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### Editor's Note

*The Investigator* is an International Peer-Reviewed Multidisciplinary Journal published quarterly (March, June, September and December), launched under the auspices of the academic community *Association for Cultural & Scientific Research* (ACSR). Keeping the panoramic scopes of research as a vibrant path, *The Investigator* intends to reflect on the skilled minds attitudinally conjuring from humanities to other disciplines. The journal explores the currents of criticism and unleashes divergent thinking. It welcomes original, scholarly unpublished papers from the researchers, faculty members, students and the diverse aspirants writing in English. It is a peer reviewed journal that brings the scholarship of academicians and practitioners around the world. *The Investigator* hopes and wishes to provide a self assuring means to you for your further accomplishments.

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**Femvertising and Menstrual Health and Hygiene Management**

*Menstruation is a normal biological process. Often, it has been treated as a private affair rather than a public health concern due to the stigma attached to it. A significant number of adolescent girls are not having sufficient knowledge about menstruation health and hygiene. Thus, this study aims to understand how TV advertisements project various aspects of menstrual health and hygiene management. These advertisements are affecting the choices while increasing awareness of young girls and boys related to menstruation. The content analysis would be used to understand how these advertisements are transcending the barriers to have an open discussion on periods and challenge the rigid stereotypes associated with this natural process. At present, 70% of the girls are using sanitary napkins after viewing TV advertisements. Femvertising is helping adolescent girls to experience period positivity and talk about menstruation freely. Keywords: Menstruation, Stigma, Menstrual Products, TV Advertisements, Menstrual Health and Hygiene Management (MHM), Content Analysis, Public Health*

FSG Report claims that there are 355 million menstruating girls and women in India. They are facing significant barriers when their menstrual health and hygiene are concerned. The report revealed that 88% of the women in India use homemade products like old clothes, rags, ash, etc. due to lack of quality sanitary napkins, personal preference, and lack of sufficient information about menstrual products. FSG Report confirmed that 71% of girls in India do not have any prior knowledge about menstruation before menarche and 70% of mothers considered menstrual blood as 'impure'. The report suggested that girls and boys should be provided with accurate and timely information about biological, socio-psychological aspects of puberty, menstruation, and MHM via mass media, influencers, and targeted education. Bobel (2019) asserted that girls are reluctant to talk about their periods due to various factors including, 'insufficient facilities, fear of disclosure, menstrual pain, and inadequate knowledge'. Bobel (2019) emphasized that girls do not just need menstrual products but they need to be freed from this menstrual mandate or the culture of silence circumventing this issue.

Femvertising, 'the new trend of pro-woman and counterstereotype advertisements are gaining popularity and social acceptance' (Varghese & Kumar 2020). Thus, advertisements related to menstrual products are playing a vital role as a source of information regarding menstruation, helping to break taboos associated with it and provide reliable information about menstrual

hygiene management (Poly et al.2020). These ads openly show and give information about hygiene-related practices of girls.

Ads related to sanitary napkins usually provide messages about menstrual hygiene. Sometimes, they break taboos associated with menstruation (Poly et al.2020). These advertisements can play a significant role in changing attitudes towards menstruation along with breaking the stereotypes (Poly et al.2020).

Advertising plays a major role in developing a brand image. It informs consumers about the functional capabilities of brands. Ads are also featuring brand's values which can persuade consumers to trust in them (Meenaghan1995). Hunt (2017) mentioned that femvertising is an altruistic effort to bring women and girls into the brand-consumer relationship in a healthy way by recognizing them as the subject of marketing efforts. Thus, Femvertising is making a conscious effort to shift the way women are represented. These ads are willing to project women as strong, authentic, challenging notions of beauty and other traditional norms (Hunt2017). This study would emphasize on how these ads are promoting period positivity and the kind of information/message they are providing to young girls and women related to menstruation.

Review of Literature: W.J. Stanton defines advertising as ‘activities involved in presenting to a group or non-personal, oral, visual, openly sponsored message regarding a product, service or idea, this message, called an advertisement is disseminated through one or more media and is paid by the identified sponsor’.

Devika stated that advertising management is a major task of an advertiser who is responsible for directing and controlling advertising. Advertising management covers analysis and planning, control, and decision-making activities undertaken by the advertiser. Identification of markets and consumer behavior are essential components of advertising management (Devika n.d.). Advertisement is the art of creating a concrete and cohesive brand image while persuading consumers to trust the product's value and purchase it eventually (Devika n.d.). Advertising is one of the major functions of marketing. Thus, advertisement management is the branch of marketing management that helps an organization to achieve its goals. Advertisements have both short term and long-term objectives. Short terms objectives include increasing the demand for the product in the market and long-term objectives include, change in attitudes/behaviors of present and future consumers (Devikan.d.).

Marketing is based on the principle of balancing 4Ps i.e. product, price, place of distribution, and promotion. Advertisement is considered a part of the promotion mix. Advertisement is considered as the avenue which helps marketers to communicate with their consumers in a meaningful way

(Devikan.d.). Advertising activities comprise of 'product attributes, knowledge of the market, the role of competition, segmenting the market to reach the targeted audience (Devikan.d.)'. Consumer behavior, socioeconomic factors, regulatory frameworks, globalization, and change in national and international scenarios govern advertising planning and strategies (Devikan.d.).

As advertising influences the consumer's mindsets, it could be seen that in the case of femvertising it has shifted the focus of female representation in advertisements (Hunt2017). Advertisements are broadening the range of representations of women in media as they have realized that narrow beauty standards and gendered rhetoric is affecting women's self-confidence and mental health, to increase brand loyalty among their consumers, and support third-wave feminism (Hunt2017). Third-wave feminism focused on 'intersectionality, storytelling, sexuality, and female agency' (Hunt 2017). Femvertising is focusing on these ideals of third-wave feminism which emphasizes on the importance of choice, reproductive right, sexuality, etc. Hunt (2017) stated that this blend of feminism and advertising might lead to the empowerment of women and creating consciousness among its audience. Yet, femvertising fails to address the plurality of experiences faced by women and the real issues for which third wave feminists are fighting for. Thus, advertisers only choose the parts of the third-wave feminist movement that are simple and catchy. Femvertising helps women to gain their voices but it is not the best tool for supporting third wave movement as the content chosen for these ads are not presenting history, foundations, or the goals of the movement (Hunt, 2017). Femvertising is considered as a complex trend. It is hailed for shifting how women are represented in media. However, it is criticized for packaging and selling empowerment to the women who created it along with simplifying the third wave movement (Hunt2017). Femvertising is a recent concept and continued research on its motives, effects, and successes are essential for measuring its impact on consumer's minds (Hunt 2017).

Menstrual Health and Hygiene is considered as one of the important aspects of sexual and reproductive rights of women. However, many girls are not aware of menstruation before their menarche (FSG report; Poly et al2020). Due to inadequate information, girls are suffering from various health problems and elder women are holding misconceptions as the FSG report reflected that 71% of girls did not have any information related to menstruation before their first-period cycle begun and 70% of mothers considered menstrual blood as 'impure'.

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) stated that when girls hit puberty and begin menstruating, their opportunities diminish as their mobility gets restricted. In some places, menstruating women and girls are not allowed to visit religious places, cook food, or even spending nights in their homes.



Isolation and expulsion from homes have been linked to several deaths (UNFPA2018). ‘Girls and women lack opportunities when they lack information about menstrual health services to treat menstrual syndromes and disorders or supplies to manage menstrual hygiene’ (UNFPA2018). Silence plays a major role in reinforcing menstrual taboos. Thus, femvertising could play a major role in breaking the silence around menstruation.

In low-income countries, girls receive limited puberty guidance and the cost of sanitary products is high. They lack safety, privacy, clean water, sanitation, and disposal facilities which add on to environmental pressure (Sommer et al.2015). ‘Menstrual shame and complexities of menstrual hygiene management were perceived as an inevitable part of social order’ gained a lot of attention (Sommer et al.2015). Private sector companies like Proctor&Gamble (P&G) played a significant role in raising awareness about menstrual hygiene management. P&G engages in a variety of menstrual management related activities that reflected on their instrumental and principled goals: expanding markets, building their brand, adhering to the ethics of social responsibility which helped many girls to become body positive (Sommer et al.2015). Femvertising could significantly uphold these values and educate young girls and women to embrace their bodies (Poly et al.2020).

Fingerson stated that teen's lives are influenced by the large cultural context of the media and advertising industries (53). She asserted that teens learn about menstrual products from the media before they learn more about menstruation in general. Disposable pads were developed at the end of World War I but it was during the 1930s when Kotex was able to convince women’s magazines to run their ads. Before 1930, such products were considered as too private for mass media (Fingerson, 53). Most ads for menstrual products used euphemisms like, “difficult days” or “feeling fresh” until recently. Now, these ads contain graphics and absorbency rates with blue fluid rather than red like blood. These ads also provide details about the products and how they work. Fingerson stated that both boys and girls learn about periods while watching advertisements on TV or while reading magazines. Thus, she claimed that the ways the products are being shown in the ads influence how teens view and understand menstruation (Fingerson, 55). The advertising strategies for menstrual products separate the product from the actual physical experience of menstruation. Thus, ads also stereotype menstruation by considering it ‘a disease, a dirty thing, that must remain sanitized, hidden, and freshened’ (Fingerson, 55). Femvertising has enough capability to challenge these stereotypes and break these taboos as mentioned by Poly et al. (2020). This study would emphasize how these ads are breaking the silence around menstruation and the kind of messages they are propagating via using femvertising.

**Methodology:** For conducting this study, I would use a qualitative research design to gain in-depth insights into how these ads are breaking stereotypes related to menstruation and to understand the messages they are sharing. Youtube App would be used by the researcher to watch these ads. The researcher would use content analysis to meet both the objectives as the content analysis is used for studying recorded information or information which has been recorded as texts, media, or physical items. Advertisements are form recorded media. Therefore, the content analysis would be suitable for this study. **Sample:** The researcher would analyze 3 ads, 2 ads by *RIO pads* and 1 ad by *Sofy* as these ads have followed some ethics of femvertising. That is why I have chosen the ads by using purposive sampling.

**Data Interpretation and Analysis:** *RIO's heavy-duty flow pad ad* reflects on heavy flow and emphasizes on the absorbency of the Rio pads during heavy flow. It is crucial to observe that a balloon has been used as a prop to demonstrate the flow of blood. The actress's expression is also worrisome as it shows a certain level of disgust. Unlike other advertisements showing blue fluid to test the absorbency of pads, Rio used red fluid and the actress is seen holding a pad dipped in that red fluid. Then at the end, she says, "*Heavy flow mein koi slim trim napkin nahi. Ek heavy-duty pad chahiye. Rio, teen guna sokne wala... heavy flow ke liye.. Rio.*" (A slim trim napkin cannot help during heavy flow but heavy-duty pad like Rio can help.)

Although, this ad seems to promote femvertising. Fingerson (2006) mentioned that these ads systematically separate the product from the actual physical experience of women. This ad uses a balloon as a prop that symbolizes a woman's body. Even though the actress stresses upon experiences women might face in terms of the flow of menstrual blood but it nullifies the essence by using a balloon to signify a woman's body. To some extent, this ad also reinforces patriarchy as the actress is holding the balloon which might be seen as patriarchal control over woman's bodies by various institutions as Hunt (2017) has stated that femvertising dilutes the ideals of third-wave feminism. It methodically dilutes woman's choice and agency. Even in this ad, a woman's body is seen as passive and a female actress is promoting the brand. Thus, Hunt (2017) mentioned that femvertising sells empowerment to those who have created it. The actress's *disgusted* expression unfolds the layers of the negative self-image of a woman's body. That disgruntled facial expression cannot break the taboo. Thus, the facial expression acts as a euphemism like "difficult days". This ad is not providing any information about how the product should be used but only focuses on heavy flow. It does not provide any information about menstrual hygiene management. Thus, this ad is only following the ethics of femvertising while being honest about the color of the blood unlike other ads as Fingerson (2006) reflected that most ads contain graphics and depict absorbency rates with blue fluid rather than red fluid. While another ad by Rio pads titled, "*Khoon*" focuses on various aspects of

menstrual hygiene management where the actress could be seen carrying a hot water bag while her phone is ringing. It also depicts how stereotypes related to periods affect the mobility of women as the actress says: “Hum khoon kar dete hai apne armaanon ka aur... apni azaadi ka” (We kill our dreams and our freedom.)

This ad also normalizes the menstrual blood and menstrual process. It also states how women feel during their periods. While we can see the actress wearing pads and taking shower, the ad also challenges stereotypes like not taking bathing and subtly promotes cleanliness and hygiene. Thus, this ad breaks the silence around the period while starting a healthy conversation around menstrual hygiene management. Here, the actress looked confident and narrated women’s experiences without separating it from the body, unlike the previous ad. Thus, we can see how conversations around periods could be changed by using femvertising as a tool. Therefore, Hunt (2017) stated that femvertising is a recent concept and continued research on its motives, effects, and successes are essential to measuring its impact on consumer’s minds. Advertisers should plan and manage the content of the pad not just to sell products but to change the mindsets of their consumers too as Devika has pointed out. Thus, femvertising has the potential to change mindsets only if the content focuses on the de-stigmatization of menstruation.

*Sofy #Embrace The New* ad is considered as the first tampon commercial. This ad focuses on how to use a tampon and stresses the advantages of using a tampon. The commercial focused on increasing the mobility of women and letting them exercise their own choice for living life as they want. This ad talks about how tampons could help women to exercise their agency. In India, most women are not comfortable in using tampons due to various stereotypes attached to the product, and this ad busts all myths related to wearing tampons during periods. It says that wearing tampons ‘is not rocket science’ and then the demonstration of how to wear a tampon begins. *Sofy Applicator Tampon* is considered more hygienic than finger tampons. Most girls think that tampons could affect virginity. This ad discusses hymen as ‘elastic tissue that stretches so tampons won’t affect it’. Then, many girls feel that it would get stuck inside or if the threads break then it would be a problem but this ad states ‘thread is woven through the tampon. There isn’t any place for it to go beyond the vagina only’. Therefore, this ad breaks all the stereotypes which Riya was struggling with to go for a pool party with her friends. But the FSG report stated that 88% of women in India are still using old clothes, rags, ash, etc. due to lack of accessibility to proper sanitary products, personal preference, and others. Thus, tampons might not be accessible to all women. They might face the same discomfort which Riya was facing initially and they might not even afford them. FSG report also revealed that many women are using traditional methods to maintain menstrual hygiene because sanitary pads are expensive and the cost of tampons is more than the pads. Thus, many women

might not be able to afford it. Thus, it is quite relevant to state that femvertising dilutes important issues for which third wave feminists are fighting for as mentioned by Hunt (2017).

Femvertising would be considered as an effective tool if it addresses the physical experiences of women so that audience can relate it. If the audience is not able to relate with the advertisement, they would not be able to relate with the product which could affect the short-term objective of increasing the sales of their product. Femvertising should not only focus on shifting roles but it must also focus on its content. In most of these ads, larger issues are not taken into cognizance which could affect the reliability and loyalty of the associated brands. It must take a multiplicity of experiences into account as these ads have focused on the rate of flow of menstrual blood experienced on different days by different women. Thus, it should reflect upon intersectionality and focus on narratives where women tend to use their choice and agency to decide about their bodies which is the foundation of sexual and reproductive health rights and these ads must treat menstruation as a public health issue. Even today, they treat menstruation as a private affair and a dirty thing to talk about. To achieve the long-term objective for bringing behavioral changes among consumers, advertisers must be cautious while designing the concept of femvertising otherwise it would not cause any substantial change. Thus, advertisers should focus on creating content that is not just fresh and new but it should be impactful and contextually placed.

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**Towards a Fictional Ayemenem:  
A Geocritical Analysis of *The God of Small Things***

*The God of Small Things is a well-acknowledged book by Arundati Roy that opens up to a great array of discussions in the field of literary theories. Apart from peeking into the politics of the novel and other recent approaches to the work from ecocritic and LGBT perspectives, this paper aims at to have a geocritical approach. Moulded by Bertrand Westphal and Robert T. Tally geocriticism focuses on the construction of spaces of the work and the role of the geocritic is to (un) map the written spaces. Roy's Ayemenem is mapped here as a fictitious place that she locates in Kerala rather than regarding it as the real Ayamanam.*

Arundati Roy came to the lead of the world of literature with the publication of her debut novel, *The God of Small Things* which was published in the year 1997 and it secured her the prestigious Man Booker Prize for fiction. The story is set in Ayemenem, a fictional place in Kerala, and the temporal setting shifts back and forth between 1969 and 1993. The novel deals with the story of a Christian family and is primarily directed at the life of the paternal twins Estha and Rahel. Narrated from an omniscient point of view, the story is more related to Rahel and her lived-in experiences. Another interesting element that we can identify in this novel is that the novel never pursues a chronological pattern for unfolding the story. It is a patchwork of flashbacks and lengthy sidetracks that are woven together to tell the story of the family.

Ammu, the protagonist of the novel is divorced and had to get away from her husband with her twins. Spending the rest of her life in her ancestral home, which is now under the constraint of her brother Chacko? The story process through the childhood and adulthood experiences of Rahel and Estha. The main incident or the nucleus behind the story is the visit of Sophie Mol, Chacko's daughter, and her death.

Apart from confiding the story of a family, this particular novel put lights into the socio-cultural and political setting of the place also. It can be perceived as a powerful protest novel against all sort of boundaries prevailed in a society that upholds practices like untouchability and caste discrimination. Velutha, who belongs to the so-called 'untouchable' had a strong bond with the twins which later on causes Ammu to realize her attraction towards him. For Ammu, her love was the "love by night the man her children loved by the day". Her love towards him became deep rooted gradually and later on Velutha was accused for the death of Sophie Mol.

While exploring *The God of Small Things*, there emerges a question whether Ayemenem is a real or an imaginary place. Geocriticism governs between the geography of the real and imaginary, thereby experimenting a spatialization of the given space. The very word 'space' can be a place, spot or volume. Towards an extent, it is treated as a rough container. But somehow it also seems to be a boundless three dimensional extent. Space is always mentioned in a work of art, especially in literature as a background detail or a background setting, like that of a foundation up on which the remaining or the core content or the story it is built. At most of the time, the 'space' of the novel is a place where the story happens. The duty of a geocritic is to glance at the map, comprehend its background, analyze each and every factors carefully and then attempt to draw the map of the space. He should be willing to make reasonable changes in his map, throughout the process of reading, as the author puts in new things, objects, places and people in her/his work of art.

Geocriticism reflects its importance in revealing, analyzing and investigating the significance of space and mapping in literature and in the world. Here we are familiarizing an unfamiliar world, and carefully understanding, observing and analyzing the life of the people there. Not only about some bunch of people, but the reader is also introduced to their lifestyles, habitats and even culture. All through the process of reading, the reader sets a journey to the other world, exploring it. The journey will continue unless or until the reader turns out the last page of the book, some lost in space, some at home in the world. It opens up infinite opportunities for examination and exploration.

Geocriticism in its theoretical approach is a method of literary analysis and theory that incorporates the study of geographic space. In France, Bertrand Westphal has elaborated the concept of 'geocritique' in several works, and in United States, Robert T. Tally has argued for geocriticism as a critical practice suited the analysis of what he has termed as 'literary cartography'. In practice, geocriticism is multi-focal, examining a variety of topics at once, thus differentiating itself from practices that focus on the singular point of view of the traveler or the protagonist. It also assumes a literary referentiality between world and text. By questioning the relations between a given space's nature and its actually existing condition, the geocritical approach allows for the study of fiction that points also the theory of possible worlds.

This is an approach whose purpose is to explore some of the interstices that until recent times were blank spaces for literary studies. Geocriticism is clearly affiliated with those theories that unleash spatial perception and representation in a nomadic perspective, which have made for a very stimulating background. Like other spaces, novels are produced by and within a culture that they do not transparently reflect. Indeed, novels often reflect back a world that is familiar enough to be recognizable, to readers but different enough to be experienced.

In this paper I am intending to carry on a geocritical study of the novel *The God of Small Things* and thereby (un)mapping Ayemenem. Roy describes the beauty of Ayemenem and she is successful in presenting this particular place as a much familiar place in front of her readers. Even a non-malayali can get a clear picture of Kerala, and she/he can feel like they had visited Ayemenem. Through the journey or life of the twins, especially Rahel, Roy very beautifully specifies each and every thing that the character witnesses. From the childhood experiences of two little children, including their small travels, observations etc the novel steps to many dimensions and at last pointing to the real life struggles they had to meet in being adults.

Author tries to create believable characters first, so that, whatever they do or whatever happens to them is credible. In *The God of Small Things*, Ammu, Velutha, Rahel, Estha, Baby Kochamma, Chacko and all other characters including the 'orange drink lemon drink man' assumes to be very real to the readers. All the characters are presented with highly efficient source of real sense within them, so that, while reading the novel, no one can think of their unreal existence. Real reader can recognize them as a bunch of people who lives in the next door. Each and everything that happens to them or things they are forced to face normally affects the reader and his recounting. If a reader finds it is hard for him to visualize the characters and to understand their role, existence and power play in that particular work, he can never pay justification for her/ himself in the very process of reading. An active reading takes place only when the events unfold and the consumer of the work of literature is able to move the story and its events. Generally, there arises a curiosity regarding the upcoming events, which helps the reader to stay connected to that environment.

The role of the author, while writing a fiction, is not just creating and narrating a story, rather it includes building up strong characters, setting etc... Once believable characters are created in a novel, the readers are in to it. A reader will step out of his or her reality and enter to a place into which she or he would not normally go without opening the cover and beginning to read. Definitely, this paves the way to the possible worlds. The place created and viewed by a reader through his continuous process of analyzing the text will be different from that of another reader. Thus, creating innumerable possible worlds.

The genre of the novel evokes a space for confusion were we finds both similarities and differences between Ayamanam , the actual place in Kerala and Ayemenem, Roy's fictional place in this novel. The book is marked as a fiction which puts its readers in to a cape wondering whether these incidents are real or not. It is hard to recognize these events as Roy's or her family's story, still thinking the ways for them to be true or real. Erasing the influence of the real place Ayamanam, I would like to focus on Roy's fictional place

Ayemenem, and its geographic features. Her descriptions of the place gave us the image of a typical town in Kerala, where people are infected by the social rules.

After introducing the space of Ayemenem, Roy grabs the attention of her readers towards a particular house which she terms as the Ayemenem House. Ayemenem, like all other places has its own special store house of tastes. Here, it is the Paradise Pickles and preserves. Westphal's theory of geocriticism is polysensuous. Geocriticism promotes the empire of the senses, a polysensuous approach to places. Most of the time, places are perceived with our eyes, but it seems most appropriate to diversify sensing to include the sounds, smells, tastes, and textures of a place.

We find Ayemenemas more a real place when the author takes her us to a film talkie named Abhilash Talkies. It advertised itself as the first cinema hall in Kerala with 70mm Cinemascope screen. The name of the talkie is written both in Malayalam and in English. The interior description feels too pity, the dirty marble lobby and the toilets called HIS and HERS. Abhilash Talkies make us remember about some real theaters that we have once witnessed. The talkie also had a refreshment counter that offers lemondrink, orangedrink and lemonorange.

Next we are moving in to a hotel, Hotel Sea Queen, and directly into the non-air conditioned rooms with twin beds, room numbers indicating 313 and 327 respectively. Spending a night in the hotel we fell into a dream; dream the river, the coconut trees, the boats, and the dull sound of the boatmen's bamboo poles, the warm water with fish in it, with sky and the broken yellow moon in it.

There is an old church with new paint at *Ayemenem*. The newly painted dome of the yellow church had a painting, painted in blue like that of the sky. Like that of the church, there is a temple where KochuTomban, the elephant belongs to. On the ceremonial days of the temple, there will be a Kathakali Man to whom; his stories are his children and his childhood. He is the most beautiful of men, because his body is his soul. On those clear nights, the sound of the 'chenda' travelled kilometers from the temple, announcing Kathakali performances. The reader automatically listens to the beats of the 'chenda' and waits to the performance that followed it. The elephant is a familiar one to all the villagers and it usually had its visit to Ayemenem House once a month for a coconut.

As we discussed earlier, an established author like Aruntadhi Roy, will never leave the difference between Ayamanam and Ayemenem unnoticed. Roy introduces her fictitious place and in that fictitious place, we familiarize Ayemenem house, Meenachil River, Vembanad lake, the church, the police



station, the temple, paradise pickle factory and many more. This is all about how I feel the text and explored its unknown territories geocritically. Attempting such a reading, one could taste the hotness of varieties of pickles, enjoy the sound of chenda, visualize the image of the history house, smell the food items and feel the intensity of the hugs between Velutha and Ammu.

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## **Revisiting Malabar Rebellion**

*Malabar was one of the province of Kerala, was directly ruled by the British Government. Land relation in Malabar was more feudalistic than any other parts of Kerala. Peasants struggles were also often in Malabar than other parts of Kerala. Malabar rebellion was long rebellion which started from 1836 onwards. The rebellion was most important struggle against the Colonial rule and landlordism. The paper discussed the struggles in between 1836 and 1921 and analysed the rebellion in most objective manner.*

As part of the anti-feudal and anti-colonial movements, the peasant movement emerged. Kerala is one of the regions where peasant struggles had a historical continuity over centuries during the British period and later. Malabar was directly under the British Rule. Land relations in Malabar were more complicated than other parts of Kerala. Most of the land was under landlord and there were numerous intermediaries between landlord and peasants. The condition of actual tillers of the land was deplorable. Economically, socially and politically they were outside the public sphere. Land legislations which benefitted peasants were not initiated by the British government. They sided with the landlords and made laws favourable to them. Because of all these Malabar was main centre of peasant unrest in Kerala. Peasant struggles were frequent in Malabar. The National Movements gave new dimension to the struggles and become more enthusiasm. Malabar rebellion was differently interpreted by many scholars; mainly on religious based. But it is clearly a peasant rebellion against the exploitative and hostile character of both landlords and British government. Most of the landlords were high caste Hindu and majority of the peasants were Muslims. That is why the peasant revolt was characterised as religious rebellion.

The sufferings of the peasants under the colonial regime resulted in series of protests especially in the northern region of Kerala. The economic exploitation was at its peak during the colonial rule and the land revenue system worsened the condition of peasants. During the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Eranad and Walluvanad taluks of the Malabar districts were in a state of constant disturbances which led to the uprisings of Mappilas against land lords and colonial Government. Between 1836 and 1921 there were thirty three such occurrence, which the Madras government characterised as ‘Moplah outrages’ (K.N. Panikkar 2016: 155.).

In these revolts, almost all of them were limited to particular region and the participants were also few except for the revolt of 1921. Only three hundred and fifty one participated in the uprisings between 1836 and 1919, among them largest being ninety nine in the revolt of 1896 (P.J. Cheriyan 1999: 416). The colonial government and judicial system always support the landlord classes and made fine and other punishments to the Moplah tenants under the Mappila Act (Kunjanathan 1961: 24.). For instance, one of the case of Melattur Amshom in 1885, the Special Assistant Magistrate in his judgment asserted to fine Chembrasser, under the Mappila Act in order to discourage “business crime” (Confidential File 1880: 2) and impose tax on Mappilas will remained them and discouraged the act of fanaticism (Ibid). It was said that Chembrasser Thangal killed thirty-eight Hindus for helping Military (E.M.S. Namboodiripad 1984:118). Most of the outbreak was suppressed by the government (Judicial Department 1915:3). The revolt of 1921 occurred during the Khilafat and Non-co-operation Movements, so the participation was also high. Most of these revolts were occurred in Walluvanad and Eranad taluks, where the peasants were mainly from Muslim community. Majority of the land was held by Hindus and the Moplah peasants rented land directly from the Hindu landlord or from an intermediary.

About ten thousand people were killed and wounded in the revolt according to unofficial estimates, while according to the official figure it was only 3, 989. The popular base of the revolt was proved from the number of those who were arrested and surrendered, 45,404, even if all of them were not actual participants (P.J. Cheriyan 1999: 416). Among the 198 participants of four uprisings, 1849, 1851, 1852 and 1896, eight were tenants, eighty nine were labourers, five were religious workers, sixteen belonged to petty occupations and nine no information is available (Ibid). The landlords and Government servants were the victims of the revolt. Among eighty three people killed in these four uprisings, forty two were jenmis, their family members, servants and guests and eleven were Government officials and their relatives. In Cheruvati Mosque alone, in the fight between rebels and military the permanent *Adhigari* Unni Moideen Kutty and fifty nine Moplah rebels were killed (Office Note 1922: 2). Of the remaining ten were people from lower caste; five were Mappilas and a British official. The fourteen of them were unknown (P.J. Cheriyan: 417) (Madras Legislative Assembly Proceedings, 1922: 2260). The participants of the revolt of 1921 were mainly from rural poor. The occupational status of 1647 rebels indicated in the referred and appeal in the Madras High Court reveal that an overwhelming majority of them, 1261 were labourers and cultivators. The remaining were also mostly from the poorer strata of society (K.N, Panikkar 1989: 167).

The exploitation of the peasantry by the landlords was the main cause of the peasant uprisings in Malabar. To extract maximum revenue was the policy of colonial rule in Malabar, for that they gained the support of the landed classes.

Forty percent of the net produce was fixed as state demand and that was more than the share of the cultivator and of the landlord (P.J. Cheriyan:417). The burden of the land revenue was on the shoulder of the lower section of the society. There was great contrast between the market prices and the Government rates for the conversion of produce in kind to money for the purpose of revenue payment. The Government assessed the land revenue in kind, but collected in cash, fixing the conversion rate on the basis of the average price over the previous ten years (Ibid 418).

Besides the land revenue, the Company received almost fifty taxes from the people like taxes on houses, shops, cattle loans, ferries, fishing nets, tapping knives, toddy and arrack, i.e., every aspects of life were subjected to tax (Ibid:418-419). The Company made *jenmi* as the absolute owner of the land. By *melcharthu* and evictions the Company with the help of *jenmi* extracted maximum surplus from the peasants. As a result the evictions increased during the 19<sup>th</sup> century and *melcharths* became common. The tenants' could not bear all these exactions and consequently majority of the peasants were heavily in debt (K.N.Panikkar:46-48).

Thirurangadi incident was the beginning of the Rebellion of 1921 in Malabar. The District Magistrate E.F.Thomas marched to Thirurangadi in August 19, 1921 with a contingent of army and police to arrest the Mappila leaders including Ali Musaliar, the popular priest in Mambram mosque (The Mappila Rebellion:1922: 73). He also had warrant with him to search the mosques and houses and confiscated war-knives. He reached Thirurangadi on August 20, but at that time Ali Musaliar was not at the Mosque and three unknown Khilafat volunteers were arrested. The news spread that the Mambram Mosque was attacked and destroyed by the Britishers. The Muslims marched to Mambram especially the Moplabs who were assembled at the weekly fair at Kottakkal. On their way the Muslims of Tanur and Parappanangadi joined them. The unarmed Muslims assembled in Thirurangadi and asked for the release of the arrested volunteers. The army opened fire on the unarmed and peaceful mob assembled there and about three hundred people were killed (S. Raimon 2006: 295). The mob turned violent. They attacked the police. Government offices were destroyed, treasuries were looted and records were burned. Thus began the Malabar Rebellion at Thirurangadi and spread to Eranad, Walluvanad and Ponnani taluks. They marched to Pukottur, but no atrocities were committed against any Hindu at Pukottur. They burnt the record books of the record room in the *Kovilakam*. No harm was done to any member of the *Kovilakam*. This was the nature of the rebel activity during the initial stages of the rebellion throughout the South Malabar. At Manjeri, Tirur, Perinthalmanna, Malappuram, Mannarkad and other places they looted Government treasuries and attacked Government offices. The notorious officers were also attacked. But no injury was done to the poor Hindus and

landlords. At Mannarkad, a good number of Hindu rebels actively participated in demolishing bridges, attacking police station and so on.

Variamkunnath Kunhammad Haji, Kalathingal Mammad and Ali Musaliar in Eranad and Sithi Koya Thangal and Embichi Koya Thangal in Walluvanad were the important leaders of the rebellion. In Eranad region 'Republic' was established and Kunhammad Haji and Kalathingal Mammad declared themselves as President. For a period of six months, the rebels had complete control of the region. At the early stage of the rebellion the Nairs, Mappilas and others of non-co-operation party were arrested and punished indiscriminately. Martial law was declared on 29 August 1911 (173). With the help of more forces like Gurkha, the Government suppressed the rebellion ruthlessly. The government forces seized the Tirurangadi mosque in an encounter with rebels and Khilafat volunteers and their leaders Ali Musaliar surrendered (K.P.Kesava Menon 1957: 119). As the rebellion continued, the police search for rebels and the punishment to them were also continued. By the beginning of 1922 about forty five thousand rebels were taken into police custody and about ten thousand were killed in the police station (K.N.Panikkar:163).

The Hindus joined the Mappilas peasants in the rebellion in the early stage. But later the Nairs and others wanted them to be safe and they joined the British army and looted Moplah houses and outraging their women. The Mappila rebels viewed it as treachery and they took vengeance by attacking them. Thus the rebellion assumed a communal colour, rather than against imperialism and landlordism.

There are differences of views about the character of the Malabar rebellion. Most of the British writers viewed it as only a communal revolt. Some writers like J.L.Strange were of the opinion that low state of the intelligence of Mappilas and the absence of learned men to instruct them in the new religion was the reason for the rebellion (T.K. Ravindran 1978: 267). William Logan and E.M.S.Namboodiripad pointed out the agrarian discontent as the cause of the rebellion, the exploitation of the peasants by the *jenmi* classes with the help of colonial rule made the peasants to revolt against them.

The Malabar rebellion became a part of the national movement through Khilafat and Non-Co operation movements. Mahatma Gandhi and Saikat Ali visited Malabar in August 1920 (E.M.S. Namboodiripad 1977: 22). Their call for Non co-operation didn't get much enthusiasm, but the Khilafat movement gained immediate response from the Muslims especially from South Malabar. All Malabar District Congress Conference held in Manjeri in April 1920 and this was the beginning of the Khilafat movement in Malabar. General character of the movement was non- violence. But the popularity of the movement disturbed the colonial powers and they imposed prohibitory orders

on all Khilafat meetings on 5<sup>th</sup> February 1921, by stating that the Khilafat meetings arouse the Muslims against the British Government and Hindus. On February 16 all important Congress and Khilafat leaders like Yakub Hassan, U.Gopala Menon, P.Moideen Koya and K.Madhavan Nair were arrested (K.N.Panikkar 2016: 177). Thus the leader reached the hands of the local leaders and the movement turned to violent one. To the Mappilas, “the Swaraj which Gandhi had promised within a year seemed a possibility not through ‘Gandhism’, but through an armed struggled” (Ibid).

K.N. Panikkar pointed out that “the Rebellion of 1921 cannot be really interpreted in communal terms. On the contrary, given the background of the economic condition of the peasantry, the pattern of rebel activity, and the classes to which the participants belonged, it is reasonable so suggest that the Rebellion was a continuation of the agrarian conflicts of the nineteenth century” (K.N.Panikkar 1989:174). Rao Bahadur C.S.Subramanyam speaking in the Legislative Assembly makes it clear that the participants of the Rebellion were poor peasants with little property and the men of property, high classes were not the part of the rebellion (Ibid). The Viceroy Lord Reading also supported the view of the agrarian discount as the cause of the rebellion. He suggested that in order to maintain peace in Malabar and to make Muslims loyal citizens, an agrarian reform was necessary (Ibid). The Government prepared comprehensive tenancy legislation in 1930.

The early uprisings of Malabar originated from the agrarian discontent, but it was localised in extent and limited in scope. Almost all the Mappila peasants of Eranad and Walluvanad taluks participated in the Rebellion of 1921 and it was more intense and widespread. The official estimates of Mappila casualties was 2,337 killed and 1,652 were wounded (Ibid:179). Above 10,000 were unofficial reports (Prema Kurian 1994: 398). The Mappila rebels who were surrendered and captured was 45, 404 (K.N.Panikkar 1989: 179).

Anyhow, the Mappilas in this rebellion were “as that of peasants and their parallels is to be found in the history of countless other peasant movements throughout India” (David Arnold 1982: 261). The rebellion of Malabar lasted longer than any other Indian peasant insurrection (Kathleen Gough 1974: 1402). It linked the period of pre political party, peasant uprisings and that of peasant actions sponsored by political parties (Ibid).

In Kerala, the Malabar rebellion is considered to be one of the first instances of nationalist uprisings. It was long struggle which started from 1836 onwards. But in 1926 with the Khilafat Movement it gained more strength and new dimension. The degradation of the landlord-peasant relationship, political and social alienation of the poor peasantry and high economic exploitation resulted in the Malabar rebellion. Malabar rebellion was always a topic of debate in the history of Kerala. The scholars and commons discussed it and interpret in their

own way or suitable to them. Those who believed in the Hindu ideology always criticised it in religious colour and explained it as Muslims revolt against Hindus. I may due to their political interest. But the historians always tried to explain it as the peasant revolts. The historical fact also shows that the Mappila rebellion as 'Peasant Struggle' and History also marked it as the 'Peasant rebellion'.

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**Reverberations of Trauma in Lidia Yuknavitch's  
*The Small Backs of Children***

*The concept of trauma has attracted a great deal of interest in literary studies. The representation of trauma in language, and its role in shaping individual and cultural identities are topics of great importance in today's world. This is a leading topic of our time, applicable to individuals, cultures, and nations. Lidia Yuknavitch in her novel "The Small Backs of Children" uses this concept in order to establish the remarkable effect of trauma in a human's life. Lidia Yuknavitch is a prominent figure of American Literature in the contemporary period.*

A deeply distressing or disturbing experience can be considered as a very basic definition for trauma. The longer we live, the more inevitable it is that we will experience trauma. The effect of trauma can last for a short time or for a long time. Trauma is a recurring theme in the novel, *The Small Backs of Children* by Lidia Yuknavitch. The author portrays the effect of different kinds of traumas through her lines and makes the reader to get involved in the story by sharing a number of haunting and painful traumatic experiences of various characters of the novel.

As the story develops a number of characters are presented to the readers. These characters don't have a name. Instead, they are addressed as 'the girl', 'the writer', 'the playwright', 'the poet', 'the photographer', 'the widow' etc. Most of the characters in the novel has faced some or the other kind of trauma during their lifetime. At any of the stage of their life, these characters have acquainted with some sort of traumatic experience and in turn they are carrying the remaining of those traumas.

The analysis of the plot shows that how elements of trauma add up to the story. The setting on the onset of the novel is a war-torn village in Eastern Europe. From this place an American photographer captures an image of a young girl saving herself from an explosion. The photograph becomes the subject of various appreciations, criticisms and debates. But the photograph became a cause of mania for the photographer's friend- the writer. The writer herself was a victim of many tragedies in her past and was able to find her own self in the photographer which made her to slip into depression. The plot unfolds when the writer's husband and a group of her friends started searching for the girl in the photograph and rescue her.



Various types of trauma show their significant role in the development of the novel. When Lidia Yuknavitch presents her characters she addresses a kind or the other type of trauma that he or she has faced. In this paper each kind of trauma that the characters of the novel has come in acquaintance with are decoded for detailed analyses and understanding. Thus the study helps to have a clear picture on how trauma theory can be applied in this particular novel of the author.

As far as the novel is concerned, sexual trauma influences the two main characters of the novel- the girl and the writer. The forceful imposition of any sexual act on another person without their consent is a sexual assault. The term 'abuse' is also used in synonym with the same. The trauma that is developed out of sexual assault is the sexual trauma.

The girl is described as an orphan of war and a girl of nothingness by the author. She has lost her family- her father, her mother and also her brother in a bomb happened in a war torn village of Eastern Europe. Yuknavitch in the novel depicts various incidents where the girl was raped. Within a small period of her life she has had multiple sexual abuses.

Seventeen times against the wall or in the barn: You move or scream or say anything I will kill them all. In front of you. First I will torture them and then I will kill them. Her eyes as dead as she can make them. Her arms as limp as she can make them. Her heart as hidden as she can make it. A soldier's cock entering the thin white flesh of a girl, into the small red cave of her, the fist of heart pounding out be- dead, bedead, be-dead. (Yuknavitch 12)

The development of high levels of dissociative symptoms, in the girl can be the result of her sexual trauma aroused out of the sexual assault she has faced. The consecutive rapes she experienced created some sort of numbness in a small girl. The same tragic experience is seen in the past of the writer in the novel.

I have slept with women for twenty years. I have slept with men all my life- from the time I can first remember things. - If by sleeping with men one means sexual encounters with men and their dicks. My father figures here. (8)

Another kind of trauma that is dominant in *The Small Backs of Children* is the war related trauma. War is the venue for violence, anarchism, exploitation and all the evils under the sky. The exposures to events such as war, political unrest and torture ends up with war related trauma. High risks of mental distress, depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is visible among the people who have experienced the effect of trauma.

Violence always had, is and will create distress and trauma among individuals. In the book, Lidia Yuknavitch has clearly portrayed the trauma a war can create amongst citizen. The photographer in the novel has taken the photograph in between the unrest of the war in the village. At the same time she is celebrating her victory in a pub in the same country. Here the author tries to convey how an adverse circumstance affects two different strata of a single country.

The character of the girl is from a village that was subjected to all the unruliness of a war. Normalising violence was common to her villagers since they were witnessing it on every morning. The girl has experience the intensity of a war in all sense. She was mentally and physically tortured her life. And she saw how her family got vanished in a quick bomb blast. The blast happened in between the war has atomized the entire family of the girl. Lidia Yuknavitch succeeds in portraying how much violence was frequent in a war torn village.

Men were sent into icehouse prisons. Women and children were raped. Children were bought and sold in the open market. Systematized violence has become part of ordinary experience, so that it was not unusual to see- not blood and body parts, but displaced fear and horror in micro motions. The tremor of a hand or the twitch of an eye; bullet marks in the side of houses; women with scars around their mouths and eyes as deep as archaeological finds; little boys who could not sit in chairs. (13)

Physical trauma also has an important role in the making of the character of the girl. Physical trauma is the trauma that is aroused out of any physical injury. Physical trauma gifted by the war has added up to the sufferings of the girl and also resulting in secondary complications such as shock, respiratory failure and death. “Nor will it ever leave her body, the blast forever injuring her spine, a silver of metal piercing her flesh and entering her, so that all her life she will carry the trace of that moment between her vertebrae” (3). Hence the girl in the novel lives with the internal pain of psychological, sexual and war related trauma and at the same time she is carrying the external pain of physical trauma.

The last and the major trauma that is evident throughout the novel is the psychological trauma. This particular trauma is dominant out of all the other kinds of trauma. Also known by the name ‘emotional trauma’, psychological trauma is the damage or injury to the psyche after experiencing an extremely frightening or distressing event. The result of the trauma can be the challenges in functioning or adjusting normally after the event.

In *The Small Backs of Children* the characters of the girl, the writer and the widow has undergone psychological trauma. All of them is carrying the burdens of the painful past and is suffering out of the psychological trauma it exerted upon them. The experiences they were through are different but each of the experiences has gifted them with a chronic psychological trauma that has reshaped their life and character.

“But that night has never left her...it is an unrelenting bruise. Its blue-black image pearling in and out of memory forever (3).” The particular incident of the bomb blast has created a constant mark in the mind of the girl. She cannot forget it or she cannot overcome it. “What used to be nightmares have transformed into color and light, composition and story. It is with her now. It will be always with her. Lifelong companion. Still life of a dead family (4)”. While the girl was with the widow, the widow hears the girl making noises in her sleep. During some nights she laughs, walks amidst sleeping, curls upon the floor and sings. The widow herself concludes that whatever the girl has been through, it must have lodged in her subconscious forever. Similarly the girl will be haunted for the rest of her life.

Coming to the character the writer, she is the victim of psychological trauma that is the by-product of a set of uneasy experience of her past. The sexual abuse she experienced from various men including her father, an unsupportive mother, multiple marriages etc. added up to the psychological trauma of the writer. The unhealthy mind-set of the writer right from childhood strengthens the psychological trauma she possesses.

I was depressed at age eight for one year, but it felt like being in underwater, which was familiar to me, the swimmer. I was depressed for the second time at age eleven for two years, then again at eighteen for one more. Then I went under- depression-second self- and resurfaced violently. Recurringly. (9)

If the death of the family of the girl is the major cause for the psychological trauma of the girl, the death of the daughter of the writer is the primary cause for her psychological trauma. Her daughter was born dead. The writer shares “I could see the grief coming like a towering wave of a water about to swallow the world” (20). The depth of the pain of the death has made her mad to that extent which made her to steal the body from the hospital and to bury her near a place where the river empties to the sea. The psychological trauma created out of the death compelled her to enter a cataclysmic silence for nearly a year.

The case of the widow in the novel too is not that different. She it is living with the traumatic loss of her husband. This loss can be her primary reason for her acceptance of an unknown girl to her house. The Widow doesn't ask or talked a word to the girl even after six days of their meeting. “The woman is

stricken by the loss of her husband to a Siberian prison. Everything she sees has the same weight-next to nothingness” (24).

These feelings of nothingness, detachment and depression, all are the after effects of psychological trauma. Psychological trauma, being a recurring theme in the novel creates similar kind of effects in its victims. While considering the girl, the writer and the widow the impact of psychological trauma is almost the same. From being isolated to being depressed all those have constant effect on their life. May be the intensity varies over time.

While understanding more about trauma it is evident that in whatever category the traumatic experience is sort into surely it has a psychological effect. It can be a sexual trauma or physical trauma it is clear that it creates a psychological trauma for sure. Thus out of all the trauma the most important one is psychological trauma.

It is explicitly understandable that all types of trauma discussed are interconnected to each other. That is the happening of any one kind of trauma mentioned above can result the birth the other type. Taking the girl as an example, the psychological trauma she had is the end product of the war related trauma she had, the physical trauma she had and the psychological trauma she had. Similarly the physical trauma is the gift of war related trauma which also caused sexual trauma of her. Thus the link between these is undeniable.

To conclude the representations of various traumas is visible in the making of the novel *The Small Backs of Children*. Also through the portrayal of various characters Lidia Yuknavitch made it possible to demonstrate how trauma can give birth to permanent marks of insecurity and isolation. *The Small Backs of Children* fits under the genre of a traumatic novel fulfilling all its standards and norms which indirectly proclaims the need of maintaining emotional health. In the contemporary period where mental health is intentionally ignored and violence is intentionally promoted *The Small Backs of Children* stands for the psyche of every human being.

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**The Politics of Disfiguration:  
Grotesque in Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children***

*Saleem Sinai, the protagonist of the novel Midnight's Children, has a huge nose that resembles the Deccan peninsula and drips continuously. This colossal apparatus was comparable to the trunk of the elephant-headed god Ganesh. Its bridge was so wide that you could "cross a river on that nose," a friend had once teased him. The novel uses nose as symbol to allegorize the national history of India. The symbolic representation of nose in the novel equates body to a political entity. The physical body that is completely private becomes a political entity with its experience of a public history.*

"I, Saleem Sinai, later variously called Snotnose, Stainface, Baldy, Sniffer, Buddha and even a piece of moon, had become heavily embroiled in Fate - at the best of times a dangerous sort of involvement. And I couldn't even swipe my nose at the time" (*Midnight's Children*, 3).

"The nose is the place where the outside world meets the world inside you. A nose like that, little idiot, is a great gift. Trust it. When it warns you, look out or you'll be finished. Follow your nose and you'll go far". (MC, 15) The nose acts as a metaphorical image that unites the public and the private, the borderline between the collective and the individual. Deploying the long nose as a grotesque motif, Rushdie guides the readers through the cultural and political history of our nation.

Rushdie believes the grotesque to be a powerful weapon with which he can satirize nationalism and colonialism. The public history of the nation and the private story of the body is intertwined in many strange ways in the novel. Like Saleem, his grandfather Adam Aziz too possesses a long nose. The nose acts as a bridge connecting past and present generations. Saleem starts narrating his autobiography beginning with his grandfather's life, describing the conditions of pre-independent and post-independent India and observes that India won independence under Adam's colossal nose. After completing his higher education in Germany, Adam found himself trapped between belief and disbelief. When he hit his nose against a frost-hardened tussock of earth while attempting to pray, three drops of blood plopped out of his nostrils and hardened instantly to become rubies. His tears too solidified to diamonds and at that moment he decided to never kiss earth for any man or God. Adam's conflict can be read as the conflict experienced by the colonized between the eastern tradition and the western novelty. His metamorphosis symbolizes the gradual transformations that happen to the colonized under western rule. Thus,

Adam decided to be an Indian, rather than a mere Muslim, and took part in the Indian independence struggle. Adam's identity crisis in a way can be taken as the identity crisis of the colonized, trapped between eastern and western cultures. The body and the society are intertwined in such a way that, whatever happens to the physical body symbolically represents the fate of the nation. Saleem Sinai's birth, growth and gradual disintegration resembles the birth, growth and disintegration of the Indian nation itself. He is inexplicably linked to the nation and his life is an extended metaphor of the literal narrative of Indian history.

One of the notable grotesque elements in the novel is the nose of Adam Aziz which replicates itself in his grandson Saleem Sinai. Saleem's nose incessantly runs and this enables him to get connected to the other midnight's children. With this long nose he telepathically summons MCC, Midnight's Children's Conference. All of a sudden, as a result of an accident that takes place inside the washing chest, he starts hearing various sounds. He soon realizes that the voices are those of the other surviving midnight's children, all born on the midnight India got Independence. Every child born at that hour has got some magical power or other. Saleem was able to hear others' voices and can enter into their thoughts. He watched people secretly with his telepathic power inside an abandoned clock tower. The abandoned clock tower thus acts as a panopticon, the center of power that places everyone under surveillance. It is an allegory of the British Empire who controlled everything that happened in India.

Saleem's face resembles the map of India. Once, Mr. Emil Zagaloo, his geography teacher mocked him for his long curvaceous nose and compared it to the Deccan plateau. He compared the stains in his face to Pakistan, the birth marks in the right side to the east wing and the stained west cheek to the left wing. Bringing the body-nation allegory into greater relief, Sinai's face and the long nose are made to stand for the Indian nation. The story told by the narrator can be read as a counter narrative to that strange allegory, the denial of debilitating anxiety about the western colonizer's influence. Comparing it with our nation, India in all its sense becomes a grotesquerie. Considering east as the most uncivilized barbarians, the British Empire entrusted themselves with the burden of educating the east. Long years of colonization created deep chasms within the psychology and physiology of Indians. We got culturally and linguistically dislocated. India got divided both internally and externally. These divisions are allegorically shown using an incident happened at the school, when Mr. Emil Zagaloo, out of his anger plucks a part of Saleem's hair. This indicates an external and internal division happened within the inhabitants of India, and India-Pak division. His nose is in a perpetually clogged and congested state and it may refer the problems faced by India during the time of inception, the chaos inside and outside. Later his middle finger got chopped on the same day Mr. Zagallo pulled his hair out. The top

third of his finger lies in the ground like a lump of well-chewed bubblegum and Saleem felt no pain.

Adam Aziz and Saleem Sinai, both being the witnesses of Indian history possesses bizarre physical features. Saleem Sinai is the witness of Indian history from the stroke of the midnight of India's Independence and Adam Aziz is a witness of pre-independent and post-independent India. Saleem says, " Close up of my grandfather's right hand: nails knucklesfingers all somehow bigger that you'd expect. Clumps of red hair on the outside edges. Thumb and forefinger pressed together, separated only by a thickness of paper" (MS, 36). Saleem also possesses bizarre physical features, that he would call himself a stainface, a snoutnose, possessor of the most delicately- gifted olfactory organ in history.

Saleem Sinai reflects himself as a purveyor of complex dualities and convergences. He was a connoisseur of heterogeneity, parody and burlesque. He was born to William Methwold and Vanita, an innocent Indian woman. Their association can be read as the Britisher's invasion into the life of poor Indian folk. Either we can say that Methwold raped Vanita or he somehow managed to have a sexual encounter with her. The product of such an association is Saleem, who suffered an identity crisis throughout the novel. It is an allegory of the plight of Indian women who got severely threatened by the British men, physically, mentally and sexually. Saleem says that his life was a constant search for his fathers and mothers. Everyone believed that he was the son of Ahmed Sinai and Amina Sinai, but his real parents were William Methwold and Vanita and he was brought up by a second mother called Mary Pereira. Later when the truth behind the births of Saleem and Shiva was revealed, he was sent to Hanif and Pia and later to Emerald and Gen. Zulfikar, enabling him to create a long list of fathers and mothers who had influenced him. Everyone believed that his long nose was the legacy of his grandfather Adam Aziz, but in actuality the nose was the legacy of his patrician French grandmother from Bergerac.

At the exact time of the birth of Saleem, Ahmed Sinai broke his leg. Birth of Saleem brought a disfiguration into the world, his father's toe. Saleem was not a beautiful baby, he says. At the stroke of the midnight, India became independent and exactly at the same moment, a child with strange physical features too was born. He narrates:

Baby snaps reveal that my large moon face was too large; too perfectly round, something lacking in the region of the chin. Fair skin curved across my features. But birth marks disfigured it; dark stains spread down my western hairline, a dark patch coloured my eastern ear. And my temples: too prominent: bulbous byzantine domes. Sonny Ibrahim and I were born friends. When we bumped

our foreheads, Sonny's forcep- hollows permitted my bulby temples to nestle within them. (MS, 169)

Every midnight's children had got some kind of deformity While Saleem possesses a gifted olfactory organ, his friend and foe Shiva possesses strong knees, with which he can crush bones into pieces. Sonny got a hollow in his head while his mother Nussie was having a forceps delivery.

Saleem says that his picture of himself was heavily distorted by his own consciousness about his appearance. He was also frightened with the images of his fellows. One of his keralan friend could travel through mirrors, had the ability of stepping into mirrors and re-emerging through any other reflecting surfaces. Another blue- eyed member from Kashmir fell into a lake and accidentally changed sex, entered as a girl and emerged as a beautiful boy. Shiva was a rat faced youth with filed down teeth and two of the magical biggest knees. A boy from Vindhya could increase or reduce his size at will, and a sharp-tongued girl from Calcutta had the power of inflicting physical wounds with words. There was also a boy who could eat metals, and a girl whose fingers were so green that she could grow prize aubergines in the desert. There was also a conjoined twin with two bodies from a single head. The head could speak in two voices, one male, one female, and spoke every language and dialect spoken in the subcontinent. There lived a witch girl in Gir forest who had the power of healing anything by laying her hands and there was a wealthy tea planter's son who had the ability of being incapable of forgetting anything he heard or saw. A girl from Madras was able to fly higher than any bird by just closing her eyes and a boy from Benaras, could profess anything about future and clarify anything about past. Saleem too admits that he had to face such figures of grotesque proportions.

Saleem had attributed many adjectives to address himself. He calls him, "A cucumber nose, stainface, chinlessness, horn-temples, bandy legs, fingerloss, monk's treasure and a bad left ear"(MS, 418). Adam Sinai, the son of Saleem Sinai too has historical importance that he was born on the stroke of midnight on June 25, 1975 at the precise instant of India's arrival emergency. Saleem says:

He was the true great grandson of his great grandfather, but elephantiasis attacked him in the ears instead of the nose- because he was also the true son of Shiva and Parvati; he was elephant headed Ganesh. He was born with ears flapped so high and wide that they must have heard the shooting in Bihar and the screams of lathi charge dock workers in Bombay... A child who heard too much, and as a result never spoke, rendered dumb by a surfeit of sound. He was the possessor of a navel which chose to stick out instead of in. (MS, 587)



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**Hamlet: A Tragic/Transcending Hero**

*Aristotle's views on ideal tragic hero are rejected in modern times. Shakespeare modified tragedy and redefined the tragic hero, but the fundamental rules remained the same. Most of his tragedies were based on Aristotle's views and concept of ideal tragic hero. The play Hamlet is a tragedy because it ends in a feeling of pensive sadness. In all the tragedies the protagonist may not be a tragic one. The protagonist, Hamlet, has no tragic faults and behaves irrationally in order to take vengeance. Based on an examination of specific scenes from the play, we can deduce that he is neither a tragic nor a transcending hero. A transcending hero is anyone who goes beyond their context or limits, causing their own downfall by personal faults, without achieving their ultimate purpose. Keywords: Tragedy, Tragic flaw, Tragic hero, Aristotle concept of tragedy.*

In *Poetics*, Aristotle suggests that in tragedy, the tragic hero will most effectively evoke both our pity and terror. He is neither thoroughly good nor thoroughly bad but a mixture of both. The tragic effect will be stronger if hero is "better than we are", in the sense that he is of higher than ordinary moral worth. Such a man is exhibited as suffering a change in fortune from happiness to misery because of his mistaken choice of an action, to which he is led by his 'hamartia', his error or mistake of judgement or as it is often although misleadingly and less literally translated his tragic flaw. Hubris, an overabundance of self-confidence that causes a protagonist to ignore a divine warning or break an essential moral rule, was a popular type of hamartia in Greek tragedies. The play is classified as a tragedy because it concludes with a pensive sadness. The protagonist of all tragedies may or may not be tragic. Is the protagonist in Hamlet confronted with tragic situations? Hamlet, according to the majority of philosophers, is the ideal tragic hero, moulded in Aristotle's tragic hero concept. There are a few instances in the play that show Hamlet isn't a tragic figure.

Many critics believe that William Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, is the epitome of a tragic hero. A tragic hero can be defined as "a privileged, exalted character of high repute, who, by fate, suffers a fall from glory in to suffering" (Diyanni 7). Tragic heroes have high qualities than above the average person, but these qualities are not enough to save the hero from fate. Hamlet has some flaws like a tragic hero but it is not in a high means. Hamlet uses a villain-like character to respond to his fate on many occasions. It is a similar way one would expect from a non-heroic character. Hamlet has the potential to be a

tragic hero, his fellow characters in the play corrupt him and cause him to become evil, it unfit him to the title of tragic hero.

The play begins with the character Hamlet, who is depicted as a typical young boy grieving the death of his father. Horatio, Guildenstern, and Rosencrantz are among his friends. At the start of the play, the reader may presume Hamlet is a reasonable, rational man. At times he is intrigued by his father's ghost. Although he is devoted to his father's ghost instructions, he doubts the authenticity of the ghost's claims, fearing that it is the devil attempting to sway him. He devises a strategy to expose the facts about his father's death.

I'll have these players  
Play something like the murder of my father  
Before mine uncle. I'll observe his looks.  
I'll tent him to the quick. If he do blench,  
I know my course. (II.ii.573-577)

Hamlet's attempt to expose Claudius' guilt demonstrates both his quality and the self-control required to act in haste. This initial presentation, however, devolves from his virtue to corruption. The influence of other characters in the play leads to Hamlet's corruption. Hamlet's grief over his father's death, which was caused by Claudius, who assassinated King Hamlet. The rashly marriage of his mother to his uncle and brother of king Hamlet leads to depression for several months.

Tis not alone inky cloak, good mother  
Nor customary suits of solemn black,  
No, nor the fruitful river in the eye,  
Nor the dejected 'havior of the visage,  
Together with all forms, moods, shapes of grief,  
That can denote me truly. (I. ii. 77-83)

Hamlet knows that his grief is not only manifested in his physical presence, but also runs deep inside his soul. Claudius' mentality and selfishness lead him to commit suicide and believe that his life has no purpose.

Oh, that this too, too sullied flesh would melt,  
Thaw, and resolve itself into a dew,  
Or that the Everlasting had not fixed  
His canon 'gainst self-slaughter! (I. ii. 129-132)

Suicide along with murder is one of the forms of physical corruption. Hamlet's willingness to take his own life reveals the effect of Claudius's evil nature towards Hamlet. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern also damage Hamlet's virtuous character by betraying him as friends. They are the real coordinators

who gives spy work to the king Claudius and queen Gertrude. They do their duties without any regret. Hamlet finds that his best friends are working for the man he hates most and he began to realize that he cannot trust anyone, he becomes more emotionally corrupted.

Hamlet cannot be considered as a tragic hero not only because of his corruptive influence, but also of his response to the surrounding evil. The best example is murder of Polonius, who hides in the room of Gertrude to hear the conversation between Hamlet and his mother. Hamlet has no remorse or sympathy for his actions.

A man may fish with the worm  
That hath eat of a king,  
And cat of the fish that hath  
Fed of that worm. (IV. iii. 164)

Hamlet acts as a mad boy to make avenge with his uncle Claudius that makes him lack his moral values and he forget the lives of other humans which leads to the death of Polonius. Hamlet is even cruel to Ophelia than he is to his mother: "If though dost marry, I'll give thee this plague for thy dowry: Be though as chaste as ice, as pure as snow, thou shalt not escape calumny. Get thee to a nunnery, go: farewell" (III. i. 136-138). Hamlet tells his own girlfriend that she is unfit for marriage, and that she will have a bad reputation wherever she goes. Through his insults and the murder of his father Polonius makes Ophelia to become mad and leads to her suicide. The assassination of his girlfriend in an indirect manner transforms Hamlet's character into a villain.

Hamlet starts the play as a tragic hero, but his interactions with other characters transform him into a corrupt and immoral character. His evil actions, whether with Polonius, Gertrude, or Ophelia, further ingrain the corruption within him. He doesn't go through any tragic situations but he acts as a crazy man to make his avengement successful. At the end of the play, he completes all of his deeds and goes on to his grave. He no longer has any noble qualities, and he instead appears to be a villain with cruel and evil feelings, as well as a disregard for justice.

Throughout the play, Hamlet begins to lose his mind, which appears to be beneficial to him. Hamlet's haste is a major contributor to his issues, and it ultimately leads to his and his family's deaths. Hamlet is blind by his own thirst for vengeance. Overall, Hamlet was a noble hero whose intentions were justified. He was a hero whose worst enemy was his own personal shortcomings, despite the fact that he appeared to get mixed up in the way and managed to get himself into further troubles. Thus, Hamlet is a person who is before or beyond the range of limits and one who causes his downfall because of

his personal flaws but not without achieving his overall goal. He goes through the extreme levels of situations to avenge his uncle Claudius. He corrupts himself by killing Polonius and suicide of his own girlfriend Ophelia. Finally, he exacted his vengeance by killing himself. From all of these circumstances of the play, it is obvious that Hamlet is not a tragic hero.

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### **Rainbow Gets a Shade Brighte**

*Alexander Doty in his essay, Making Things Perfectly Queer: Interpreting Mass Culture (1993) says “cultural texts offer the potential for queer readings that focus on connotative rather than denotative meaning, that is, to find credible readings hidden in text that a culture of homophobia and heterosexism bars us from seeing” (17). Explorations into popular Malayalam cinema offers such possibilities although homosexuality and other alternate sexual patterns are shunned by the Malayalee psyche and cinema adopts the path that is least challenging. The dread of such ‘deviance’ is visible in the phobia such creative artistic expressions reveal in their works. The homophobia that percolates the Malayalee sensibility is perceivable in the film maker’s craft as well. This dread of homosexuality prompts the society to question homo social behavior and thus films about male bonding reveal the subtext of fear and suspicion the society exhibits when confronted by such relationships. This paper attempts to explore how the recent award winning film Moothon sets the pace for a change in the Malayalam cinema in bringing forth a non stereotyping of gender by by analysing the treatment of gay characters in other popular Malayalam movies. Keywords- gender, stereotyping, queer identity, quest, self- expression etc.*

Rithu (2009) and Mumbai Police (2013) have earlier depiction of queer characters that are positioned against heterosexual characters and binaries are built upon this framework of homosexual and heterosexual positions. “Queer is by definition whatever is at odds with the normal, the legitimate, the dominant. ... ‘Queer’ then, demarcated not a positivity but a positionality vis-à-vis the normative” (Halperin 62). Alienation of the ‘Other’ and misrepresentation of the queer community is strikingly visible in these films. Moreover, in the conceptualization of both the stories, gayness emerges as a pointer towards the weak-willed, morally susceptible characters. Rithu directed by Shyama Prasad narrates the story of three friends, named Sunny, Varsha and Sarat and the theme is that of betrayal. On a cursive reading of the film, Sunny’s identity as a homosexual seems to be of little importance but a closer understanding of the undercurrents of human behavior as revealed in the film unveil another story. Sunny is introduced in the film with boyfriends partying in Bangalore while Sarat is the subdued, home loving, straight guy from the US. The film builds upon this binary of a straight and a gay character. The straight guy is the innocent, morally upright person while the gay character is weak-willed, struggles with his insecurities, is jealous and emerges as the betrayer in the film. Gayness gets criminalized by association. Homosexuality is placed strategically in the narrative in a more recent film titled

Mumbai Police (2013). This film by Rosshan Andrews triggered several debates on the theme of homosexuality and the film deserves merit for

foregrounding a much tabooed topic. Homosexuality in this film is as Seidman opined “Constructing the homosexual as defiled justifies his/her exclusion from public life. Symbolically degrading the homosexual contributes to creating dominated gay selves – that is, individuals for whom shame and guilt are at the core of their sense of self; public invisibility becomes in part self-enforced” (353). The film unravels the story of male bonding in a disciplined male-centered world where three police men, Farhan, Anthony Moses and Aryan share a steady and strong friendship. Antony is designated to investigate the murder of Aryan and ends up losing memory following an accident moment before revealing the name of the murderer. Farhan assigns the new Antony, alienated from the old self, to complete the investigation. Mystery is unraveled when the new Antony discovers his gay self, and he is shattered and torn between his two selves. Antony finds that it was his old self that had killed his friend in order to maintain his façade as a macho police man. Here, the new Antony is unaware about his sexual inclination; after losing memory, Antony meets his gay partner (unaware of him being his sexual partner), only to feel awkward with his advancements and gestures.

The film fails to transcend the heteronormative tradition even though it bravely created a gay character and used a masculine prototype like Prithviraj (actor) for the role. Unlike other Malayalam films with gay themes or characters, this film subverts the portrayal of gayness as less than masculine. But the constant fear of discovery and the resulting emotions of insecurity results in aggression. Antony is a complex, fragmented person, torn by guilt and shame and is compelled to enact the macho male stereotype thereby alienating himself from his true self. His identity is to be established through performance rather than suggestions about his sexual inclination. The film suggests a self-analysis of a gay self from the perspective of his own heterosexual identity, as imagined by the director of the film. The subtext of homosexuality as deviance and as the cause of the hero’s miserable failure is subtly conveyed to the audience. His heart wrenching cry over his realization of his sexual preference reflects the society’s paranoia about homosexuality. Though the film maker shocks the sensibility of the viewer with a homosexual act visible in a shadowy opaque visual, the film maker plays on a diplomatic terrain. The tentative adventure into the domain of homosexuality may lead others to venture into this theme at a later stage. The movie falls short of any attempt towards breaking stereotypes and the narrative remains loyal to the hegemonic ideological construct.

*My Life Partner* released in 2014 employs a similar strategy in its appropriation of queer sexuality. Though the portrayal is sensitive and with empathy, the film maker fails to consider homosexuality as a normal human sexual preference. Richard and Kiran are two friends who are confronted with their deep passionate relationship. They live together and problems crop up with their decision to adopt a child. Richard, who is a bisexual, marries an

orphan, Pavithra and the situation is further complex when a pregnant Pavithra realizes the nature of the friendship between Kiran and her husband. Leela Iyer, a psychiatrist and social activist in the film, opines about the relationship: “This can’t be called real love: only an emotional bonding”. The film maker emphasizes that circumstances have played a major role in this relationship. In an interview given to *The Deccan Chronicle*, Padma Kumar, the film maker said: “Homosexuality is a human behavior like drinking or prostitution and has to be addressed ...” (“M’ Town Goes Offbeat”).

Since cinematic narrative upholds and normalizes heterosexuality, it plays a significant role in identity construction and, by the process of ‘Othering’ the homosexuals, film makers accelerate this process. Chandupottu (2005) and Odum Raja Adum Rani (2014) are films that delineate and deliberate upon the polymorphous structures of sexualities and sexual identities. Chandupottu by Lal Jose has an actor Dileep, of the mainstream cinema donning the role of a man confused about his sexual identity. His preference for a feminine self invites ridicule and his alienation from the community compels him to abandon his home land and his subsequent journey to another place, transforms him completely. The film reasserts the heteronormative tradition proscribed by the society and the hero returns home after having completed his period of exile when he makes a painful exploration and discovery of his masculine self. His identity is defined by the societal reactions in the film and compartmentalization of gender identities using classic stereotypes reveals the film maker’s desperate attempt to adhere to the popular notions of conventional sexual behavior patterns.

Moothon sets the pace for a change in the mainstream Malayalam cinema in, bringing forth a non- stereotyping of gender. A man stands in front of a mirror, his kohl-rimmed eyes alight with rapture but also brimming over with tears. This is the heart of Geethu Mohandas’ Moothon- a star crossed romance, tender, forbidden and heartbreakingly beautiful. Just like her debut film, *Liar’s Dice*, Geethu weaves her story around the quest for a family member, although things are more complex and layered here. The visual trajectory of film is equally as immersive as it moves all the way from the pristine, idyllic, and tranquil home in the Lakshadweep islands to the chaotic, violent, ruthless and ugly underbelly of Mumbai. The film follows Mulla, a teenager who reaches Kamathipura in search of his mysterious ‘moothon’ (elder brother); and the quest itself becomes a powerful motif behind defining both characters. Moothon, the person, in the initial parts is a myth, for Mulla, as well as the audience. The reasons for his brother leaving the island is known to him only through rumors, something to do with a broken heart. He has almost forgotten the elder one’s face. Even the photographs are unclear. Mulla asks his uncle and guardian Moosa, “Are these stories about him true?”. At this point we are not told about what he has heard. One gets a sense of déjà vu when the action shifts to Mumbai, specifically to Kamathipura, ‘exploring the underbelly of



the city.’ A familiar host of characters, from a ruffian known only as Bhai, to a sex worker, Rosy, make their appearance. But the script springs its series of surprises when one starts to get the feeling of heading down a trodden path. Moothon also speaks in two tongues- the local dialect of islands and Hindi.

The story possesses a non- linear structure wherein we also head back to Lakshadweep to get a look at the past life of Bhai aka Akbar, which sheds light on his present. These are best parts of the film, which throws up questions on identity and sexual orientation, and on how a conservative society violently clamps down on individuals who attempt to break out of the mould. Amid this, plays out an achingly beautiful love story involving mute Amir. In a scene, the two gay lovers, Akbar and Amir, is seen silently laying in a lake, illuminated by the full moon. Soon, like children, they play in the water, hold each other, sing together, almost as if looking into each other’s souls in those few moments. The chemistry between them is palpable. The love story between Akbar and Amir- one a religious fanatic and another, a mute person trying to find inner voice, is the beating heart of gangster relationship drama, Moothon. It’s as real as any love story that would see in both Malayalam and Hindi cinema, but without unnecessary stereotypes. From Kapoor and Sons (2016) to the recent Ek Ladki Ko Dekha Toh Aisa Laga (2019), never has commercial Hindi cinema been able to really address the subject of alternative sexuality without being loud and overdramatic about it. Malayalam commercial cinema has altogether steered clear of the subject until recently. For decades, Malayalam films have obeyed patriarchal social structures by sticking to the ‘working man-homemaker woman’ stereotype and promoting the idea of a ‘perfect family’ through many of their stories. Even their superstars have always been male actors.

The film is a metaphorical inner quest to find oneself by facing up to life’s vagaries. It is about “the sense of identity and crises within”. However, at the heart of Moothon, lies an unforeseen, uncommon and extraordinarily tender love. Akbar is on the top of things, be it in expressing the ecstasy in finding an abundance of love amidst a shoal of fish or resorting to the religious/ cultural practice of self-flagellation to express the pain of surreptitious, forbidden passion. The only option for the visibly broken and tormented Akbar is but to run away from home and also from himself. The film left the audience wondering about the ambiguous end adding audiences’ curiosity by putting primacy on their individual interpretation of it than imposing any given “reading”. Shot in Agatti and Bangaram islands, it had the Torontonians inquisitive about Lakshadweep itself. Not just when it comes to beautiful sun, sand and sea, but also the language and culture Ms. Mohandas brings alive.

The brief yet intense romance in the film makes most heteronormative relationships pale in comparison the narrative deftly navigates the labyrinth of sexual orientation, gender identity and self- expression. It captures the instant

spark, the blossoming romance, and the sexual tension that burns like wildfire when Akbar falls deliriously in love with Amir. Theirs is an affair that grows in the shadow of secrecy and intolerance, and Akbar finds it both euphoric and terrifying. Ms. Mohandas jostles with an interesting idea- that of a rare fluidity when it comes to matters of gender and sexuality. “The idea was not to see gender, but love”, says Mohandas. For her, it wasn’t about titillating or being provocative, but pushing the boundaries of cinema both in terms of content and aesthetics.

Apart from the recent *Njan Marykutty*, Malayalam cinema has mostly treated the LGBTQIA community with casual disrespect, very often resorting to stereotypes. *Moothon*, on the other hand, has characters that are startlingly real and full of life. Mulla is depicted as gender- fluid. It is interesting how some mundane scenes like, Mulla looking through photographs, or another involving the forced application of lipstick on young Mulla by a group of boys, shown earlier comes back again in the final scenes. Mulla, the then young female protagonist, too struggles with being identified as a girl. The transwoman she meets in Mumbai named Lateef, encourages her to dress like one and embrace her real self. In one scene, she shows Mulla the mirror and asks her to look deep within. Though they share just a few minutes of screen time together, viewers know that there is a relationship that almost resembles one of a mother and daughter, but addresses a personal conflict that often goes unspoken. Lateef, despite the limited screen space, has a strikingly real persona as a trans person nursing deep wounds.

The film outright challenges the stark, traditionalist binaries of mainstream Malayalam cinema. It fearlessly plays with gender identity, but also holds on to the vulnerability of grappling with one’s queer identity and how it intersects with other facets of characters’ lives. Like most lovers, Akbar and Amir are trapped in a power struggle with each other, in which one wishes to fulfill the relationship, while the other chooses to surrender to the society around him. This is the point in the film that changes both their lives for the worse and the love story of Akbar and Amir is told with a simmering sensuality that at no point becomes absurd. Also, Akbar’s distress at grappling with his faith and his deep love for another man is another personal yet political dilemma that Mohandas chooses to retain as one of the main points of tension in the film. *Moothon* has enough depth in it for us to dive deep, and come back with material to ponder.

“Malayalam may have a string of celebrated screen romances, but there isn’t a single film that does justice to same-sex love. What makes *Moothon* an overwhelming film for us is the journey of Akbar and Amir. They communicate through unsaid words and furtive glances that make sense and speak volumes. Their chemistry is so very organic and realistic, we can easily relate to every moment of their love story,” says Jijo Kuriakose, artist,

documentary film-maker and LGBTQ+ activist. Be it in the conservative island or the seediest part of the urban jungle, Akbar's solitude remains, making the film intensely personal and political at same time. A film that insults and mocks the LGBTQ+ community reveals the perspective and sensibility of the filmmaker, and we need to break the social conditioning. Moothon, thus, definitely is an attempt to disturb the comfortable.

Same-sex marriages are big news, and attract short-lived fanfare. The LGBTQ+ community members are yet to get visibility in society and workplaces. Nived and Rahim would probably be the first gay couple from the State to get married after the Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court of India decriminalized Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code in September 2018. The section, introduced in the British era, had made sexual activities against the 'order of nature' illegal. The section, dealing with unnatural offences, prescribed a punishment of 10 years and fine for those who "voluntarily has carnal intercourse against the order of nature with any man, woman or animal." In its epoch-making judgment, a five-member Bench of the apex court decriminalized consensual sex between adults of same-sex. The law is unfair to same-sex couples, says Nikesh, pointing out the difficulties in entering the name of their life partners as their legal successors or survivors. Expanding the family is another issue face by same-sex couples. Yet, in the midst of all the discrepancies, the rainbow gets a shade brighter, the journey ahead, though, is no walk in the park.

As Mulvey ("Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema."837-838) asserts, in classical cinematic trajectories, the pleasure in looking is always gendered where there are always male and female points of identification. Cinema activate as well as attract certain desiring relationship and concepts, one of the most prominent of which is the binary of masculine and feminine. Halberstam (*Queer Time and Space*, 84) has taken this into more detail and claimed that gendered characters in a film play their part within an extremely limited and bounded variation in line with the gendered spectators who have already consented to the limited gender roles. "Entertainment in many ways is the name we give to fantasies of differences ...as much as viewers want to believe in alternatives, the mainstream film assumes that they also want to believe that the choices that they made...offer the best possible options" (Halberstam, 84). This could be applied to the tropes adopted by the Malayalam films mentioned earlier. Though films like *Mumbai Police* and *Rithu* has queer presence, thereby presenting alternatives, the queer characters remain only to conform the appropriateness of heterosexual choice. Hence by providing a queer inclusive cultural texts masquerading as a portrayal of alternative sexuality, these films question the homosexual tropes, by making way for the normalization of heterosexual relationships.

What we require is as Foucault writes in “The Gay Science”: “... is a radical break, a change in orientation, objectives, and vocabulary”. (as quoted by Diana Fuss, “Theorizing Hetero- and Homo Sexuality”. 351) While the cinematic representations of queer have increased in volume, the concern lies with the sexual politics implicitly played within these texts. They speak voluminously of the cultural environment and often fail to apprehend the complex issues of identity and acceptance faced by the queer community. The homophobia exhibited by the community and the normalizing of heterosexuality is aptly mirrored in these films as well, notwithstanding a couple or more films that tread a path of resistance against the accepted sexual norms.

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**Tracing Dalit Identity in S. Joseph's "Identity Card"  
and ArunKamble's "Which Language Should I Speak?"**

*The paper attempts to understand the relation between identity and culture, real identity and imposed identity through the analysis of the poems of Dalit literature; S. Joseph's "Identity Card" and ArunKamble's "Which Language Should I Speak?". The emotions are well expressed through the poems. This paper focuses on the mental anguish of Dalits and the social attitudes against them. Keywords: Identity, Inequality, Class system, Dalit Consciousness, Existentialism, Colonized and colonizer*

In India, the caste system has pushed the lower caste to the bottom of the social, economic, and political chains. They are referred to as Scheduled Castes under India's Constitution. Through the legal measures the Constitution have tried to end their discrimination and marginalization. Laws have been passed to stop embarrassing practices enforced upon Dalits in India and the practice of untouchability is also banned. There were positive actions taken in the form of reservation and provisions for government jobs to ensure their social and economic development. All the measures, like above mentioned, have taken for the social, political, economic and the cultural upliftment of the Dalits. But the question is about the attitude of the society towards Dalits and their attitude towards the society? Even though Dalits are protected and cared through the benefit of the law, are they really feeling equal in society? This research study attempts to comprehend the Dalit identity issue in the modern world by analysing two Dalit poems, S. Joseph's "Identity Card" and ArunKamble's "Which Language Should I Speak?".

The word 'Dalit' is derived from Sanskrit word 'Dalita', which means 'oppressed'. In Indian socio-cultural context they were considered as untouchables and below Brahmin, Kshatriya and Vaishya. They were also called as 'Chandala' or 'Avarna' in the ancient period. Narasimha Mehta and Mahatma Gandhi referred them as 'untouchable' or 'Harijan' during 20<sup>th</sup> century. The word 'Harijan' means the people of God. The official term used for this community is Scheduled Caste. 'Dalit' is a self-chosen word which is derived from Sanskrit and Marathi. This word is also used to include all the deprived and oppressed of India (Mandavkar).

Dalit literature which deals with the oppressed according to the Indian caste system. Dalits have a history of being lived in sorrow and subjugation under the high – classes of Indian society. So they were treated as marginalized,

downtrodden and subaltern for centuries. But because of the efforts of many social reformers like Mahatma JyothibaPhule, Dr.Ambedkar and Mahatma Gandhi these people were recognized and raised. Dalit literature had also played a prominent role in uplifting the Dalit community. Dalit literature has been originated from the womb of Dalits Pain. The Dalit literature is fighting against the inhuman system which was imposed on the Dalits. Dalit consciousness is the base for Dalit literature which is different from the consciousness of other writers.

Dalit consciousness is well portrayed through S. Joseph's : "Identity card" and ArunKamble's "Which Language Should I Speak?" In both poems the speakers are very much confused with their identity. In the poem 'Which Language Should I Speak?'the speaker is confused about what language to choose.

Picking through the Vedas  
His top-knot well-oiled with ghee,  
My Brahmin teacher tells me,  
'You idiot, use the language correctly!'  
Now I ask you,  
Which language should I speak? (Kamble8-13)

He was asked to speak as it is used in the family by his grandfather but in school the teacher who is a Brahmin asks him to speak as it is thought in the school that is standardised language. The problem of real identity and given identity perplexes the speaker. His real identity conflicts with the given identity. The upper class determines what to do and what not to. Social standards are implemented by the upper class. So being oneself considered to be a stupidity in the society. As a colonizer-colonized relationship the colonizer determines what is apt for the colonized. Thus, the naturality is being uprooted. The question of the speaker also becomes a question of existence. In which way one can exist? Is it by choosing the real identity or the given identity? The poem "Identity card" can be seen as writing back to the modern society. The poem is originally written in Malayalam but it is titled in English as "dentity card". The poem expresses the inner conflict of the speaker. "I noticed, she said returning my card: the account of your stipend is entered there in red". (Joseph 11-14)

Being a student of a school the identity card, which is supposed to refer the identity itself, becomes a matter of discrimination. The attitude of the modern society towards the Dalits is well portrayed in the poem and the deep pain suffered by the Scheduled Case in the modern society. In the poem, till his identity is revealed, he was in love with a girl. But when she discovers the account of stipend which is marked in red, she leaves him. Freedom of the boy is curtailed by the prejudice of the society. The poem clearly depicts how the

poor suffers the discriminatory attitude from the society. The problem of real identity and given identity is also clear here. The change in the attitude of the society is necessary to accept the person as he/she is.

These days I never look at  
a boy and a girl lost in themselves.  
They will depart after a while.  
I won't be surprised even if they unite.  
Their identity cards  
Won't have scribblings in red. (Joseph 15-20)

The continuous experiences of rejection and discrimination may force the Dalits to accept their current situation as their fate. They may limit themselves mentally and satisfy with their present way of life. In the poem the speaker loses his faith in love and explains the perishing nature of love relationship. The change in the attitude of the speaker happened because of the bitter experiences he had in his life. That is discrimination from the society. The poem "identity card" depicts the modern means of discrimination in a modern institution. Kerala state is famous for its educational advancements. But in the poem the boy who is a student in one of the schools in Kerala is discriminated based on his caste. Education removes the darkness of ignorance. But reading the poem one can understand that it is not so. People are acquiring more knowledge but they are not becoming wise. The burden of old practices still influences the modern society.

The world is considered to be the right of all. Every human being in the world has the equal right for everything. In every aspect: economically, politically, socially and culturally the rights are equal for all. Today in India the caste discrimination is uprooted. But it is not taken away from the mindset of the society which results in discriminating the other. One who is a Dalit is not his/her choice. But the negative attitude of the society shatters them psychologically. Identity is a mark of one's existence. So, society should become a free platform where everyone can live with their real identity without any crisis.

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**The Cultural impact and Human Struggle for Social Existence:  
Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart***

*The paper aims at introducing an insight into the nature of cultural conflict as depicted in Chinua Achebe's Things Fall Apart. This study shows how the African black culture represented by Ibo tribe comes into disagreement with the white one imposed by British imperialism. The greatness of Chinua Achebe lies in the vivid description of place which is Nigeria and people who are the native Africans and how he was able to show the inner conflict that took place inside the major character's, like Okonkwo, in their pursuit of mere existence within a declining culture in the face of a tyrannical white one. The conflict has two aspects; an internal which can be traced within the same culture among its members and sometimes inside a specific character, on the other hand an external conflict took place between two cultures the African and the British one. The pursuit of mere existence is the dominant theme within this novel. Keywords: Culture, Racism, Existence*

It may be argued that Okonkwo's pursuit of existence represents the African culture itself in its endeavor for survival in the face of a domineering British one. Despite the fact that Okonkwo dies at the end, but it's quite evident that the African culture continued its struggle for existence in the hearts and minds of the new generation. The entire search for existence whether on individual level or cultural level. This paper is an attempt to facilitate this knowing and understanding.

The culture in Africa is a mixture of countries with various tribes that each has their own unique characteristic from the continent of Africa. African culture is expressed in its arts and crafts, folklore and religion, clothing, cuisine, music and languages. "Cultural analysis concentrates upon the political dynamics of contemporary culture its historical foundations, defining traits, conflicts and contingencies"(Moises 5). Expressions of culture have different cultural diversities. Cultural Studies is interested in the production and consumption of culture. "The production and consumption of culture is linked with matters of class, economy and representation. It is also linked with power and identity"(Nayar 7).

Chinua Achebe was a Nigerian novelist, poet, and critic who is regarded as the dominant figure in African literature. His first novel and magnum opus *Things Fall Apart* (1958); occupies a pivotal place in African literature, and remains the most widely studied, taught and read African novel. The style of Achebe's



fiction draws heavily on the oral tradition of the Igbo people. *Things Fall Apart* emphasizes the interdependency of the masculine and feminine. Another hallmark of Achebe's style is the use of proverbs, which often illustrate the values of the rural Igbo tradition. Achebe's goals cannot be realized by a simple return to pre-colonial African age. He believes African society has been irrevocably changed by the colonial era.

Before Achebe wrote *Things Fall Apart*, the novels that had been written about Africa and Africans were written by Europeans. Mostly, the European writings described Africans as uncivilized and uneducated persons. Achebe was most successful writer of the lot because he "has been critical of the role of Christianity in Africa, his criticism has been regarded generally as moderate and his creative work has won almost universal praise for his objectivity and detachment (Sharma 85). *Things Fall Apart* focuses on the early experience of colonialism as it occurred in Nigeria in 1800's, from the first days of contact with the British to widespread British administration. Achebe is interested in showing Ibo society in the period of transition when rooted traditional values are put in conflict with an alien and more powerful culture that will tear them apart. Achebe paints a vivid picture of Ibo society both before and after the arrival of white man, and avoids the temptation to idealize either culture.

In the novel *Things Fall Apart*, Achebe presents a different perspective of life. He accomplishes this by introducing to us an African tribe named Ibo. There are tremendous differences between these people and the Europeans at that time. That is precisely why Achebe wrote this novel. He wrote it so that reader can learn about his beloved African culture. He wants to impress all of those who may misperceive his native African culture. The order of the Ibo society is disputed with the appearance of the white man in Africa and with the introduction of white religion Okonkwo, who is looked highly upon by people is unable to adapt to the changes that accompany colonialism. He tries to live Ibo life, however the arrival of the white man into his society causes him to fall apart.

In the end of the story Okonkwo, in frustration, decapitates an employed of the British, then commits suicide which is a sin against the tradition to which he had calling to. The conflict in the novel, vested in Okonkwo, derives from the series of crushing blows which are leveled at traditional values by an alien and more powerful culture causing, in the end tradition of society falling apart. In *Things Fall Apart*, Achebe recreated the tragic consequences that took place due to clash between the Ibo society and the white man. By using a character such as Okonkwo, he showed how even the strong willed people of the Ibo society were unable to overcome the British influences.

Some of the conflicts contained religion, social life, education and other. The Ibo people have a very different religious life style than the British people.

The Ibo believed in polytheism, the worship of many gods. This is how religious the people of the tribe are. When the Christian religion introduced, many people became interested in new religion. The most interested of the tribe were the people with the least titles. The British told the Ibo people that worship of polygamy is senseless and that there is only one god. “your gods are not alive and cannot do any harm,” Replied the white man. “There are pieces of wood and stone”(Achebe 105).

Achebe describes in his novel the falling apart of the African culture. The Christian missionaries in the novel, Mr. Brown and Rev. Smith, are major of the *Things Fall Apart*. The novel emphasizes the importance of this impact on the Ibo by the European autocracy. Through the representation of the Igbo peoples way of life and their reaction to the colonizing forces that enter their villages, Achebe presents themes of identity as a group of African people with a past and heritage to be honored. This reoccurring theme of identity in the sense of African people can be traced back to Achebe’s background as a native of the Igbo people in Africa.

Today, many legal efforts are initiated to tackle the problems of discrimination and subjugation of the marginalized, and to establish equality and justice in the society. All humans deserve equal dignity irrespective of their caste, class, religion, creed and gender. The study of works, fiction and no-fiction, discussing such themes would promote the understanding of the causes, course and consequences of these issues. This understanding would enable people to respect and adhere to the concept of universal brotherhood.

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**Varanattu Narayanakurup's Contribution  
in the Field of Mudi yettu and Kalamezhuth**

*The vast majority of the ritual arts of Kerala are resplendent with all the elements of theatre.. Mudi yettu and Kalampattu, a traditional ritual performance of Kerala that created feelings like fear, trust and bliss in the hearts of every believer. It is ritual cum art performance include music, dance and theatre evolved at Kali temples on the mother goddess. It's a village festival celebrating rich harvest, mudi yettu is thins offering to Mother Nature. It narrates the legend of Bhadrakali and Darika, popular all over Kerala combines the local and Brahmanical influences. Varanattu Narayana Kuruppu is a one of the best and outstanding mudi yettu performing artist. He dedicated his life for this ritual. In this paper I have discussed the contribution Varanattu Narayana Kuruppu in the field of Mudi yettu. The dance of Bhadrakali is provocative, powerful and which gives as immense power into the people.*

The ritual theatre of 'Mudi yettu' is a typical ritual art form for the analysis of the complex nature of the performance traditions of Kerala. In this art form all the aspects of theatre-performance, actor formation, the concept of the audience, make-up, costume and all other externals of theatre are inherent. This ritual is conducted to appease the Goddess 'Kali' residing in the sacred groves.

Mudi yettu is a ritual dance drama from Kerala based on the mythological tale of a battle between the goddess Kali and the demon Darika. It is a community ritual in which the entire village participates. After the summer crops have been harvested, the villagers reach the temple in the early morning on an appointed day. Mudi yettu performers purify themselves through fasting and prayer, then draw a huge image goddess Kali, called as *Kalam*, on the temple floor with coloured powders, where in the spirit of the goddess is invoked. This prepares the ground for the lively enactment to follow, in which the divine sage Narada importunes Shiva to contain the demon Darika, who is immune to defeat by mortals. Shiva instead commands that Darika will die at the hand of the goddess Kali. Mudi yettu is performed annually in 'Bhagavati Kavus', the temple of the goddess, in different villages along the rivers Chalakkudy Puzha, Periyar and Moovattupuzha. Mutual cooperation and collective participation of each caste in the ritual instills and strengthens common identity and mutual bonding in the community. Responsibility for its transmission lies with the elders and senior performers, who engage the younger generation as apprentices during the course of the performance.

Mudiyettu serves as an important cultural site for transmission of traditional values, ethics, moral codes and aesthetic norms of the community to the next generation, thereby ensuring its continuity and relevance in present times.

The season for the performance of Mudiyettu spans from January to May. But it is performed during the other months also as an offering to the temple. The fact that these performances are held at *kavus* near fields indicated the connection of the performance with ancient fertility rituals. Now days, Mudiyettu is performed as a theatre form all over the country and abroad, without any regard for the season or space of traditional performance.

Mudiyettu is usually performed by the members of Kuruppu and Marar communities, who are generally placed low in the hierarchy of caste structure in Kerala. Here, we also need to understand the caste dynamics in Kerala. The varna system get introduced to Kerala after the migration of Brahmins into the state. After the arrival of Brahmins redefined the already existing social fabric and introduced the aspects of the four tier caste equation. They also, in turn, appropriate the already existing ritual performance and incorporate into them the elements of vedic religion.

Kallattu, Varnattu, Keezhillam, Pazhur are the important families who have the responsibility of performing Mudiyettu in various temples. There are in all nine groups who perform Mudiyettu across Kerala. Previously various *kavus* were also the tradition of a guru, the teacher, imparting the knowledge about the performance to a set of disciples. But these tradition have been diluted or become obsolete over the years. Also, previously, a paltry sum, a cloth and some food grains were the remuneration was called *arangupanam*. The term comes from *Arangu* (stage) and *panam*(money) and is literally translated as the money for staging; revealing the theatricality of the performance. The families and groups who traditionally perform Mudiyettu had specific space for the practice of the ritual. This space is imbued with sacred significance and it is called *Kalari* in malayalam. Before the performance a list of sixty articles is handed over to those who managed the *kavu*. These sixty items encompass all the properties and costumes needed for the performance of Mudiyettu. A group performing the ritual includes sixteen peoples. Eight of these sixteen people are in charge of the accompanying music and percussions and the rest are the actual performances.

The ancient rituals associate with the performance of Mudiyettu show definite connections with the fertility rituals. In ancient times, the rituals started in the fields with the gathering of newly breed grains. Then the festivities begin with a team of devotees circling the village. The team visits each and every house in the village and the households contribute a measure of food grains. Thus, the fertility ritual forms the corner-stone of the performance and transforms the performance of the rituals.

The ritual performance of Mudiyettu starts with the drawing of the figure of the mother goddess using various colours. Before this there is the ritual of *Kottiyirakkal*. This announces the performance to the entire village and is a characteristic feature of many of the ritual performances of Kerala. Mudiyettu centers on the transformation of the drawing of mother goddess into a divine being. The inanimate drawing is brought alive the prayers and rituals observance carried out by the performer. This visual transformation is the crux of the performance. Kalamezhuthu or the drawing of the visual representation of Kali and Kalampattu a musical performance describing the mother, are central to this transformation. The drawing begins even days before the actual performance. This may even be forty days before the staging.

Another legend describes the birth of Kalamezhuthu and Kalampattu and those who perform the rituals. The enraged mother who has killed Daksha was wrecking havoc on the universe and by Shiva's orders a figure of the mother was made in the forest. Seeing her own drawing, Bhadrakali turned benevolent and named the artist Kuruppus. The artists held on to her feet and sang songs in her praise. Those songs came to be known as *Kalampattu*.

Mudiyettu involves only the drawing of Bhadrakalikalam. The process starts in the morning. The space for drawing is marked out and the drawing begins. The rough drawing is made marking the basic figures. The Bhadrakali figure needs the minimum of sixteen hands. Some artist drew only four hands. If they are drawing a big figure, they draw sixty sixty-four hands and they are represented as holdings sixty four arms. Each hand having a defining Ayudh or weapon in hand. Roughly half was in waiting. Usually the big figures are drawn by marrars. Kuruppans and Thiyyattun is draw similar kind of Bhadrakali kalams. We should consider the Kuruppans as the experts in drawing these figures. They never use any special materials for drawing and they still follow the ancient modes of drawing the figure of the mother goddess, as Chelattu Achyuthan points out. Pulluvakalams lacked in beauty, though they are ancient. The *Thottampattu* called Kalampattu is central to the conjuring up of the figure mother goddess. Kalampattu describes her entire form. The songs are accompanied by a range of instruments specific to Kerala. They are *chenda, Nanduni, Itakka* and *Ilathalam*. The description of the entire form of Kali is central to the song sung by Kuruppans. The same element is present in the performance of Mudiyettu. But the songs sung by Kuruppans are more beautiful and evocative. Seeing the blood shot figure of angry Kali, a troubled siva asks some Kuruppu, one good at drawing, to draw her picture. Kali on her way comes across the picture of her violent self. Every ritual performance is a magic world of colour. The colours are accentuated by the light emanating from the sacred lamp, rhythms and songs. They inspire a heightened sense of devotion and the colours become evocative and poetic.

Now the actual performance begins. A lamp is lighted from the lamp placed on the kalam. The performers ask the spectator's permission before lighting the lamp. The belief is that by lighting the lamp from the lamp on kalam, the soul of the mother goddess is transferred on to the stage.

Mudiyettu has all the elements common to ancient ritualistic folk performances: stage, characters, music, instruments, involvement of the spectators and it combines all the element of traditional Indian acting style- the performance of Mudiyettu works within the prescriptions of *Natyashastra*, the tenants of ancient Indian acting methodology, even though it is a folk perform once. From this one may assume that the ancient Indian acting traditions had fold influences and vice-versa.

Lord shiva, Nradaha, Bhadrakali, Dharikan, Koyimbidarar, Khandakarnan, and Kooli are the main actors in this performance. The performance is divided into eight parts:

Shiva Naradha Samvadham  
Journey of Dharika  
Entry of Bhadrakali  
The entry of Koyimbidarar  
Journey of Kooli  
Fight between Kali and Dharika  
Taking the crown  
The crown is offered to Bhoothaganas

The transactions and transformations of the various forms of ritual in the changing world of religion and material culture in pre-modern kerala constitute an almost unexplored field of historical research. The extent anthropological, folkloristic studies on kalamezhuthu are, one way or other, highly dependent on contemporary sources of data and evidence, and almost exclusively concentrate on the colour-pattern, or the craft and design, or the ritual practices of the kalamezhuthu in a macro analytical way. Some studies seem to imagine and locate the ethnic composition of the performers of kalamezhuthu. Kalamezhuthu has been imagined and interpreted as involving a highly developed sense of abstract design and craftsmanship and as showcasing the artistic skills of individual artist and as manifestation of individual pursuit of art. These peripheral studies have rejected the historicity of the art form and its religious roots. The folkloristic ways of analysis and interpretation of kalamezhuthu largely ensure the perpetuation of the colonial perception of society and the pre-modern social relations of Kerala.

Kalamezhuthu represents a religious and symbolic tradition of four-drawing of various forms of deities in kerala. It is derived from the Tamil kalam meaning area for dramatic or gymnastic exhibitions. The kalam in the sangam texts

indicated several cultic occasions such as vilakkalam, kuttaratukalam, pulavukkalam, porkkalam, veriyattukalam and urrukkalam. It is the first stage of the transformation of a geographical space in to the cultic context of human activities, as seen in literary evidence in south India. The term kalam is mentioned earlier as an area for gymnastic exhibitions and threshing floor in medieval south Indian society. The same meanings are also used for the term Kalari. In sometimes the cultic tradition of kalam and kalamezhuthupattu appear in the medieval documents associated with the kalari(war deities) of the Natuvazhi swarupams, and land owning sthani nayars and warriors in Kerala.

Kalamezhuthu is the preparatory initial stage of the ritual, during which, coloured pictures of serpents (sarppakkalam) are made using powders of various colours from easily available natural material. One among the pulluva acts as the chief priest for the ritual and through out this ritual he is assisted by a group of helpers called the paniyalukal. These paniyalukal are girls or women from the family of the people who owns or manage the grove and intends to conduct the ritual; their number would purify themselves by abstaining from all worldly pleasures for 41 days, and on the 41st day, the ritual begins. Designs generally used for sarppakkalam (dedicated to serpent god) are Ashtanagakkalam, Nagakanyakkalam, Sudarsanakkalam, Santhathikkalam, Nagarajakkalam, Nagakanyakkalam and Ananthasayanam. The components of Astanaga (8serpents), Ananthan, vasuki, Gulikan, Sankupaalan, Thakshakan, Mahapadman, padman and karkkodakan are considered divine serpents protecting our earth. The Astanaga are again classified into Brahmana (ananthan and vasuki), kshatriya (Gulikan and sankupaalan), vasya (Thakshakan and Mahapadman), soodra (padman, karkkodakan), employing the nomenclature used in the caste system. Representation of serpents of all caste in a single sarppakkalam is said to indicate the cultural unity of the society. Also there 8 serpents are designed in a highly tangled form, indicating that none can live without the others as all are interconnected, but having their own roles.

The Kalam is drawn either in front of the sacred grove or in a near by temporary structure with thatched roof. The festival site is cleaned, decorated with leaves of fig tree, mango, areca palm, betel, young unopened leaves of toody palm or coconut palm, young unopened inflorescence of areca palm. The floor is waxed with a coating of mud, on which designs are made with panchavarna podi, consisting different colours made of natural materials. The colours are yellow, white, red, green, and black, representing the five natural elements of this universe when the kalam is ready, the nilavilakku (the traditional oil lit brass lamps) is lit, marking the beginning of the ritual. With this starts pooja, the process of invoking the serpent gods in to the kalam. Invocation is done by silent prayers and floral offerings along with water. For this, only selected flowers and leaves; flowers of thechi, leaves of thulasi,

flowers of thamara and leaves of koovalam are used. This is followed by offering of (noorum palum) to the gods invoked in the design followed by tender coconut, mature coconut, raw rice, fruits, and milk.

The serpent gods who have been invoked in the sarppakkalam, are supposed to have been satisfied by the offerings and are now supplicated with devotional songs to get their blessings. The songs, pulluvapattu are sung by the husband and wife of pulluva who also plays certain musical instruments (kudam, veena and ilathalam). Now the helpers will stand with the tender inflorescences of areca palm in their hands, concentrating in the songs and the kalam. In the limited light of the nilavilakku, the song and the typical drumbeat transform these helpers to a hypnotized state. With this, they slowly swing their body and dance like a snake, and at climax, they rub off the kalam. This hypnotized dance is called the thullal or pambu thullal. The same procedure of kalamezhuthu, pattu, thullal will continue for the whole period in the morning as well as in the afternoon. In the sarpa kavu owned by Namboothiri, worship involves another vedic ritual called sarpa bali, where looked raw rice is offered for all serpent gods of the universe with manthras and thantra. As atonement for killing snakes, serpent or cutting or damaging plants in the grove, another ritual called *payasa homam* is performed, where the *payasam* (sweet pudding) is offered in the holy fire (homam). It is believed that agni (the fire god of the homam) acts as a messenger for all gods and goddesses and the highest way of pleasing gods and goddess is by performing homam. Thus kalamezhuthu is altogether absent in the serpent worship of the namboothiri and if at all, it is performed in an entirely different way. Here, people belonging to the kuruppu community perform the kalamezhuthu pattu; these people perform Bhagavathy pattu and sarpa pattu in the sacred groves of the Namboothiri. Though Bhagavathy pattu is performed occasionally, sarpapattu has not been performed in the sarpa kavu for the past 30-40 years due to the Non-willingness of the performers. This is because the general belief goes that while making designs of serpent gods, if any mistake is made, he will lose one year from his life. As the women members of the traditional Namboothiri community are prohibited from public appearance and moving freely in public, the thullal part is altogether absent.

From the first day of the month of vrischika to the 11th day of Dhanu of Malayalam era, decorated floors called kalams were drawn and along with it selected song praising kali were sung. The kalams were drawn in the northern parts of Bhadrakali temples under a temporary shed called panthal decorated with bunches of flowers, young coconut leaves, red flowers etc. insert in the kalam is the picture of Bhadrakali is plain outline first, growing with days, in hands, weapons in hands, canine like teeth etc. expressive of roudra and bhayanaka rasas. When the drawing of kalam is completed usually by 7 pm, singers called karuppanmar sang Bhadrakali songs, to the accompaniment of the musical instrument called *Nanthuni* and *Elathalam* and *veekkan* etc. for



rhythm. Special poojas mark the occasion, following the appearance of the supposed representative of kali, called *velichappadu*, fully dressed and equipped, who bows before the goddess, begins to dance in a particular way and makes oracular utterances with sword in hand. The dancing of the *velichappadu* follows a fixed pattern. After the dance and the *kavutheendal* or *thullal*, the kalam is wiped off using tender coconut leaves.

Varanattu Narayana Kurupp is a contemporary Mudi yettu performing artist. He is belonging to the Varanattu Kuruppu family of traditional performing artists of Mudi yettu, based in Oratti in the Thrissur district of Kerala. Narayana Kurupp has expertise in the other facets of mudi yettu as well, such as kalampattu, chutti kuthal and kalikoppu making. He also is an expert in the kalamezhuthu art. He has performed Mudi yettu enactments, engaged in the art of kalamezhuthu making as well as kalam pattu, in more than 1500 stages within and outside Kerala. He won several awards.

Varanattu Narayana kuruppu was born in the year 1944 March 16 and brought up in a well known varanattu kizhakke family traditionally performing folklore arts such as mudi yettu and kalamezhuthu, as their family heritage. At the age of 12 he began his training under the mentorship of his own uncle Late Sri Rama kurupp, a well known figure in the same field. In 1959 at the age of 15, Narayana kurupp gave his debut playing the role of Darika.

He has also registered a *kala sangham* (performing troupe) known as the *Kizhakke Varanattu Mudi yettu Kala Sangham*, under his leadership, teaching newcomers in the Mudi yettu and kalamezhuthu arenas systematically. He has also authored a book completely on mudi yettu, on the basis of his knowledge and experience that he accessed thus far.

In 2010, Mudi yettu, the dance drama performance ritual tradition of Kerala was inscribed in the representative list of intangible cultural heritage of humanity by UNESCO. Kizhakke varanattu mudi yettu sangham was founded to preserve, develop and further propagate this ritual tradition. The invocation is an intuitive manual created to disseminate this precious tradition to the common people without losing its essence and its worth by this group, as prescribed by UNESCO as well as the *Central Sangeet Natak Academi*. The most significant element of mudi yettu is the invocation of goddess Kali. The notion behind this is the invocation of good to demolish the evil, just like there is an invocation in any art form, mudi yettu consists of the appearance of several characters; Narada, Darikan and kooli are also invoked in addition to kali in this art form. Through this scheme of 'The Invocation' the Varanattu group members as well as their head and the eldest member of the varanattu family. I.e. varanattu narayana kurupp is dedicated sincerely to popularize and globalize mudi yettu.

According to him, the ritualistic art forms of kalamezhuthu (writing the picture of goddess kali in this art form, using naturally synthesized colour powders), devotional songs and mudiyettu, which are performed completely in dedication to goddess kali. All his experiences have been enriching. If the rest of the artists are as devoted to this art form they would also have only elevating experiences and his life is a proof of that. He prays that only good befalls on everyone a well. His childhood was filled with poverty. It was poverty which led him to his faith in god and his devotion. In those days he had started his prayers and then training for mudiyettu at three in the morning. At six he used to start his studies for the school and he said to follow this regime strictly for a long time. He still remembers his uncle used to tell him that he should never perform this ritual art, just for the remuneration. He started his journey, with those words inscribed in his heart, from the age of twelve. Even though he had to do a lot of sacrifices at the time, he now has the fortune to work towards making mudiyettu a world renowned art form. This was possible due to his dedication, god's grace and honest hard work. One significant lesson that he has learned from performing mudiyettu for all these years is that, no matter which form of art the artist should always adorn humility. The path to the rounded growth of any artist can be paved only through the respect for the teacher, blessings from parent, humility and discipline. There is no artist who can claim that he or she has learnt everything there is to learn about that art, since this will only resist the artist from growing further and no doubt, will lead to his or her learning curve will deflect south. Any individual should start his education of an art form along with deep sense of reverence for the teacher and with an earnest intention to learn and perform the art in a disciplined manner, so as to earn the blessings of everyone.

Even today, whenever we are learning to do a performance of mudiyettu and kalamezhuthu, he and his colleagues ensure that we offer our prayers at the *kalari* (the institution or venue, where the training of a particular art form is conducted) so as to bring out the best of our performance as mentioned earlier. He believes it is also as a result of these prayers that mudiyettu has reached the heights, it is at today. He still considers himself a student of this ritual and he constantly attempts to grasp deeper concepts of mudiyettu.

He had an elder brother of the name Rama kurupp, they both used to accompany their uncle during his performances. As their guardian, their uncle encouraged them to stay awake during the nights of his kalamezhuthu and mudiyettu performances. This is when their initial training began with tidying up the dressing room, getting the palm leaves ready for decoration, making floral garlands, preparing fire torches, grinding rice to process the materials required to process makeup, putting on the make up for the artistes, draping the costume, in that particular order. On the days when there were no performance they had to wake up by three in the morning and train till six. Their training involved beatings, as a form of punishment. After six, they were

to go to school for their education. As a result of continuous training, he performed the roles of sivan, naradan, koyimbadanayar, darikan at the age of thirteen. It was at the age of sixteen he was able to perform the most important role of goddess bhadrakali, for which he had ensure that he followed the rituals as required. In those continuous five years practice and the teachings he learned to handle all the roles, the singing, putting on the makeup as well as the rhythms involved in mudiyettu routine in a disciplined way. In the year of 1962 he passed his matriculation examinations.

Subsequently, due to poverty as well as the reverence and love he had for this art form, his teacher, uncle and the most important person in his life then advised him to discontinue his education and focus on agriculture and this performance art form. He obliged. From that day learning continued in the field of toy making. This was also due to the reason that they were not capable of paying for other people to make these toys. Eventually, himself and his brother learned to make these models and started making as well as restoring the idols in mudiyettu. 'Please ensure that this ritualistic tradition is nurtured long beyond my days', these words of his uncle was his advise as well as his desire and was strongly etched in to his heart. After his uncle's demise, not just the performance of this ritual tradition but also prayer offering and the required rituals were carried out in a disciplined way, as it became his responsibility. From that day till today, this has filled up his activities keenly. On the 27th of January in the year of 2000, his elder brother passed away. In the year of 1982, he was married and eventually became the father of two sons. He named them Ramesh and Suresh. The woman he married belonged to a family which has only heard of mudiyettu. Her name is Omana and once she became part of their family she learned about mudiyettu in all her earnestness. She has supported him by carrying out the necessary activities in all areas related to mudiyettu.

Eventually a new idea was born in his head. The knowledge that was passed on to him by his teacher, the disciplined styles of performing and his vast experience should not be restricted to his mind alone. Be it anything, if it stays in our mind for a long time that will make us restless.

As a result to pass on the wisdom that his teacher imparted to him and also to preserve this tradition ritual art form under the supervision of his sons, decided to train a few kids in a disciplined way. His elder son Ramesh and the younger son suresh, both are actively involved in performing mudiyettu. One such both they had a friendly gatherings at his ancestral training centre for performance, with a few artist friends and their neighbours. As a result, all the artistes gathered there on that day agreed to let their kids get trained in mudiyettu. Besides to further nurture this art form, it was decided to form a group and get it registered. They also formed a governing body for this. Thus in the year of 2009 'kizhakke Varanattu Mudiyettu kalasangham' was registered as number

276 and started its operation. In the first governance meeting he was voted and appointed as the 'kalari asan' (the master of the training centre), unanimously. It was also decided that this ritualistic tradition can be passed on only through 'gurukkal' teaching method. Gurukkal teaching method is believed to be the traditional way of schooling to have been followed in India in the good old days, where the students reside with their master and are taught mostly through oral instructions and also through observation. In the very same month they had seventeen students joining their training centre and started their education. Subsequently they had many students training with them and today they have over seventy two individuals (including men as well as women) who could learn mudiyettu from close quarters and many of them are even fortunate to perform it. This training centre continues its operation successfully even today.

Mudiyettu is based on a temple ritual, the order of the preparations are strictly followed. The artist has to take fast before the performance. Those who perform strictly followed vegetarian food and practice seven days fast before the performance. On the day of performance and before the day has to eat the 'Nivedhyachore' from the temple. In the evening he can have only water and no food. Meditation and prayer are there in the morning and evening.

The training of Mudiyettuis followed a strict order and it transferred traditionally. There is no written rule (*Attaprakara*). They trained four or five years comprehending and learning these art forms, especially for performing the purappadu of Kali. The performance varies depending on the ritual of the temple where it is performed. His childhood onwards he learn Mudiyettu. Before training is made to under the art form; should understand the whole aspects like What is Mudiyettu? What is the ritual behind? What the legends behind? How to perform? How to behave in temple? The training start after this only. Rhythm, steps, eye training. A candle is lit in the dark room and the trainee has to move his eyes along with movements of the flame. For steps some positions and movements from Kalari are used. According to the beats and chants steps are taught. The practice of steps begins after getting up '3' o'clock in the morning and oiling the body. Expressions are taught first in training and then Rasa. For the steps the feet are used in a standing position. Feet are oiled and massaged before training. This is essential in the performance that last for almost six hours. Since it might straight the legs of the performer.

He is a doubtful physical trainer and the aim of the physical training for Mudiyettu is self realization. The performer has to realize the potential of his body and mind. Graceful movement of the body is essential. There is also grace on the face of the performer. This would not be there on the face of an untrained actor. Physical training better the performance. Mudiyettu follows a

strict training tradition and rules. It is just that it is unwritten. There are some changes coming in the presentation style with the changes of times.

In Kerala, all the art forms have its own rhythms, styles, music, expression and its own identity. As a master performer, Varanattu Narayana Kuruppu dedicated his life to popularise and preserve the the ritual performance of mudiyettu and Kalampattu Nowadays also strictly followed training and tradition. He continues his effort to publish a book based on the Mudiyettu in other language. A well designed website extols the contours of the art.

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**Narrative that Marks out the Human-Object Relationship:  
A Study of the Movie *Venom***

*Science fiction can be called as the literature of ideas deals with imaginative conceptualization such as time travel, space exploration and extraterrestrial life. Human beings when encounter with an object is unpredictable. In the movie *Venom*, an object-correlative relation and a dual life takes place between the characters. The movie gives a clear explanation about what happens when an object is being inserted into a human body and the situations and challenges faced by the character. A thing or object cannot do anything of its own and it needs something to support. This can be further explored with the help of 'thing theory'. The swap happening in human Conditions with the technology is evident. However, science fiction films are known for their fidelity to technological view and for the production of extraordinary viewers where philosophical issues like human conditions are being explored. With the help of advanced technology science fiction has gained a wide acceptance in today's world. This paper aims at a detailed analysis of the movie *venom* unearthing the center images which will help to understand the narrative better and in turn will help to understand the Modernism and Post-Humanism further, utilizing science fiction and the concepts to mark out the human-object relationship. Keywords: Science Fiction, Human-Object relation, Extraterrestrial life, Thing*

Theory, Modernism, Posthumanism, Object Corelative, Technology, Dual Life. Science Fiction called as Sci-Fi is a genre of fiction which make progress consistently and concentrates on the representation of ideas, concepts and reliance of writers. It depends heavily on scientific facts, theories and principles as support for its situations, characters, subject matters, and scenario, which is what it makes different from fantasy. Sci-Fi often recommends about what could really happen in later generations. It also aids to scrutinize what might happen if certain situations or circumstances came to be and also the scientific advancements and revolution taking place. Over the last few years, science fiction has become an enormous genre, with vast existence in film and television. Because of its connection to reality, it created an engrossing and stimulating category in the intellect of spectators. A notion called Posthumanism deals with a new idea of technology where it examines something that is beyond human state and it can be the boundaries between the human, the animal and the technological aspects and how change is enacted in the world. Researchers described the effectiveness of popular science fiction in capturing the imagination of the public, and creating unrealistic portrayals of science and scientists. This has both positive and negative impacts on science communication, and may even affect priorities (Menadue and Diane).

Human-Object relation is an important aspect of science fiction. In day-to-day life human-object relation is very evident for e.g., take a photograph captured by the photographer even though it's an image or an object it has a close relation with the human who captured it and most of it feel like real and might have powerful feelings for the image, there arise a human-object relation and the concept can be called as object-correlative. Brown discusses about thing theory as an approach that scholars use to investigate human-object relations in art, literature, culture and everyday life. The phrase came widely into use in 2001, in Bill Browns critical inquiry titled *A Sense OFThings*. Take an example of a watch as an object where we utilize it to verify time, as Brown wrote in his essay thing theory "We begin to confront the thingness of objects when they stop working for us "(*Things 4*). So, when the watch stops working, it has been removed from our life and we call it a thing. A thing is always being projected when human beings use it in different circumstances. Rather things exist only when considered in relation to a subject, and Brown clearly notes that any object has the potentiality within it to be a thing (*Other Things 5*). Additionally, in *Sense of Things*, Brown discusses how "things seem slightly human and human seem slightly thing-like" (13).

Taking the movie *Venom*, a human-object relation is deeply seen and is one of the movies that depict the non-conformity. "Venom" is a fictional character published by Marvel-Comics, in association with spiderman. The character is an alien symbiote, a liquid-like form, surviving by bonding with a human and there in the movie the pros and cons of bonding of human when a new object is entered is being explained. This dual life form takes on advanced powers and calls itself "Venom" (Yucel). The movie deals with extraterrestrial life where Eddie Brock, a journalist appears as the center attraction of the movie and his opponent Carlton Drake who is the head of a scientific organization was on a mission where he encounters with extraterrestrial creatures. Drake began to become obsessed by the potential bonding the creatures to live subjects. Later, Brock with the help of a character Dora Skirth tries to enter Drakes Investigation room and there a strange object Venom enters into his body and a human-object interaction starts in the movie. The movie further with the concept of thing theory can be explained; in the first half of the movie an object, alien symbiote enter into a security's body and there she seems to behave indifferently, her hand became weapon and started injuring other people around and when the foreign substance moves from the body the person die. The body is not controlled by the person but by the object that enters into the body and it creates lot of troubles. Next, there are deep meaningful dialogues of *Venom* where everyone could analyze the depth of the movie. This conversation goes ahead when Eddie is in a baffled state of mind when a new object enters into his body and he feels totally distracted with the situation.

Dr.Dora Skirth: Yes. But we don't call them that. We call them symbiotes.

Eddie Brock: Symbiotes?

Dr.Dora Skirth: And they cannot survive in our environment without help. Drake believes that the union between human symbiote is the key to our survival, but not here on earth.

Eddie Brock: Drake is trying to put human beings and aliens together, so they can live in space?

Dr. Dora Skirth: We call them hosts. (*Venom* 34:26).

The movie *Venom* with the support of Posthumanism is also understood where there exists a state beyond being human and embodies different identities and understand the world from multiple perspectives. Eddie has become something more than a human where he achieves healing power and fighting abilities which he could not do alone but with the help of symbiote. It is seen in the movie where Eddie climbs, jumps and do all sort of things which he couldn't do when he was a normal human being. The power of using his own body as a weapon was something beyond human capability. In the movie *Venom* the relation between a thing and a human being creates emotion in the audience and with the help of the term object-correlative the emotion between the character Eddie and Venom is seen towards the climax. It is seen that Eddie accepting the object inside his body and started a friendly conversation with the Venom and he is teaching human qualities. The dialogue below proves the emotional scene of the movie.

Eddie Brock: I have absolutely no problem with you sticking around, but if you do, we are going to have to have some ground rules, alright? You cannot just go around eating anybody that you want to.

Venom: I cannot?

Eddie Brock: No, you cannot. Alright, we need to, uh, we need to reiterate this. There are good people in this world, a lot of them, and then there are bad people. The deal is, you will only ever be allowed to touch, harm, hurt, possibly, very possibly eat very, very bad people, but never, ever, ever good people. Alright?

Venom: Fine.

Eddie Brock: Good. (*Venom* 1:29:20)

The nature of both identities is merged together. A dual life takes place between the characters. For venom human act as a costume just for the survival of the object but to the conclusion there arise a bond between the human and the object. Though towards the starting of the movie the alien object creates trouble later Eddie Brock tries to calm the situations and deals the alien in a friendly manner. Science and technology are two most important essence of life. It gives a futuristic vision to our imagination and actions. And the movie can be seen as the Marvel cinema universe as a posthumanism on the level of production and on the level of form. The Director Fleischer says



“...the aesthetic and the character himself all combine to make something that just feels different... I got really like because *Venom* is, I think truly one of the coolest of the characters, and it is the opportunity to launch a whole new world as opposed to just being plugged into a pre-existing one” (Fleischer, 2018). The movie, perhaps seems a little confused about its goals whether is it a superhero, a horror story or a science fiction etc.

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**A Study on Attitude of Customers  
towards E-Wallets**

*Traditionally, India is a cash economy with circulation of physical money. A significant portion of the population of India is unbanked, with restricted access to financial services based on technology. Significant emphasis was imposed by the Government of India and the Central Bank on financial inclusion and making banking and payment services available to everyone. Non-bank players help banks provide simple banking services for banks. Due to urbanization and customer aspirations for electronic payments, the payment industry is increasingly growing. A digital wallet (or e-wallet) is a software-based framework for various payment methods and websites that securely stores payment information and passwords for users. Users can complete transactions easily and rapidly using near-field communications technology by using a digital wallet.*

Digital wallets can be used in combination with mobile payment systems that allow clients to use their smartphones to pay for their transactions. It is also possible to use a digital wallet to store loyalty card details and digital coupons . Digital wallets largely remove the need to carry a physical wallet by storing all the payment data of a customer in a safe and compact way.

Digital wallets make it possible for a wide range of developed countries to engage in the global financial system more fully. Digital wallets allow participants to accept payments from friends and family members from other nations for services rendered and collect funds or payments. A bank account with a physical company or branch is not needed for digital wallets, often enabling those in more rural areas. An electronic wallet must be linked to an individual's bank account in order to make payments. The main components of the e-wallet are software and information. The software component stores personal information and ensures that data is secure and encrypted.

E-Wallet is a type of electronic wallet, which is used for online transactions. Transactions may be purchasing items, Bill Payment, Mobile and DTH recharge, Ticket Booking etc. E-Wallet services can be used through computer, smart phone and tablets. It is otherwise known as “Digital Wallet”. E-Wallet can be secured with the help of a password or biometric authentication. E-Wallet is a type of prepaid account; it is used by different

category of customers to store their money for future online transactions. Before it can be activated, the user must input all of their account information, which is then stored and used when the time comes to make payments. By using a digital wallet, users can complete purchases easily and quickly with near- field communication technology. E-Wallet provides several benefits to those who used it. It can increase the participation level of people in the field of online transaction. After the implementation of E-Wallet in our society people are ready to use it with effective ways.

Today, E-Wallet services, especially among college students, are mostly used by the younger generation. Since they play an important role in young people's day-to-day lives. And, they had the right idea and a clear understanding of the application and use of such innovations. They therefore prefer the E-Wallet as much as possible. Smart phones have become an important part of everyday life in today's world. In addition to the development of smart phones, a range of services have been developed to use the potential role of smart phones as communication devices, such as mobilised instruments, entertainment tools, internet access tools and even payment tools.

The wallet are starting a transformation by withdrawal of paper cash by the various governments in worldwide, in India On 8th November 2016 the government of India wiped out Rs 500, 1000 from the Indian economy. This situation was favorable in the development of digital cash through digital wallet. India has been a phenomenal increase in the number of E-Wallet users. Some of the digital wallet in India paytm, google pay, Mobikwik, Jio money , amazon pay etc. For purchasing anything, the people do not have to rush to ATMs or banks to withdraw cash, rather transaction can be done there and then in a fraction of seconds. It has become an upcoming way of purchasing goods and services without any physical movement of cash. The main objective of e-wallets is to make quick transactions thereby discouraging people to make use of use cash. This boom is the after effects of Demonetization. But there is still a lack of trust for digital payments. There are those who still do not feel secure using what they do not trust the Internet and perceived security risks. The objective of this study is to find out how customers perceive the e-wallet and the factors that influence their preference.

Table no. 1  
Classification of Respondents as per factors influencing them to Prefer E-Wallets

Affecting factors	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Privacy maintenance	10	14	34	62
Security Maintenance	5	8	35	72
Easy to use	6	27	33	54
Convenient	20	24	52	24

Service fees	15	30	38	37
Innovation	25	31	38	26
Brand loyalty	17	22	32	49
Internet problems	20	24	50	26
Useful for small billings	22	19	45	34

Source: Primary Data

From the above table no. 4.19 it shows that majority of the respondents strongly agree with the privacy and security maintenance is the major factor for preferring e-wallets. And also easy to use, convenient and service fees are the factors of preferring e wallet.

The table no. 2 shows the classification of respondents as per occupation with satisfaction level of e-wallets.

Table No. 2  
Classification of respondents as per the rating of e-wallets with occupation  
(Observed frequencies)

SI NO	OCCUPATION	SATISFACTION LEVEL		TOTAL
		SATISFIED	UNSATISFIED	
1	Student	3	10	13
2	Government employee	12	2	14
3	Professional	34	5	39
4	Private employee	23	7	30
5	Self employed	10	14	24
	Total	82	38	120

Table No. 3  
Classification of respondents as per the rating of e-wallets with occupation  
(Expected frequencies)

SI NO	OCCUPATION	SATISFACTION LEVEL		TOTAL
		SATISFIED	UNSATISFIED	
1	Student	8.9	4.1	13
2	Government employee	9.6	4.4	14
3	Professional	26.7	12.3	39
4	Private employee	20.5	9.5	30
5	Self employed	16.3	7.7	24
	Total	82	38	120

Table No. 4  
Calculation of Chi-Square Test for the Occupation  
with Satisfaction Level of E-Wallets

SI No	Observed Frequencies (O)	Expected Frequencies (E)	(O-E) <sup>2</sup>	(O-E) <sup>2</sup> /E
1	3	8.9	34.81	3.9
2	12	9.6	5.76	.6
3	34	26.7	53.29	1.99
4	23	20.5	2.5	1.25
5	10	16.3	39.69	2.43
6	10	4.1	34.81	8.49
7	2	4.4	5.76	1.3
8	5	12.3	53.29	4.33
9	7	9.5	6.25	.656
10	14	7.7	39.69	5.15
			Chi Square	30.096

Table No. 5  
Result of Chi-square Test for the Occupation  
with Satisfaction Level of E-Wallets

SI No	Particulars	Calculated Value	Degree of freedom	Level of Significance (.05)
1	Pearson Chi-Square	30.096	4	9.488

Since the calculated value is greater than the table value, we reject the hypothesis that there is no goodness of fit between observed and expected frequencies.

In India, there are lots of changes in environment; “change” is only truth in this world. It is advisable to accept and adapt according to it for survival. Modern financial system has gone through many changes in terms of payment processing system from traditional banking system to ATM/ Debit card, Credit card online payment, wire transfer, NEFT, RTGS etc. and the latest feather in the cap is digital wallet or E-wallet. But People are using a few services mostly fund transfer, bill payments and recharges etc. With people preferring mobile-app payment methods for all sorts of the transactions, the future of e-wallets looks bright. This is true as even e-commerce business depends a lot on such a mechanism to lure customers for amplified purchases. This will have people accepting and using e-wallets for a range of transactions like paying bills, online/offline shopping and even transferring money to another person.

This study also proves that the customer perceptions about the e-wallets are good and they accept that the e-wallet is an alternative, attractive, supportive and necessary one of digital era. But there are many services which are already going on in the international market and people are using it like square wallet it gives card scanner to scan any credit / debit card to make payment through mobile device, are still to come in India. The awareness and practical usability of the E-wallet is low, so these studies recommend that it should be increased by adding more value added services to it.

All these are possible as e-wallets offer an opportunity to users for performing multiple transactions in a highly secured manner while still being user friendly. The use of such mobile wallet payments is not only restricted to retail and e-commerce business but there are many ways through which B2B and B2C businesses to can leverage its offerings.

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### **Higher Class Women's Life in Edith Wharton's *The House of Mirth***

*Edith Wharton (1862-1937) was one of the most distinguished American writers whose fame rose to its pinnacle during the early years of the twentieth century. He is well known for her works like Ethan Frome (1911) and The Age of Innocence, the latter being the winner of the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 1921. But her career as writer of repute as well as merit was first established by another work, The House of Mirth. The touching yet realistically prepared story of Lily Bart has captivated readers alike be it the early 1900s or today. In this particular study, an attempt will be endeavoured to discuss the depiction of the upper class in the work and how this aspect gravely affects the life of the protagonist as well as the women of that class. The House of Mirth a masterpiece. Keywords: Edith Wharton; The House of Mirth; Class; Women; Gender Issues*

The early years of the twentieth century were full of new hopes and aspirations. The common public expected a lot of new developments as well as opportunities. The last century was a chaotic one. The arena of American literature was well prepared for any novelty which would be beneficial to the life and tastes of the reading public. The nineteenth century American literature was dominated by figures like Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804-1864) who wanted to deal with the Puritan heritage of the British-Americans; Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849), who wrote about the mysterious and macabre aspects of Nature in a manner loyal to the Dark Romanticism of the era and several abolitionist writers who wrote extensively about the legal institution of slavery prevent in the Southern states. However, by the dawn of the new century, most of these subject matters had lost their sheen. Slavery was non-existent and its place was superseded by racism. The Puritanism of Hawthorne was in a state of decay and Poe's horror stories were soon going to lose their demand to horror cinema. At that time, Feminism remained a subject which was scarcely dealt with in American fiction as well as literature as a whole. It won't be completely right to label Edith Wharton a feminist. But she was one of the first major American writers to deal with the condition of women in America – something that was done nearly a century ago by writers across the Atlantic in England.

Edith Wharton was born Edith Newbold Jones in 1862 in New York. She acquired her present name through her marriage to Edward Robbins Wharton in 1885. Herself being a part of the aristocracy, she was able to give a detailed description of the life of the richer as well as the privileged classes in America during the post-Civil war era, known around the world as the Gilded Age. Her career as a writer was shot into prominence by her ability to attract the reading

public through her works. In 1921, she became the first woman in history to win the Pulitzer Prize in Literature for her novel, *The Age of Innocence*. She breathed her last in 1937 in France. Wharton wrote extensively about the economic as well socio-economic aspects of the American society during the times she lived. This depiction stands loyal to her works *Ethan Frome* and *The Age of Innocence*. But *The House of Mirth* was the one which was instrumental in setting up Wharton's career and that will be the work chosen for discussion here. *The House of Mirth* first appeared in a serialised form in the Scribner's Magazine beginning in January 1905. It appeared in book form later that year and was well accepted by the reading public. The popularity of the work has resulted in various labels being applied to it but its chief appeal lies in the fact that it dealt with a topic scarcely dealt with in previously.

*The House of Mirth* deals with the life of the aristocratic New Yorkers during the early years of the twentieth century. It deals with a not so young woman named Lily Bart, who has failed to marry a man who would be her ideal husband as she expected money and luxury as well as affection from a man. She was born to the aristocratic community but the actions of her parents before they died forced her to lead a life of penury inside a shiny cocoon of glitz and glamour. The novel begins with Lily nearing her 30<sup>th</sup> year, still single and still dependent upon her miserly relatives. Lily manages to get herself a prominent place among the socialites throughout the course of the novel although she has to pay a price in the end. Things start to go against Lily when her looks and grace fail to get her anything other than fake appreciation. Her poverty begins to take a hold upon her. She attempts to lead her life in away that is acceptable to the upper classes bringing even more problems and miseries upon her. In the end Lily commits suicide or accidentally overdoses her on sleeping pills thus bringing to an end a life that began like a fairy tale only to end like a gothic tale.

Because of the novel's heavy depiction of the need for money as well as the evils it creates in the upper classes, many critics have tried to establish a notion that *The House of Mirth* is a Marxist novel. The idea does not sit well with others as the conflict between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat can hardly be established here. Lily Bart would not be classed as a proletariat. Others see the wiping off of Lily in the end as an example of an attempt to match the works of French naturalist writers like Emile Zola (1840-1902) and Guy De Maupassant (1850-1893). One of Zola's heroines, Nana from the eponymous novel, is unceremoniously wiped off in the end. But Lily Bart does exert an influence upon the world she lives in and hence she could never be an insignificant creature. What matters the most while reading the novel is the depiction of the upper-class women which is there in the work.

From the very beginning we find Lily within the shackles which the stamp of aristocracy has put her in. a birth in the posh circles of a society is useless if



you don't have the material wealth to match it. Lily's various attempts throughout the novel to make a life of prosperity out of marriage makes things worse for her. The evil effects of money were not something Wharton had dealt with for the first time in this novel. In Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations*, we get a glimpse of Pip's efforts to rise in the Victorian society and be a true "gentleman" in order to be with his beloved Estella. A similar picture appears also in *The House of Mirth*. Lily attempts courtship with Percy Gryce and then with Lawrence Selden in order to meet her needs. The little money she gets from her aunt Peniston is squandered upon her addiction to gambling. Throughout the course of the tale, we readers get a glimpse of how her life is only advancing towards disaster and nothing else. All of it was, more or less, because of Lily's heritage and her wish as well her need to be among the privileged classes which she could only hope to chive was through marriage. If we star to study *The House of Mirth* in this manner, we begin to understand that Wharton was indeed trying to give a detailed picture of how the women in the aristocratic class of the early twentieth century New York lived.

The publication of *The House of Mirth* coincided with the rise of the suffragette movement in America under the leadership of figures like Susan B. Anthony and Carrie Chapman Catt. It was about the right to vote as well as a place in the political scenario for women where the monopoly of men was traditionally existent. The depiction of the woes of the people of the lower classes has always been there. In 1906, another American writer named Upton Sinclair published a novel called *The Jungle*, which dealt with the woes of the meat packing industry workers. Wharton attempted to portray the woes of the wealthy, privileged section of people and why the people of no category of society are actually happy. This effort of Wharton has to be praised. Wharton's prominent place in American, North American, English as well as world literature has never been questioned. She was able to write about the aspects of the socio-economic problems which the upper classes encountered and her reputation will always be accepted as long as the society exists.

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## **Socio-Economic Analysis of Fishing Villages in Neendakara Panchayat of Kollam District, Kerala**

*The present study was carried out taking a small representation of the population living in the fishing villages of Neendakara Panchayat. It provides an outlook regarding the socio-economic conditions of Neendakara which can be inducted to understand and analyse the whole fishing village surrounding the study area. The investigator also makes an attempt to find out the educational status, the use of media by people of different age group to get a clearer picture of socio economic status of the study area. Key Words: Socio-economic Media aquaculture*

Fishing is a primary activity and it takes place in wild. According to FAO statistics, the total number of commercial fisherman and fish farmers is estimated to be 38 million. Fisheries and aquaculture provide direct and indirect employment to over 500 million people in developing countries. Fishing is an ancient practise that dates back to at least the beginning of the Palaeolithic period about 40,000 years ago. A fishery is defined as a system composed of three interacting components: the aquatic biota, the aquatic habitat, and the human users of these renewable natural resources. The state of Kerala is abundantly rich with marine brackish water and fresh water resources. The state of Kerala is a narrow strip of lush green land bounded on the east by high hills interspersed with rivers and on the west by the Arabian Sea. The area of the continental shelf off this coast is about 40,000 km<sup>2</sup> and the overlying waters are considered to be among the most productive in the Indian Ocean. Neendakara is a village in Kollam district and an intermediate fishing port.

Neendakara Panchayat of Kollam District, 9 kilometres north of Kollam city in Kerala, India, is the headquarters of the Indo- Norwegian Fisheries Community Project, which was established in 1953. The site was handover to the Government of Kerala in 1961. Neendakara Panchayat extends from 8<sup>o</sup> 56' to 8<sup>o</sup> 58' N latitudes and 76<sup>o</sup> 32' to 76<sup>o</sup> 33' E longitude, located at the northern border of Kollam Municipal Corporation. Neendakara covers an area of 592 hectares from which the land area is only 286 hectares. The fishing villages are spread over the three wards of Neendakara Grama Panchayat in Chavara Block. About 70% of the population is engaged in fishing. The main economic activities are based on fishing and its allied works. They catch fish from the Ashtamudi Lake and the Arabian Sea.

According to the 2011 census, the total population of Neendakarapanchayat was 16,976 among which the male population is 8,357 and female population is 8,619.

Objectives of the Study: To find out the occupational structure of the population. To understand the educational status of the study area. To find the use of media by the population. To study the socio economic condition of the people.

Methodology: For the present study both primary and secondary data were used. Primary data was collected through interview based on prepared schedule and field survey. Secondary data was obtained from Census Department, State fisheries and Regional fisheries offices, Panchayat Level statistics.

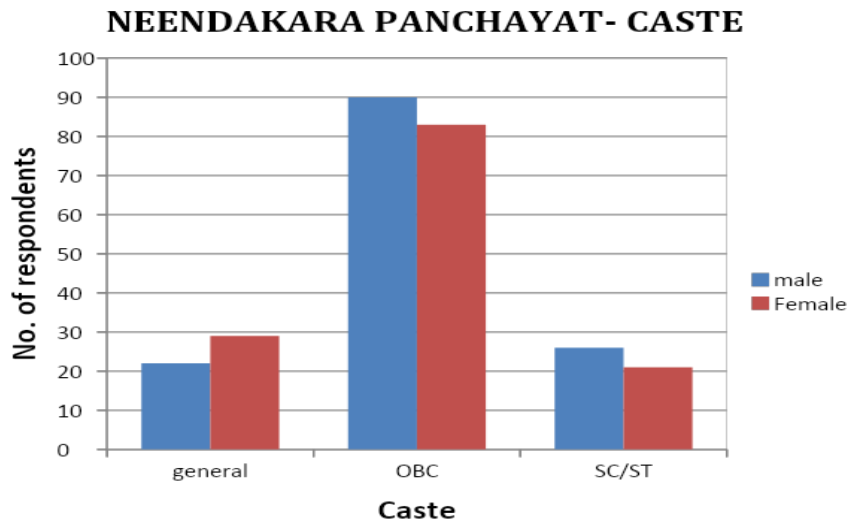
Result and Discussion: The socio-economic characteristics of the fisherman is explained by considering the variables such as age, caste, education, occupation, income, family type, family size, media and expose to communication, food, health, shelter and drinking water.

Age and Occupation: Neendakara Panchayat-Age and Occupation

Category	Age				Occupation					
	Male	%	Female	%	Total (%)	Workers	%	Non workers	%	Total (%)
0-14	31	23	35	26	24	0	0	66	46	24
15-59	93	67	88	66	66	107	84	74	52	67
>60	14	10	10	8	9	21	16	3	2	9
Total	138	100	133	100	100	128	100	143	100	100

Source: sample survey

The above table shows the age and occupation structure of Neendakara Panchayat. It shows that the age group between 15 and 59 is high and most of the workers are concentrated on this age group



Majority of fisherman in the fishing village belongs to OBC category (64%) followed by General category with 19%. 17% of respondents belong to SC/ST category.

**Income**

Income	No. of respondents	%
<8000	50	82
8001-18000	8	13
18001-28000	1	2
>28001	2	3
Total	61	100

Source: Sample Survey

The above table shows that the income level of the respondents is low, in which 82% belongs to income < 8000 and they are working in the fishing sector. Those having income greater than 8000 are working abroad and are in government sector.

**Family Type and Family Size:** The respondents in Neendakara Panchayat are having nuclear family and having members between 4 and 7. It shows that most of family has children more than two. Majority of respondents (93%) lives as nuclear family and 7% lives as joint family. The nuclear family constitutes father, mother and their children sometimes grandmother or grandfather too. Joint family constitutes a large number of members. About 74% of the family contains members between 4 and 7 because most of the family contains more than 2 or three children. 23% of the total contributes the members between 1 and 3 because in this case the family have father, mother and children sometimes lives as single and living only 2 members.

**Educational Status:** The age group between 0-14, the percentage of educational level is 32% to the total and only 10% are illiterates because they are less than 5 years. 46% has undergone their study below 10<sup>th</sup> standard and 20% have studied up to 10<sup>t</sup> standard. The age group between 15 and 59, 59% of the total respondent possess well educational status. In this category the most of the respondents have the ability to read and write and almost all secured primary education. 50% respondents are below metric and 69% respondents have SSLC qualification. About 22% of respondents doing professional courses such as nursing, ITI etc., 95% are under graduate and 93% have gone above graduation and only 4% are illiterate.

**Media and Expose to Communication:** Majority of respondents (67%) are highly exposed to media and communication facilities and they falls under the age group between 15 and 59, out of it 64 % watch television, 53% listen to radio 65% read newspaper daily, 89% are using internet because most of the respondents have mobile phones and from it they uses internet and they are more familiar with social networks. The main reason behind this is that the females are at home and they are used to watch the television programmes mainly serials and men are watching news, sports etc.

Respondents below 14 years are exposed to media and communication is 23% of the total and out of it 26% watches television programs like cartoon, songs etc. 21% listens to radio programmes with their mother, 31% read newspaper as part of their curriculum and to enhance general knowledge. 11% depends on internet for their study purpose.

11% of the respondents above 60 years the percentage of media and communication expose is only 11% of the total, out of it 10% watch television include male and female, they watch serials as well as news, and 26% listen to radio mainly they are males and listen news about the climate changes and monsoon. Only 4% read newspapers, they are males and among them who are not using internet is high because they don't know how to use it.

**Health Conditions:** Majority of the respondents between the age group 15 and 59 (68%) shows high health status and out of the total 68% are healthy and 17% are unhealthy followed by 24% are less than 14 years and in that 25% are healthy and no one are unhealthy and 9% by the respondents greater than 60 years shows the health status, where 7% are healthy and percentage of unhealthy respondents are less and the main reason is that they are under the old age and affected by the old age diseases.

The main reason for the good healths are the awareness programs from the primary health centres and all the children are vaccinated therefore they approach the health centres as fast as possible in case of health issues. The government introduces so many programs through NHRM for the welfare of

the fishing communities and *anghanavadis* are running correctly for caring the pregnant ladies and children below age 6 years and also provide nutritional food up to age 18 years who are anaemic, weightlessness and unhealthy conditions.

**Food Availability:** Majority of respondents (67%) come under the age group 15 and 59 shows high availability food where 76% showed by high availability of food and 66% shows medium availability of food. The high availability of food means they receive all type of food at all time and their income is very than others. The medium availability of food include all type of food but they used costly items once in a month and they don't used to go outside for food and their income level is substantial for carrying their day to day life.

About 24% of the total, the respondents under the age less than 14 years shows food availability, where 19% shows high and 26% shows medium availability of food. The high availability of food is due to the high income and they are provided with high quality food. The medium availability categories are also having good quality food and the main peculiarity is that they have food at all the time. The age under 14 years are fulfilled with nutritious food from the *anghanavadis* and also by their family.

Only 9% of the respondents greater than 60 years shows the availability of food, out of it 5% are getting high availability of food because their income is high and earned a good amount in their life during their working time followed by 8% under medium availability category and the reason is income availability and 9% doesn't get adequate food because they don't have good health for working and depend other people for food and medicine.

**Shelter Needs:** Majority of respondents that is 98% of the total has owned house and only 2% lives in the rented house. Most of the respondents live along the coastal areas and they have owned house, but their ownership is given by the government as '*pattayam*' that means that they have the right to live in that area and have no right to sell or handover to others. Only 2% lives in a rented house due to their low income. Due to the monsoon and coastal calamities, tsunami also affects their houses and at that time they are forced to leave their habitat and making settled in camps.

**Drinking Water:** All the respondents possess high water availability in which 67% of the total come under the age group between 15 and 59 followed by 24% of the respondents under age 14 years and 9% of the respondents are greater than 60 years. At the time of coastal calamities and monsoon the availability of water is less and sometimes they don't get enough water to satisfy their needs because of the breaking of pipes lines and roads.

Development of a nation depends upon the living standards of the population. This study gives an in depth look into the standard of living of people depending on fishing for their livelihood in Neendakara village of Kollam district. It shows that the respondents are having good drinking water facility and proper shelter though they are facing problems during natural calamities like flood, cyclones etc. The people are aware about the existing conditions in their area and take precautions to face the disasters; still they are wishing to stay in their places.

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**Mahasweta Devi's *Bayen*: Unheard Cry of a Mother**

*Mother, the most sweet and powerful word in the whole world. Mother, the cure to all our sadness. The magician, who erases all our sorrows and pain. She is our first doctor who cures all our illness with the magical potion of her love. She is our first teacher who teaches us so many lessons and prepares us for the battle of life. She is a good actor too; she is good at hiding all her tears behind her smile. She is even ready to give her life in order to bring her children to this world. A mother is always ready to cross every limit for her children, but is not ready to see even a drop of tear in their eyes. There is no word in the whole universe which can define her fully.*

There is no one in the world who can replace mother. A mother's love for her children is limitless. But what if she is separated from her child? Will she be able to tolerate it? No, she will get shattered even on the thought of it but sometimes mothers may get separated from their children. Superstitions are one among the major evils which separated many mothers from their children in many rural parts of India. Even in today's world of science and technology, still there are people who blindly follow superstitions. Still there are places in India where people blindly follow superstitions even if it costs someone's life. Many a times, it even separates people from their beloved ones, even a mother from her child. Some people may make use of the superstitions to satisfy their personal interests. *Bayen* is a play by Mahasweta Devi which tells the story of a mother who gets separated from her child due to superstitions and the personal interests of some people.

The play *Bayen* says about the subjugation of women in the patriarchal society. The play describes the life of a mother who is separated from her son due to some superstitious beliefs. It is said that in India, women are worshipped as goddess. But the play shows the cruel side of the Indian society where women are oppressed and are forced to live according to the "norms" and wishes of the patriarchal society. The play takes us through the life of its protagonist, Chandidasi or in other words, through the life of a mother who is forced to leave her son. Mahasweta Devi effectively portrays the sorrows and longing of a mother who is separated from her son. She also focuses on the superstitious beliefs of the rural people and how it affected the lives of several people, including the protagonist of the play, Chandidasi and her son.

Chandidasi is the protagonist of the play. The play begins with Chandidasi singing a lullaby for her son, Bhagirath. When Bhagirath asks about the song



to his father, he narrates him the story of the “bayen”, who was once his wife and Bhagirath’s mother. Chandidasibelongs to the Kalu Dome clan who gave shelter to King Harishchandra. Her family consisted of her husband, their baby boy and herself. After the death of her father, she decides to take up the ancestral profession of burying the dead bodies of children.

When she started to do her ancestral job, she got torn between a mother’s responsibilities and her profession. Chandidasi decides to leave her ancestral profession in order to spend more time with her son. When she tells this to her husband, he doesn’t agree to do so and does not pay any heed to her sentiments. This shows the power of men over women in a patriarchal society. Eventhough she wishes to be with her son, her husband does not allow her to leave her job. Her life became more miserable when Tukni, a baby died. Chandidasi was held responsible for Tukni’s death. The villagers started to blame her for casting an evil eye on the children in the village. One night, Chandidasi tried to protect the graves of the children from the hungry jackals but some people twisted the news and made it as if she was eating the dead bodies of the children. She decides to leave the job. But overnight, she is branded as a ‘bayen’ by some of the villagers who disliked her. People forced her to leave her family, including her baby and started to treat her worse than an animal. The author portrays how innocent people are ill-treated in the shadow of superstitions. She also paints very effectively the sorrow of a mother, who is forced to leave her baby.

After labeling her as a bayen, Chandidasi was forced to live away from the community and if she happens to come near the community, she had to lookdown and never raises her eyes. Also some things are tied to her so that it will make a sound when she walks and people will know if she is near. The stone-hearted society attacked her physically and emotionally. She was not even allowed to get a glimpse of her son. The son was taken away from his mother. No one paid attention to the heart-breaking cry of a mother. She longs to see her son but stays away from him just because she doesn’t want to cause any harm to her son even by her presence. The mother was even ready to stay away from her son just because she wanted him to be safe. The villagers who labeled her as a bayen ignored the fact that she was a human being, moreover, she was a mother.

Towards the end of the play, Chandidasi comes to know that some people are planning to rob a train. She sacrifices her life in order to stop the robbery and save the people. By the end of the play, Bhagirath, her son cries out that she is his mother and declares to the whole world that she is not a bayen. At this point, the villagers were willing to accept that she is not a bayen. This affirmation of her motherhood posthumously removes her status as a bayen, but it was too late to undo or reverse the mistake. The loss was only for her

son and for herself. They both were separated from each other just because of mere superstitions and the personal interests of some people.

The play, *Bayen*, relies upon discrimination, superstitious beliefs of people and how it worsens the life of innocents. Though India is a developing country, still there are places in India where superstitions dominate to a large extent. Some people follow superstitions to such an extent that they do not even hesitate to take a person's life. In *Bayen*, the author shows how superstitious beliefs and selfishness separates a mother and son in a male dominated society. The play exhibits the transformation of a working woman into a public scapegoat.

When Chandidasi is accused as a bayen, even her husband, Malindar does not come to her rescue. He does not support her but rather beats the drum and shouts that his wife has turned into a bayen. Usually husband and wife love, supports and take care of each other. But here, we can see that Chandidasi's husband himself is hurting her. Just like Rama who leaves Sita due to the words of a dhobi in Ramayana, Malindar too leaves Chandidasi based on some superstitions. But here, the situation is much worse. He even ignores the fact that she is a lactating mother and forces her to leave her son. *Bayenis* a powerful example for a play depicting the life of a woman who is exploited in a phallogocentric society till her last breath.

In this play, a mother's status in the society is restored by her son. When Chandidasi works in the graveyard, she wishes to leave that ancestral profession and go back to her family. She feels that she is not getting enough time to spend with her son and thus decides to leave that job for her son. She had to stay in the graveyard even though she was a lactating mother. One night, she breastfeeds a child's dead body because she got suffocated as she was not able to feed her son or to shower all her love on him. Also she tried to protect the graves of children from jackals by covering them. She did it because she loved children and doesn't want to see the jackals eating their bodies. But all these paved way towards her labeling as a bayen. Her motherly feelings or love towards children became a reason for people accusing her as a witch. When Bhagirath was small, he was told by his father that his mother is dead. But when he comes to know that his mother is alive, he wishes to go to her. Despite the words of his father, he visited her secretly. He doesn't believe the superstitions and became sad on seeing his mother's condition. He is not afraid of her even when people claimed that she is a bayen instead he longed to get her love and care. The bond of mother and her children is very strong. It is not easy to break this bond through mere superstitions. This is portrayed through the love and concern of Bhagirath for his mother. Chandidasi stays away from her son as she wanted him safe even if he is away from her. The mother is ready to bear the pain of separation to keep her son safe. When she dies, Bhagirath cries out to the world that she is not a bayen. The little boy

understood the plight of his mother which the “elders” in the society failed to understand.

The play depicts the agony of a mother who is marginalized by the society. Chandidasi could be seen as an example for a typical Indian woman who obeys her husband blindly and does not question him even if he is wrong, just like Sita in *Ramayana* or Gandhari in *Mahabharatha*. She does not raise voice against the injustice done towards her instead, thinks that it is her fate. Motherhood is one of the greatest gifts which a woman can get. Loss of a child to a mother is perhaps one of the biggest losses. Here, Chandidasi suffers the loss of her son. She becomes a puppet in the hands of the male dominated society and lets others to decide her life. Her love towards children is beautifully shown in the play but at the same time she is forced to leave her son. In the whole play only her son loved her truly, only he said that she is not a bayen. This shows the bond of a mother and son.

Many people say that men are responsible for the exploitation of women. But through this play, Mahasweta Devi shows us the bitter truth that when some men maintains their ego in a male dominated society, some women, directly or indirectly, allow them to dominate. In most of the situations, women suppress their voice and let men rule over them. Maybe they do so because they are taught by the society to do so. Due to his ego, Malindar doesn't allow Chandidasi to leave her job even when she pleads him. If she had not listened to him, she might not have faced such a cruel “fate”. In some situations it is necessary to raise our voice, gender doesn't matter here. If the question is upon our existence, we should raise our voice, at the same time it should not do any ill to others. If Chandidasi fought against the injustice done towards her, she might be able to live her life happily with her son. Instead she allowed the people, blind with superstitions, to decide her life. She cried deep inside for her son. But she never let her voice come out. This was her sole fault. If she had raised her voice and fought against all the injustice, her life would have been different.

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**Gender Representation in Margaret Drabble's *The Red Queen***

*Gender is an idea which rule human kind to differentiate human being on the basis of the division done on their sex to help one identify the features related to human kind. Theorists and philosophers till modern time assume sex as biological and gender as social. This assumption holds that what we understand as gender is a notion created by the society, and to be precise, exclusively by the patriarchal society. So, what a patriarchal society may represent in their definition of this differentiation, ofcourse, will be seen and defined from their own perspectives and mostly by keeping their own sovereignty intact as earlier. This ofcourse will not be a neutral analysis of identification of human being on basis of the biological division. Therefore, going ahead of the past analysis of gender, the post-modern analysts, theorists and philosophers opine that, sex, too is social and mere reproduction of the notion of patriarchal society. A renown theorist of post-modern era, Judith Butler sees sex reassignment surgeries as an example of how people are trying to change their sex to fit the norm, which in her view makes sex socially constructed. Butler goes on with her remark, that, certain gendered behaviors are natural, illustrating the ways that one's learned performance of gendered behavior is an act of sorts, a performance, one that is imposed upon us by normative heterosexuality.*

Henceforth, many ideas have tended to change or took different shape or ideas in the postmodern time and beyond. In this new conception of gender study, everyone has their own right to play his or her role, as they prefer. A person irrespective of his or her sex can present themselves as male or female, as the person likes. The idea has become more relevant since the LGBT and others have aroused as the most contemporary study. Events like; French feminist movement stood as a pioneer on the way to establishment of the post-modern gender study. Regarding gender Simone de Beauvoir states, "One is not born a woman, one becomes one." This view presents that in this particular study, gender should be used to refer to the social cultural constructions of masculinity and femininity and not to the state of being male or female in its entirety. Along with Beauvoir other scholars like; Michel Foucault, Jacques Lacan, Helen Cixous, Julia Kristeva as well as Luce Irigaray and Judith Butler etc. argue that what we conventionally regard as 'feminine' is only a reflection of what is constructed as masculine. The theories and ideas developed by these theorists and scholars have been executed in the fictional representations of the writers like Doris Lessing, Margaret Drabble, Margaret Atwood etc. The present paper will through some light on such gender perspectives the major characters of *The Red Queen*, one of the best novels of Margaret Drabble and representation of various relevant taboos of the society and its consequential impact on the role played by the respective characters of the novel.

Margaret Drabble, a contemporary living author, residing in London has written many novels portraying the suffering of women. She has penned down for almost 19 novels, making her debut with *A Summer Bird Cage*, in 1963. *The Red Queen*, *The Millstone*, *Jerusalem the Golden* etc. are some of her remarkable novels, she has ever created. A major theme of her novels is the correlation between contemporary England's society and its individual members. Her characters tragic faults reflect the political and economic situation and the restriction of conservative surroundings, making the reader aware of the dark spots of a seemingly wealthy country. Most of her protagonists are women. Her heroines are occupied with the difficulties of fulfilment and self-definition in a man's world, the conflicting claims of self-hood, wife-hood and mother-hood. Women and their suffering are a major issue that Margaret Drabble deal with throughout her representation of the fictional world. Whether men or women, one has to live their life according to the frame work, they have been set up. Any unexpected imposition on any person depending in their gender is unfair and illegal, which should not be done. This very aspect of one's individual identity has preoccupied in the whole idea behind Drabble's novels. The works of Margaret Drabble who is considered one of the outstanding representatives of contemporary British feminist, is appraised as the manifesto of the feminist ideas. Drabble formulates her protest against the discrimination between woman and man by appealing to the restriction of female freedom. She has fictionalised the real stories of life, where some womenfolk although being modern, educated, self-dependent and self-sufficient; cannot attain an undisrupted and steady life; which is not only true to 18<sup>th</sup> century or older times, but to the present era too. Development of all sectors of life would not do any good unless and until, people will change mindset in the respective fields of life.

*The red Queen* is one of the most elegant, seductive, delicious and intriguing novel amongst fictions contributed to the world of literature by Margaret Drabble. This book was inspired by a volume of court memoirs written in Korea more than two centuries ago. Being utterly engrossed by the story of the crown princess, the present time protagonist of the novel tries to explore the past world of the lady, in which she lived with so much passions and sufferings. Drabble was not trying to represent the historical account of the crown princess of Korea of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, nor she was trying to reconstruct Korean culture or real life in the Korean court, instead, she asked questions about nature of survival and about the possibility of existence of universal transcultural human characteristics. And while doing so, she tries to look at the entire drama of the court life and the life of the crown princess through the eyes of Dr. Barbara Haliwell. Barbara Haliwell the professor from London had received an anonymous gift from someone unknown where contained a memoir of *The Crown Princess*. The memoir records a fascinating tale of the red queen who had a paranoid husband, the Crown Prince of Korea, Prince Sado. He was not a normal human being and kept some strange desire

to kill people. After having killed many people by Prince Sado, King Yongjo put his own son in a rice chest till death, executing his exercise of power he killed his own son and to be king of Korea after him. The wife and the dethroned Princess of the dethroned Prince Sado found it extremely difficult to bear her husband died in the rice chest. According to her, lack of love and affection from the father during his entire life till death is another strong reason of Prince Sado's mental instability. This has fuelled on the strange outburst of his emotions. As a prince or the most powerful second to his father, Prince Sado had lived and executed his own desire in whatever means he preferred. He didn't need to reconcile with anything. But the would-be queen and later widow of the former prince and mother of the new king had suffered a lot for no fault of her own. The girl who longed for a red silk skirt and her mother who endured hardship in life supposed to be in joy by their destiny of the poor girl's transformation into a royal princess. But the ten-year-old girl in shock of handling this transformation wished to die to avoid her fate, "I cannot describe the intensity and the terror of my apprehensions." This is how a girl or woman live and survive in a patriarchal family not knowing how to deal with everything. She would also face enormous challenges to satisfy the in-laws as they need, which rarely leaves herself with satisfaction. The red queen had been blessed more having company of a mad husband from his youth till he was compelled to murder by his own father king. "Learning was not forbidden to women, but nor was it freely offered to them. I think, now, that my exemption from the masculine curriculum and the state examination system was a blessing in disguise: unlike my husband, I was able to sharpen my wits without fear of failure. But at times when I was young, I envied those who had more access to learning." (Page 35, *The Red Queen*)

As a young Princess, she aspired to have been blessed with the knowledge of the contemporary time, as she knew that knowledge is the power. The Red Queen wanted to be powerful, although she realized that, "But for the most part, women's power was exercised through men. As mine was, for I lived in repressive times. . . ." Initially, as a Princess, she found it quite difficult, being a poor or lower middle-class girl to act the role of a Princess. When she was settled gradually, in the course of the time, she discovered another problem of life, that is, the mental instability of the Prince Sado. Although the prince was harmless to his own family comprising wife and kids, he was rather wild outside, even he killed many people in uncontrolled wrath. As a poor lady of the prince, she could not help just being a silent witness of all the incidents. She had no power of her own. Her role in the crime of her husband and the reaction of the father-in-law king, supposed to be utterly helpless. The most pathetic of her being a woman is when she had to be silent while her husband was killed in a rice chest by her own father-in-law. She could not plead for mercy and let the prince be given a chance to recover from his schizophrenia. She knew very well that the disorganized behaviour of the prince could be

treated if it would have been handled with love and affection from the father's part, but she was never asked or her recommendation was never taken for the same. She was like an unused object of the palace, which is decorated with all riches, but never taken as important for anything. The protagonist of the latter part of the novel Dr. Barbara Haliwell had similar story of a husband who was too mentally not healthy. After two hundred years, as time blesses her, Babs is quite in a better position as she could go out to foreign countries alone and could sleep with a famous scholar Jan Van Jost for mental and physical satisfaction. Babs could travel alone from London to Seoul alone, while the Crown Princess had not been fortunate to see beyond the palace before her 60<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Barbara, the female scholar and professor of London of the present time, fell in love with Jan Van Jost, which ended unfortunately after respectable three days of night together in their hotel room in Korea, while they were attending a Conference, where Jan was a chief guest. During her short visit to Korea, she has got to know many things about Korean royal history, particularly of Prince Sado and the Crown Prince. The short affair of Babs and Jan remained as an unfortunate story of two lovers who intensely loved each other and in his faith to her Jan disclosed his desire and rather plan to adopt a Chinese infant with his present wife Viveca. Jan wanted Babs advice and help in the matter, as it is very much a difficult and critical job to adopt a foreign infant which will grow up later as a multicultural child. Babs honestly wondered what and how to help him in this regard.

The strange mixer of joy and horror of the last night together of Babs and Jan leaves the young professor Dr. Barbara Haliwell, with a transformation for life. They were in an affair for a very short time after meeting in a conference in Korea. The glamour of Jan Van Jost put the young professor in such a blind admiration that led to her accept his offer to have a night together in hotel Pagoda. Two nights in the same hotel went well, though the last night was quite unfortunate because, Jan Van Jost died in that last night after having a cardiac attack in bed. Babs had seen live the way the man with whom she was in love, to die struggling for his life. The same female instinct cried out helplessly when the crown prince died struggling for life in the rice chest. The Crown Princess, in her immortal spirit and Jan remained as guardian angel which reflected in her later endeavours of helping Viveca, the last wife of Jan to adopt the Chinese infant. It was Jan's last wish to adopt the Chinese baby, so, she did it for him. And not only she did it, but became a second mother of Chen Jianyi. It is quite reflective that, being a female, she felt the urge to the baby that Jan was so eager and done everything to adopt the child, which made her lead the entire transaction to get the baby in Viveca's hand, the legal wife of deceased man. "One-night stands with famous men are for star-fuckers. The two nights with famous men are inelegant and inconclusive. But three nights constitute a romance and a relationship. Van Jost has protected

her reputation from beyond the grave. Three nights have given her right to own him and confess him. Three nights have given her a stake in the magnanimous heart of Jan Van Jost.”

A female has to take care of her reputation whatever status she may belong to, but, not by a male. The same finger which raised to a female is not raised to a male, as a man is protected by superior rule of the patriarchal society. Being a female, Barbara got attracted to a male named Jan Van Jost, in the society where one is normally preferred to be heterosexual, but that too will be interrogated and blamed of being dishonest to her incapable husband. Therefore, the notion of sex and gender are arbitrary and not based on any convincing reason. Both the characters, the red queen and Barbara are victim of this idea of the society and Drabble was quite successful in presenting the sex and gender image in the two characters in the postmodern era.

The plight of both the women has similarity who have been held from completely different background, being victimized by their identity of feminine. If the lady princess would not be a gendered being or a female, she would be given real royal importance; rather, she would be paid exclusive attention in her remarks. But she has no say in all courtly affair and even the familial affairs too. Her destiny to witness silently the course of death penalty of her husband is extreme elaboration of her gender as a symbol of patriarchal society. Dr. Barbara Haliwell would not have been so much touched by the story of the red queen, had she not been a woman. The similar reflection of life, like child birth, death of the child, schizophrenic husband etc. made Barbara feel the intensity of the trauma the crown princess was in. The consequential reflection of all such instances leads a woman to utter failure in life, as considered by the society. The woman has to take all the responsibility, no matter, whoever had done it or whoever had made the mistake. Unlike a female a male is not responsible for the unfortunate outcome of the whole family. If the husband is doomed in his life, the wife is responsible; similarly, if the children meet misfortune or such like, the mother or wife has to be responsible. the red queen has similar story to tell, the tale of how a young girl in 18<sup>th</sup> century Korea is picked from obscurity to be consort to the crown prince. Though inhabiting a jade, silk and jewelled world, the Crown princess must also contend with the murderous impulses of her husband Sado, who is not normal rather schizophrenic. Two hundred years later, the crown princess's story has a deep and far-reaching effect on Dr. Barbara Haliwell, an academic on her way to a conference in South Korea. Haunted by the story of the red queen's ghost Babs feels that she must do something to keep her story alive, but, she had faintly had an idea what to do for the same. It can also be drawn a conclusion that, the similar intensity of life story had taken them closure and Babs speculation over the former story. Though the entire novel can be studied from gender perspectives, it is quite clear that, belonging to 200 years older time, the red queen's story is quite capable of making a pen picture



of a patriarchal society. Compared to that old story of the red queen, the story of Babs is rather amazing, how can similar significance be reflected in 20<sup>th</sup> century London based academic. She should be free from the shadow of gendered implications, which she has become victim of one way or the other.

Life is still not that smooth for a woman who is not comforted or surrounded by patriarchal power, which sounds rather archaic in tone. But surprisingly, the modern and post-modern assumptions and practice of our society regarding gender of human being is ambiguous and not based on equality. Dr. Barbara Haliwell's experience of life leads to understand the pathetic conditions of the crown princess as, both had been suffering in their life as a woman, a wife and a mother. While presenting the gender representation of the characters specially the main characters of *The Red Queen*, like Barbara Haliwell, Drabble is quite successful in asserting the correlation between contemporary England's society and its individual members. Barbara's life full of dissatisfaction and unfulfilled desire leads her to sleep with Jan Van Jost in hotel Pagoda, which too comes to an end unfortunately. The crown princess too was never satisfied in her life though she was a princess by designation. All the riches of the palace were not able to make her happy because of her life was dominated by the male powers father, husband, father-in-law and at last by her son. In her entire life she had not got chance to raise her voice, so, after death, she takes help of Babs to make the world know and feel her story. With parrel to the story of red queen, Drabble makes her delineation convincing by the character of Babs as, the tragic faults of that character reflect the political and economic situation and the restriction of conservative surroundings, making the reader aware of the dark spots of a seemingly wealthy country.

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