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Editor's Note

EDITOR'S NOTE

The disciplinary obligation doesn't need to be idealized as a solitary and remote entanglement to its only domain; but more of a roomy and generous approach to its analogous streams. Media Studies related to any engagement in our daily life substantiate the moves to embrace such attempts. In the articles of this issue, there are ventures both direct and circuitous to the domain of Media Studies.

Inquiry related to Gender and Technology is an article that tries to explore beyond the traditional boundaries of the discipline. The studies, Tribal Identity and Indigenous Knowledge Production and Survival Adaptations to COVID-19 among the Tribal Communities, inquire about sectors that popular research in Media often failed to address. History of Media education in Kerala is another infrequent research area, fortuity of an initiative in this issue. Typically, deliberations on Film studies are on ahead in any research platforms of Media Studies. Articles on films *Pariyerum Perumal* and *Susanna* are from such a research palette.

Bruno Latour in his essay 'How to Keep the Social Flat' {Latour, Bruno. (2005). Reassembling the Social- An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory. Oxford University Press} elaborates on the inquiries; a researcher usually engages coherently. He says, 'A local 'informant', prodded by the questions of a visiting ethnographer, realizes that most of his habits of thought are coming from places and agencies over which he has no control' (Latour, 2005). Thus, an inquiry has to be extended to the agency question and the traditional research design. Stretching the question to the social fabric would resolve the problem. Recent research in Media Studies can show traces of similar methods, which trigger buoyancy in the field.

Lalmohan P., PhD
Chief Editor

Survival Adaptations to COVID-19 among the Tribal Communities in Kerala

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Abstract

This research paper discusses the responses and reactions of the tribal villages of Kerala to the COVID-19 pandemic, mainly during the first wave after the outbreak. The paper analyses various measures adopted by the state government and the way those measures impacted in the positive outcomes among the tribal population. In-depth interviews were conducted to plot the major activities carried out in the tribal communities during COVID-19 pandemic. The inferences cover areas of activities related to health, hygiene, precautions, awareness initiatives, and online education. Special emphasis was given to the new plans and progressive models of development initiated right after the first lock down phase. The success in the implementation of activities and programs on the onset of COVID-19 reveals the tribal-friendly scenario of the state.

Keywords: COVID-19, tribal hamlets, tribes and pandemic, online education, community radio

Introduction

Aboriginals or indigenous people have a long history of extermination from epidemics. Europeans migrated to America along with their quite common measles and smallpox were the reasons behind the extinction of Yanomani tribal groups of Brazil and South Venezuela. Toxic waste spills in the regions of Ecuador's northern Amazon led to the deterioration of many indigenous communities by cancer, respiratory disorder and kidney failures. Several groups are decimated by curable illness like malaria, smallpox and pneumonia.

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If the past is prologue, the COVID-19 pandemic is life-threatening to the indigenous groups across the globe. Being the most vulnerable health category in nearly all countries, indigenous groups possess a high mortality rate and low life expectancy. Inability to access healthcare, malnutrition, lack of clean water, shortage of essential services and poor sanitation facilities are the disadvantages of the indigenous groups that catalyse the super spread of the pandemic furthering their fatal conditions (Sharma, 2020).

India stands second in the world in terms of tribal concentration after Africa. According to the 2011 Census of India, the tribal population of the country is 10,42,81034, which constitutes 8.6 percent of the total population. Most of the tribes are concentrated in central parts of India, spreading over the states like Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Gujarat, Chhattisgarh, and Jharkhand. More than 533 tribal groups are already identified, having heterogeneous social, religious, and cultural differences. Some of these groups have sub-categories within them. Among these tribal groups, 75 communities are categorised under Primitive Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTG), the most vulnerable and economically backward communities within Scheduled Tribes (Mohanty 2020).

Tribal communities face many challenges in India. Of the total population, 40.6 percentage live below the poverty line as against 20.5 percentage of the non-tribal population. The problem of underweight is one and a half times more in tribal children compared to their counterparts. Pulmonary diseases are extremely high compared to the rest of the state with 703 against 256 per 100000. Lack of health personnel, medical equipment, language and social barriers between the health workers and tribes lead to the prevalence of such diseases to an extremely high extend. This scenario of compromised health conditions and low immunity make the tribes to be easily vulnerable to COVID-19. The high population density, public distribution systems, and community lifestyle can contribute to the rapid spread once the communities are affected. The Ministry of Tribal Affairs introduced different procedures to save tribal people from the pandemic and made a number of interventions and extremely useful aids for the community. Absence of timely actions during the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic invited catastrophic results which became detrimental to the survival of indigenous people in the largest democracy of the world. The fact is that time is running out (Mohanty, 2020).

The tribes in India faced a number of problems under COVID-19, similar to the racial and regional discrimination. Many of the

tribal people were deprived of their jobs which resulted in reverse migration to native places. Most of the daily labourers were stranded in workplaces without food and other necessities. The extent to which the outreach programs can address and cater to the needs of tribal people is questionable and a choice between disease and death by hunger (Sharma, 2020).

COVID 19: A Kerala Context

Kerala is one of the states in India where the tribal population is incredibly low. A total of 484839 tribes live in the state that constitutes 1.45 percent of the total population. There are 36 tribal groups in Kerala out of which six are the primitive vulnerable tribal groups. Paniya, Kurichya, Malai Arayar, Mavilar, Kurumar, Muthuvar, Irular, Kanikkaran, and Kattunaikkar are the major tribal groups of Kerala. Each group is so heterogeneous in terms of culture, beliefs, livelihood strategies, social organisation, economy, and developmental perspectives. The whole state is divided geographically into seven tribal zones namely Kasaragode, Wayand, Attappadi, Nilambur, Parambikkulam, Idukki, and Travancore (Velappan, 1994). Until the middle of the last century, most of the tribal communities in the state had an isolated life, maintaining very less contact with the non-tribal population. But, in the past few decades, they endured notable changes in their lifestyle, food habits, dress, religious practices, language, worldview, community structure, social interactions, and participation in the decision-making processes. Modern education, the political process, and mass media can be identified as the key factors behind this drastic change.

The tribal settlements in Kerala are an overly sensitive area where people live remarkably close to each other and follow a community-involved way of life. Personal space and restricted compounds are rare in the tribal hamlets of the state leading to the chance of getting the virus spread rapidly if one person contracts the disease. This demanded an extremely important yet delicate way of handling the activities in the tribal communities. The Government of Kerala along with the Forest Department, Kudumbasree, Anganawadis, Local Self-Government, Health Department, and volunteers from various organisations attempted to safeguard the tribal communities from the physiological and emotional issues related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Review of Literature

The academic sphere responded vigilantly during the time of the COVID-19 pandemic. Many research papers were published during the period. Studies related to indigenous people and their life during pandemic were common on national and international platforms. The number of studies from India was comparatively less. Newspaper articles and governmental documents provided basic literature for correlating the pandemic and tribal life in Kerala. Cupertino (2020) in his study on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the lives of indigenous people of Brazil explains in detail the possibilities of the decimation of indigenous groups due to the pandemic. Care strategy and policies are explained with practical solutions to problems that might be faced while executing the programme.

The indigenous Mexican groups are critically examined by Leon (2020) in terms of their social, environmental, and health backgrounds in the context of the pandemic. Strengthening the existing health system in a community-based approach will be beneficial to contain the virus and for the long-term health improvement of the people. Further, environmental pollution leads to many health hazards. The cohesion of the elements development and fighting COVID can have effective progress in the group.

Gosh (2020) explores the interesting relationship between the rituals performed during quarantine and the effectiveness to combat corona virus among the tribes. The study was based on three ethnic tribal groups, Galo Adhi and Nayishi of Tani tribal groups from Arunachal Pradesh. Self-isolation was a commonly-practiced custom from time immemorial among the groups. The study gives a clear picture of the knowledge of tribes regarding the interaction with other communities and exclusiveness in their health habits. Chakrabarti (2020) points out that a balanced and preplanned strategy which ensures food security, health and hygiene, and mental stability is required for the tribal settlements in India for fighting the pandemic. The community-fostered developmental initiatives and grassroots level awareness are the building blocks of this strategy. Officials, self-help groups, and consistently active health workers help equip the tribes to combat COVID-19.

The practical way to cope up with a pandemic crisis is the maximum involvement of people in all initiatives, suggests Krishnakumar (2020). Social distancing, economic contribution, cleanliness of public spaces, avoiding gatherings, and adopting a responsible lifestyle can effectively contribute to the early and easy disappearance

of the virus. Emergency health care, quarantine spaces, and mobile medicines must be prepared in advance. The solutions and practices from other countries can also be implemented for the purpose.

Objectives

The general objective of this study is to analyse the impact of COVID-19 on the tribal communities of Kerala. The specific objectives of the study are:

1. Plot the major activities carried out in the tribal communities during COVID-19 pandemic, and

2. Assess the developmental initiatives specially designed on the onset of COVID-19 pandemic in the tribal communities in Kerala.

Methodology

The nature of the study demands a qualitative research methodology. Qualitative content analysis of newspapers from March to November 2020 and intensive interviews with three officials were carried out. Telephonic interviews were conducted with health professionals from Idukki (Adimali), a volunteer worker from Palakkad (Attappadi), and a tribal community member from Wayanad (Panamaram). The three districts were selected since they have the highest tribal populations and represent the Northern, Middle, and Southern zones of Kerala.

Analysis

I) The Major Activities Carried Out in the Tribal Communities in Kerala

The tribal communities faced several challenges, which they later converted as possibilities and moved forward with all available external aids. The many can be categorised as,

1. Health and Hygiene
2. Necessities and Precautions
3. Awareness Initiatives
4. Online Education

1. Health and Hygiene

Thirteen mobile medical units were functioning among the tribal communities in various parts of Kerala. They were conducting an average of twenty medical camps per month. The medical officer led the camp in which pharmacists, staff nurses, and other paramedical staff also participated. The team collaborated with field workers and supervisors to provide quality treatment to basic illness, post-natal care, immunisation, prevention, and control of communicable diseases. With the outbreak of COVID-19, this regular process was interrupted and later converted to some other flexible and community-friendly means. Initially, there were no cases reported in tribal settlements. At that time government initiated orders restricting the regular medical camps and unnecessary entry into the tribal hamlets. The major issue faced by the tribal communities in the early stages of the pandemic was the misperceptions regarding the health sector. The routine camps were cancelled, and the regularly treated patients had to wait for a long for consultation. Many tribal settlements blocked the route proclaiming their decision of self-isolation.

Later, immunity-boosting camps were actively held in different tribal communities. The Forest Department supplied the hygiene kit consisting of masks, sanitiser, soap, hand-wash, and some generic medicines. Private groups also showed interest in providing sanitation kits in tribal areas. Ensuring the health of aged members and those who were following treatments for diseases were crosschecked. Nutrition Kits were separately distributed to children below the age of six and senior citizens above sixty-five.

2. Necessities and Precautions

Self-proclaimed lockdowns were the most important initiative done by the tribal communities of Kerala, especially in hamlets like Idamakkudy near Adimali. This was not new for the group, who insisted on staying away from society for years. Since most tribal hamlets shared borders with neighboring states, border security was especially important. There were forest paths through which people from Karnataka and Tamil Nadu entered the state. Tribes from Karnataka were rehabilitated in some parts of Wayanad with the help of the health department.

A list of migrant workers was prepared, and the necessary steps were taken to quarantine them once they reach the community. Teams were set to ensure the quarantine of the people. Illicit liquor entry was

strictly prohibited in the state. Washable masks were made by the forest communities. Marking lines around the ration shop and water taps were effective ways of maintaining social distance. The token system for public distributed ration was useful at the time to control the excessive mass in front of the shops. Civil Supplies Corporations in certain areas performed door to door deliveries to stop people from going outside the houses. Community Kitchens were started in many settlements. Forest Department vehicles were fully alert and performed a greater number of regular rounds to ensure complete lockdown. Officials visited aged tribal members in their houses and conducted subtle awareness activities.

3. Awareness

The major challenge faced in the tribal communities during the pandemic was to build a strong awareness among the people. There was a narrow line between providing information and creating panic. Carefully chosen strategy carried out by officials and non-official volunteers succeeded in strengthening the knowledge about COVID-19 among the tribes of even remote places. Break the Chain campaign launched in the state took time to reach the tribal groups. Awareness campaigns about personal hygiene and social distancing in local languages were ensured by training local communities across protected areas. Washbasins and hand wash were installed as kiosks in many points of the hamlets especially at the entries and exits.

Calls for volunteers were uploaded in social networks for working with tribes. Around 400 young teachers, students, political activists, IT professionals, and advocates came forward for creating awareness. Short videos were made on personal hygiene and best practices regarding health and self-care. Those videos were presented by trained members of the community in their own language which had a great impact on the members. Radio Mattoli, a community radio functioning in the district of Wayanad for the past eleven years, played a protuberant role in the dissemination of informative content. The radio with three lakh listeners had already distributed 5000 radio sets for the tribal in the place. Mattoli aired contents in many native dialects.

4. Online Education

When the Government of Kerala launched the online education initiative named *First Bell* on the first of June 2020, tribal students from different areas especially Wayanad were unable to access and

attend the classes. This was due to the unavailability of television sets as well as other digital devices. The government campaigned for installing television sets that were to be placed at Anganawadis, libraries, or study centers in tribal settlements where the students could watch their aired lessons in a safe social distance. Independent groups, virtual communities, and individuals from different streams of life participated in the TV challenge. There were still places without electricity and internet connection making it difficult for online education.

As an extension to the online learning program initiative by the Government of Kerala, classes in six different tribal dialects were being aired in the VICTERS channel. Tribal youths were appointed by the government to act as tribal mentors or Gothrabindhu and ensure education to the lakhs of tribal students in the state. The state education department identified six local languages, Kattunayikka, Paniya, Adiya, Kurichya, Oorali, and Kuruma, to begin with the initiative. Classes were available on the YouTube channel and also in WhatsApp groups.

II) The Developmental Initiatives Specially Designed for the Tribal Communities

Among the different developmental initiatives specially designed for the tribal communities both officially by the government and unofficially by volunteer groups, the following five had maximum outcomes and discussions:

1. Arogya Jagratha Samithi

This was a grassroots level supporting body for the people in-home quarantine. The group comprised of the ward member, ASHA Worker, Anganwadi worker, Kudumbasree Area Development Society Member, Scheduled Tribe Promoter, Community ASHA Member, Rapid Response Team member, Janamaithri Police Officer, an official from local self-government, and other community members as required. The main duty of the group was to monitor the health of members in-home quarantine, observe and ensure isolation principles, conduct inquiries, and adopt welfare measures.

2. Travelling Library

The Forest Department was actively involved in the coordinated works related to the COVID-19 pandemic. During the daily visits, the

Department came to know about the necessity of books and reading materials among the different age groups of the tribal communities during the lockdown. This prompted them to implement the idea of a travelling library in Aaralam. The official vehicle of the forest department carrying almost 3000 books provided a platform for the tribes to explore their reading patterns and choices. Students of primary schools made maximum use of the scheme and the most enthusiasts among them visited the traveling library.

3. Vanika

A major issue faced by tribal communities during the past decades was trade. The products collected and made from the forest had been sold at incredibly low prices. The middlemen who acted as a liaison between the shops and the tribe-trader took advantage of the simplicity and straight forward nature of the community members. Vanika was an innovative initiative that enabled the tribes to sell agriculture and forest products online. The WhatsApp groups explained in detail the products and price and interested buyers could contact for details and pay money online in advance. The project was proposed by the Wildlife Division of Thiruvananthapuram. Now, Vanika comprises 54 tribal settlements. This is an extension of Kani Markets that had been started earlier, but was closed due to lockdown. Produces like pepper, kasthuri turmeric, Malabar tamarind, jackfruit, banana, tapioca, and honey are being sold at market rates. Handicrafts and baskets are also available.

4. Kaithangu

Kaithangu is a project that had been started earlier but was carried out effectively during the pandemic by the officials of Konni including the Tribal Officer, MLA, and District Collector. The program aimed at bringing rice, provisions, medicines, and other necessities at the doorsteps of the tribal houses in 11 Grama Panchayats in Konni. The team reached thirty-seven houses directly. The officials carried big packets of rice and provision on their shoulders.

5. Back to Roots

The Paniya and Kattunayikka tribal groups after the lockdown were allowed to dwell into the forest for collecting their natural food sources. Studies have proven that there are about 200 varieties of edible plants that are being used by tribes from time immemorial.

Roots, tubers, and fruits comprise the major diet of the group. Lockdown and food crises could not unsettle the lifestyle of the tribes who have been through droughts and famines and have always managed to bounce back to life with the help and comfort of the forest.

Discussions and Conclusions

Kerala confronted the crucial stage of the COVID-19 pandemic that was intruding into new clusters across the state. The spread of the virus was increasing progressively. The time demanded care and protection to the weaker sections of the society. This included adults above sixty-five, children below six, patients with a history of cancer or heart diseases, pregnant women, and people with low immunity. The tribal communities come under the vulnerable weak slices of the society that are to be protected in this context. With the low literacy rates and less access to media, the tribal community remained unaware of the current global panic related to the pandemic.

The trickle-down approach was highly criticised for its direct benefits to the lower levels of social class only and hence a grassroots level perspective of development had to be imbibed to ensure the safety of tribal communities from this major health hazard. The national policies related to the tribal populations in the context of COVID-19 were literally appreciable, but practically unrealistic to be adopted. The increased number of tribal populations, density of living, remote habitats, and low immunity to diseases were hindering the process of addressing tribes nationally.

The prime objective of the study was to analyse the impact of COVID-19 on the tribal communities of Kerala. It was found that the tribal communities remain safe from the deadly clutches of the pandemic to date with the best practices and unceasing efforts from many mutually related branches of the government, self-help groups, and citizens. Exploring the impact gave light to certain concomitant benefits of the pandemic i.e. the betterment of general health conditions among the tribes and improvement of lifestyle with the totaling of digital devices and the exposure of online learning.

The study plotted the major activities carried out in the tribal communities during COVID-19 pandemic as follows:

- Activities related to health and hygiene including immunity-boosting camps, perceptions related to sanitisation, and general treatments for existing diseases.

- Notable actions focusing necessities and precautions enlisting the migrant labourers, closing borders leading to the unaccountable flow of alcohol which resulted in familial crisis and physiological issues.

- Awareness undertakings opened new windows of communication to the tribal groups utilising the maximum potential of the current advancements in mass media and technology, and the database of volunteers which can be further employed for developmental edges.

- Online education and digital developments generally in libraries and households are the greatest accomplishments of the period. The study explored five major developmental initiatives that are specially designed for tribes on the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in Kerala.

Kerala has a limited population of tribes compared to other states of India, making it feasible to implement initiatives both at the top and grassroots levels. The easy access to most of the tribal hamlets through roads and by vehicles, comparatively better knowledge of demography, appreciable works from the part of non-governmental organisations, volunteers, students, and activists make it possible to reach out to the tribal communities with better developmental insights.

The success in the implementation of activities and programs on the onset of COVID-19 in the tribal communities is made possible due to the meticulous planning and organised working style at the grassroots level. The coordination between the government officials, health workers, volunteers, and tribal chiefs of the state lead to the harmonious fulfillment of maximum projects as planned.

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Gender and Technology: An Inquiry Based on Technofeminist Approach

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Abstract

This study uses qualitative data to analyze the mutual relationship between gender and technology on the grounds of technofeminist approach. The study was conducted leveraging the theoretical analysis. Judy Wajcman's technofeminism is the basic reference of the analysis. This paper highlights the ideas and notions of contemporary science and technology studies. Also, it highlights the fact that current approaches focus on the mutual shaping of gender and technology, in which technology is conceptualised as both a source and consequence of gender relations. In avoiding both technological determinism and gender essentialism, such theories emphasise that the gender-technology relationship is fluid and situated. These deliberations highlight how processes of technical change can influence gender power relations. A feminist politics of technology is thus key to achieving gender equality.

Keywords: gender, technology, technofeminism, social constructivism

Introduction

Over the last two decades, feminist theories of gender and technology have come a long way. On the early groundwork, feminist research on technology tends to view technology either as neutral or as determining, drawing implications for women that are either over-optimistic or over-pessimistic. By contrast, contemporary feminist scholarship within technology studies, or feminist technology studies, is more ambivalent politically, and sees technology as socially constructed, or coproduced, alongside gender

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(Faulkner, 2001). Current approaches focus on the mutual shaping of gender and technology, in which technology is conceptualized as both a source and consequence of gender relation (Wajcman, 2009). This approach considered the artifacts and the social circumstances associated with them. Linking with gender and technology, feminist scholars like Wajcman recognize that gender is not the only axis of social hierarchy and identity (just as there are sites not primarily marked by gender). Indeed, the enormous variability in gendering by place, nationality, class, race, ethnicity, sexuality, and generation makes a nuanced exploration of the similarities and differences between and across women's and men's experience of technoscience all the more necessary.

Moreover, as McNeil (2007) observes socio-technical relations manifest not only in physical objects and institutions but also in symbols, language, and identities. This notion helps to understand that the social relationship to technology is integral to the constitution of subjectivity for both the sexes. The concept of gender itself is now understood as a performance or social achievement constructed in interaction (Butler, 1990). Rather than conceiving gender as fixed and existing independent of technology, the notion of performativity sees the construction of gender identities as shaped with the technology in the making. Thus, both technology and gender are products of a moving relational process, emerging from collective and individual acts of interpretation. It follows that gendered conceptions of users are fluid and that the same artifact is subject to a variety of interpretations and meanings. (Wajcman, 2009)

This article analyses the mutual relationship between gender and technology on the technofeminist approach. The researcher tries to point out the themes and issues, inquires a theoretical framework based on research methodology suitable henceforth, presents analysis, findings, and conclusion.

Theoretical Framework

Judy Wajcman's technofeminism is the basic reference of the analysis. Technofeminist approach conceives technology as both a source and consequence of gender relations. Gender identity and discourses are produced simultaneously with technology. Thus, Wajcman argues that the relationship between gender and technology is mutually shaping and mutually constructed.

Methodology

This paper aims to analyse the mutual relationship between gender and technology on the technofeminist approach. The researcher selected a qualitative analysis method. This paper is based and conducted using a tool of theoretical analysis through which the researcher analyses the concepts and views of feminist science and technology scholars.

Analysis and Discussions

Feminist perspectives of technology and technical artifacts reshaped the concept of technology itself. Feminist approaches elaborate technology with the cultures and cultural practices associated with it. Over the last two decades, feminist concerns with STS (Science and Technology Studies) have discussed the feminist politics of technology and the idea of mutual shaping of gender and technology. Technology is both a source and consequence of gender relations in this constructive approach.

Technology and Gender

Technology is a fundamental part of social and everyday life (Cozza,2010). Kraft & Siegenthaler (1989) observed that the traditional distinction of technology is either good or bad. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, scientists and scholars have inquired about the role of technology in structuring identities, social relations, and the transformation of the social system. According to Maddock and Parkin (1993), scholars and sociological literature have failed to analyze technology from the perspective of gender for a long time. They believed that technology is neutral and free from any gendered implications. Later, feminists and gender studies observed the relationship between gender and technology. They presuppose that gender is one of the significant structures of the social order and gender relations are found whenever people are found (Cockburn & Ormrod, 1993).

Cozza (2010) observed that sociological and feminist researchers highlighted the importance of gender and technology studies internationally in the twentieth century. Cozza added that some important analyses on co-construction of gender and technology in organizational contexts. According to Wajcman (2004), the gender and technology debate might be the framework of reference for many researchers to network and develop new research and programs, passing from a gender-blind vision to a gender-aware vision.

Harding (2009) pointed out that, from the beginning, a group with different political, institutional, and disciplinary interests in science and technology in the West pursued five major trajectories of gender and science projects. The first trajectory is the position of women in modern western science and their role in scientific and technological research. The second one is the empirical supportive system of the 'sexist science' for the claimed inferiority of women. The third trajectory is about the use and application of technologies against the equality of women. This path mainly focused women's health, reproductive and environmental concerns. Another trajectory questioned scientific and technological education-pedagogy system for restricting women development as scientists and engineers. The most important among the five is the problems of epistemology, methodology, and philosophies of science that produce and support the sexist technological practices. These issues have remained important in science and technology for almost four decades. Later, significant developments have happened in some areas, including the improvement of access for women to scientific studies, academic publications, institutional collaborations, lab and lecture jobs, and the presence in policy contexts. Above all, the crucial achievement of feminism, in this period, is the improvement of epistemological and methodological approaches that restructured the logic of scientific inquiry and its popular regulative ideologies.

The Mutual Shaping of Gender and Technology

Over the past few decades, feminist scholarship has focused on the mutual shaping of gender and technology. The research literature associated with science and technology elaborated that objects and artifacts are not separate entities. It is a part of the social fabric that holds social elements together. The social circumstances shape technological innovation within it. Contemporary science and technology studies dislodged the notion that technology is simply the product of rational imperatives. Also, it discusses the feminist politics of technology on the grounds of mutual construction. As Wajcman (2009) points out, with the development of new technologies, contemporary feminist discussions have been much more optimistic about the opportunities opening up for women. At the same time, a fresh and sophisticated perspective known as the social studies of science and technology has emerged. As a result of cross-fertilization, feminist scholars have drawn, reconfigured, and restructured sociological theories. Those theories consider technology as a sociotechnical product shaped by the social relations produced and used.

Wajcman argues that there is a mutually shaping relationship between gender and technology, in which technology is both a source and a consequence of gender relations. The mutuality between gender and information and communication technology is not immutably fixed. The capacity of women users to generate excellent readings of artifacts is completely relayed on their broader economic and social circumstances. Wajcman pinpoints an example of the mobile phone usage of women in different social circumstances to substantiate her points. She argues mobile phones, which might feel liberating with a western female user, for her mother it may be a tool to keep track of her daughter. In contrast, it may be different in the hands of the woman working traders in the third world countries for them the mobile phone provides the opportunities to communicate with others. Ultimately, many variables such as place, nationality, class, race, ethnicity, sexuality, and generation are highly associated with the mutual shaping of gender and technology.

Faulkner (2001) clearly distinguishes 'gender in technology' and 'gender of technology.' According to Faulkner, for gender in technology, gender relations are both embodied in and constructed or strengthened by artifacts to yield a material form of the mutual shaping of gender and technology. In gender of technology, the gendering of artifacts is more by association than by material embodiment. Faulkner claims that the technology we encounter is often strongly gendered in labour division at home. As Greshuny (1982) says, among the technologies present in the modern household, only a small number of equipment are used equally by men and women. Women and girls more commonly do the routine task of cleaning and cooking. On the other hand, nonroutine tasks of home maintenance and more technical activities are more commonly used by men.

It is not only the uses added on the gender association of artifacts, but designers of the equipment also make gender norms. This argument is clearly illustrated in a study about microwaves conducted by Cynthia Cockburn and Susan Ormrod (1993). They argue that microwave was initially designed and marketed as a 'brown good' for the heating of prepared meals. It also appeals to single men who were expected to be more interested in technical equipment than cooking. Later this product was redesigned as a 'white good' with more complex cooking facilities and sold to family members who assumed that the women do most cooking.

Here, the mutual shaping of gender and technology is evident. Features designed into artifacts manufactured especially for women or men users show and enforce gender stereotypes that, in turn, play into design choices.

Gender and Technology: Social Constructive Framework

The constructivist or social shaping approach treats technology as a socio-technical product. As Bijker et al. (2012) argue, technology is a socio-technical product—a seamless web or network combining artifacts, people, organizations, cultural meanings, and knowledge. Wajcman (2004) conceives technology as both a source and consequence of gender relations and many feminists science and technology scholars widely adopted a social constructivist framework for their studies.

According to Faulkner (2001), the social construction framework of technology rejects technological determinism. It opposes the views that technologies developed in a predetermined direction, also questioned notions like the power of technologies to determine social change and social order. Faulkner also observes that the adoption of Thomas Haghe's concept of 'socio technical' (1986) was an essential step in constructivist technology studies. This word is intended to convey that technology is never just technical nor just social. As Haghes points out, the term socio-technical establishes the relationship between society and technology. It denotes that the expertise and choices involved in designing and developing new technologies are necessarily heterogeneous. The terms like 'interpretive flexibility' also help demonstrate the notion that the particular affordance of technology is not given and predictable. In terms of gender and Information and Communication Technologies Wajcman (2009) observes that feminist science and technology scholarship has explored the effects of gender power relations on design and innovations and the impact of technological change on society. Like this observation, Lie (2003) argues gender relations can be thought of as materialised in technology, gender identities, and discourses as produced simultaneously with technologies. In addition to this, several empirical studies have demonstrated that the marginalization of women from the technological community profoundly influences the design, technical contact, and use of artifacts.

Feminist theories are now much more aware of the contradictory effects of Information and Communication Technology on women. For the same reason, Wajcman's idea about technofeminism neither dismisses technology as appropriate to women nor heralds technology as automatic liberator. The same artifacts might have a different meaning for different groups of women. Revolutions in technology do not create new societies, but they change the terms

in which social, political, and economic relations are played out. A social constructivist approach offers a long tradition of analysing the societal effects to define and distinguish between technology and science.

Conclusion

The intellectual convergence of feminist scholarship and science and technology studies explored the idea that people and artifacts co-evolve and co-existent. Technology is a predictable result of scientific and technological knowledge and emerged as a result of some social concerns. It is a socio-technical process, and gender is an integral part. Women's identities, needs, and choices are constructed together with digital technologies. All the science and technology studies literature associated with the feminist perspective shares concerns about the hierarchal divisions between men and women. Although gender is embodied in technology and science, the relationship is not fixed. The capacity of women users to design, produce, and use the technology depends upon their social circumstances. The key specialist actors of technology, especially in the design of new technical artifacts, are predominantly men and it leads to the absence of particular users like women. While it is impossible to note the characteristics of artifacts that provide inclusiveness in advance, it is imperative that women are involved in the process and practices of technological innovation. This perspective supports identifying and reconstructing the exclusion of people from technical fields and activities. Thus, technology politics is essential to the reorganization of gender power relations.

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A Story of Desire for Journalism Education

■ **SURESH K. S.**[*]

Abstract

This paper is part of an attempt to trace out institutionalization efforts of journalism education in the regional context of Kerala. There are fewer views from academics on the history of journalism education in Kerala. The history of journalism education is mainly filled with the recollection of memories and commonsensical understanding of the past. This narrative begins with a journalism training programme inside and outside the university system. This paper tries to locate the efforts to begin journalism education in the regions of Kerala. The paper argues that there were unsuccessful efforts in the erstwhile regions that were included in the State of Kerala in 1956. This paper is based on a few newspapers archival sources and secondary materials. The undocumented part of efforts to start journalism education pointed to lethargic tendencies towards its history and locating it within the social context.

Keywords: journalism education, Kerala, communication and media studies, Mathrubhumi

Introduction

The field of Communication and Media Studies (CMS) has encountered numerous turns in the area of practices and theory. The debate over the status of the field is not new to this field. During the end of 1950s, the article published by Bernard Berelson in The Public Opinion Quarterly titled *The State of Communication Research* raised a question about communication research in US. The debate showed the presence of various views and concerns over education for the journalism practice

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in that context. It is a vital part of the advancement and improvement of the field. The field of journalism had wide acceptability in the Indian social context. Several social and historical factors offered such a consideration among the public. The field of Journalism had established a strong relationship with the Indian public from the colonial period. The beginning of Journalism training in regions in India is identified as the 1920s. This story of beginning is a redundantly placed within efforts to map the history of journalism training/ education in India. Recently in 2020, academic events organized in India to celebrate one century of journalism education. This way of generalizing journalism education in India, ignores regional differences in the progress of journalism education across the nation-state. This way of history situate regional trajectories in a linear, uniform progressive time frame fails understand the ups and down in different trajectories. This paper mainly emphasizes on the regional historical context of journalism education in Kerala. This paper primarily used archives of Mathrubhumi daily. These archives of the "first draft of history" were less used. Furthermore, this study is constrained to triangulate the available facts with other documents, particularly the official one.

Although journalism education has been popular among Keralite, particularly for the last three decades, the history of journalism education is not considered with necessary gravity. Most of the historical narratives of journalism education try to place the starting of training, the pioneering figures, and institutes that introduced such a course in Kerala. This attempt marks events in chronological order.

Before the independence period, journalism training and education were not widely accepted even though institutions came into existence. Like other regions in India, the Kerala context is also widely acknowledged the practices in the print medium. The print medium facilitated connecting people beyond the existing constraints in the spatial and temporal dimensions. It turned the press into a potential tool for making conscious among the public. Most of the leaders involved in the socio-political issue used writings in print as one of the significant tools for expressing socio-political concerns. This turned the journalist into a socially committed practitioner, always committed to questioning the authority. Gradually, being a journalist is considered an admired label in modern independent India regarding social recognition received among the public. All these factors firmly established the foundation of journalism practices. However, the persons involved in the journalism practice were not trained, persons.

The Indian university system gave not much importance to journalism education. The journalism course was started in independent

India as part of the University education system in 1952. Eapen (1995) documented the beginning of the Nagpur course launched with Dr. Roland E. Wolseley of Syracuse University, New York, as the first Head. During this period, the Working journalists from the Malabar region were urging for a training system for a journalist. The working journalist union demanded a favorable decision from the Travancore University syndicate to start a diploma course for journalism ("Thiru Sarvakalasalayil Pathrapravarthanathinu Oru Diploma Course (A Diploma Course for Journalism in Travancore University)," 1953). The Travancore University syndicate had initiated a favourable decision to begin a diploma course. The Syllabus committee meeting presided by Maloor Govindapillai held in September 1953 proposed to start the course in the next academic year ("Thiru Sarvakalasala Pathrapravarthanathinu Diploma Course," 1953). The committee included Pothen Joseph, P. S George, and K.Karthikeyan. K.P KesavaMenon and Maman Mapillai were in the committee but absent from that meeting. Maman Mapillai requested to be kept out of the responsibility. This demonstrated journalists' interest in receiving training course as part of the educational system despite the representatives from the media ownership being less interested in part of the University's attempt to introduce such a course.

The course embraced the post-Independence spirit in design. The diploma course was designed with a two-year duration, while post-graduate diploma was for one year. The intermediate was set out as the eligibility criteria for the course. The subjects opted for training course were reporting, editing and translation. Comprehensive coverage of Indian constitution, Defamation laws and anti-national laws were included in the theory course. Furthermore, four months of practical training—two months in Malayalam and English newspapers were envisaged as part of the course. The structure and content of the study revealed its intentionality. The course aimed to impart functional capacities for practicing journalism and create a professional journalist within the framework of the newly formed Nation-State.

Travancore-cochin Working Journalists association requested relaxation in basic qualifications for the working journalist with three years of experience for admission in post-graduate diploma in journalism. The University Syndicate submitted the proposal for the Diploma course for Journalism with Government approval ("Pathra Pravarthanathinnu Diploma Course," 1954).

There were no further developments on the proposed course. The working journalist meeting informed their discontent towards the delay in the beginning of the course. The union passed a resolution that demanded beginning of the course in July 1955 ("Pathrpravarthaka

Yogathile Prasagangal," 1955). Although there were urge for journalist union for the proposed course, the status remained stand-still. During the tenure, the regions were incorporated within the newly formed Kerala State. The Travancore University were turned as Kerala University in 1957. Travancore University's proposal were not considered favorably and efforts were unsuccessful. It might be in the context of formation of Kerala University, journalist union continued demand ("Malabar Pathrpravarthaka Yogathile Prameyagal (Resolution in Malabar Journalists' Union Meeting," 1957). Kerala University again came across the proposal to begin new courses including post graduate diploma in journalism ("Kerala Sarvakalasala Thudangunna Puthiya Coursukkal(New Courses at Kerala University)," 1961). Kerala Union of Working Journalists (KUWJ) requested Kerala University to implement a postgraduate diploma in journalism ("Pathrapravarthakarkku Refresher Course Nadathan Theerumanam," 1961). The University were also in effort to getting sanction from the University Grant Commission (UGC). The University Grant commission rejected the proposal for Diploma in Journalism from Kerala University ("Pathrapravarthana Diploma Coursinu Anumathiyilla," 1962).

During these days, KUWJ move ahead with idea of refresher course for journalists. Although the idea for refresher courses and journalism education were dissimilar, this could be seen as a response from the journalist union, as an alternative attempt to offer training in journalism. As part of the State, the educational system was successful enough to offer support for the journalism practice in the dimension journalism education. During 4th five-year plan period, The Kerala University visualized a Centre at Calicut. As part of this proposal journalism department was envisaged at this Centre. However, this has not been approved by UGC ("Kerala Sarvakalasalaykku Aonnara Kodiyude Vikasana Pathadhi (A Development Project for Kerala University)," 1967). The Courses for Journalism were introduced in 18 universities in India during period of second educational reformation. The Universities in Kerala implemented the journalism courses after 1975. One journalism education institute- The Institute of Journalism of the Press Club Trivandrum- is established in 1968 outside university education system. Despite efforts from Kerala University for a course in Journalism, the proposal was not acknowledged by the UGC till 1973. UGC recommended for new two-year Journalism course in Kerala university in 1973 ("Journalism Coursinu UGC Anumathi," 1973). In this situation, two kinds of training institutes were established for imparting journalism training. The proposed course was introduced at the Kerala University only after establishing the Department of Journalism in 1976. The presence of the foreign-trained expertise of Dr. K. E. Eppan and Dr.

J. V. Villanilam shaped the university education system to a wider scope of mass communication beyond journalism. However, the journalism practice was the main of attention of the students. In the 1980s, Kerala's journalism practices amplified and it can be evident in the increase in the editions of major newspapers in the State. The Literacy rate in the State and matching readership of the newspaper were on a high rise. The opportunities for trained practitioners have increased in association with the emergence of media institutions.

Both the programmes maintain the similar structure of the program envisaged during the 1950s for imparting functional practices for journalism. These designs imagine a trained journalist within the nation-state framework. One of the significant differences in the latter course was the introduction of communication research which offers scientific orientation to the field of study. The institutionalized structure and content of the field of communication and journalism study move ahead with an orientation towards communication & media studies; however, the standardized structure of this field of education in the region still pursues its legacy of earlier programme structure. The activities for institutionalization of the field maintain its lacunae with contemporary developments, now arrived at a critical juncture.

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'Back to the Roots': An Inquiry into Tribal Identity and Indigenous Knowledge Production

■ **ROHAN PILLAY A.**[*]
  LALMOHAN P.[#]

Abstract

Knowledge and identity play a symbiotic relationship in the lives of all communities. The role played by one in upholding the other is an area that has been the focus of a number of researchers all over. Similarly, this stands true for indigenous communities as well. Their knowledge capital and expression of identity are matters of political debates in different parts of the world.

In this light, the researcher aims to undertake an epistemological analysis of the term identity and then study the role played by it in the knowledge production of these communities. The researcher then looks at a few different art forms and indigenous knowledge systems to understand and leverage this knowledge production for the betterment of the society as a whole.

Keywords: cultural identity, tribal identity, indigenous knowledge, knowledge production, indigenous knowledge systems.

Introduction

The knowledge capital contained in indigenous communities have the capacity to transform the world. However, this transaction of knowledge capital has been heavily affected by a number of reasons. To this end, it is imperative that a study be conducted to analyze how to engage with indigenous knowledge capital and systems around the globe to ensure a fair and proper cultural transaction.

In the context of this research, the researcher finds it imperative that the study should begin with an epistemological inquiry into the

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term identity. The researcher then moves on to look at a few indigenous communities. The research then widens to examine indigenous knowledge systems, and art forms and how they can be used in tandem to come up with an effective method that would benefit all the stakeholders. In this regard, the researcher has leveraged a qualitative analysis methodology.

What is Cultural Identity?

Gleason (1983) considers American writer, intellectual, and scholar, Will Herberg's *Protestant-Catholic-Jew: An Essay in American Religious Sociology* as a pioneering work that dealt with the concept of identity. First published in 1955, throughout the book Herberg, engages in a detailed discussion of ethnic identity while unravelling the questions relating to the search for identity. Since then, numerous authors and intellectuals have frequently leveraged the concept of identity.

A significant marker in this regard is Robert Penn Warren's *Who Speaks for the Negro* (1984) that was first published in 1985. This book shines light on the importance that the term identity had obtained during the period wherein he "seizes" the word identity to highlight the atrocities and identity problems faced by the blacks in America.

Edward Seaga (1997) puts forth an argument that cultural identity is more often than not concerned with the dissimilarities that occur between similar entities and far less on the similarities that exist between similar entities. Furthermore, he adds that this is far more evident in those communities where the differences are easily evident.

Today, the word identity has grown manifold in its connotations and usages. Shoemaker (2006) argues that philosophers while talking about identity refers to it as the relation that an object has to itself that it does not share with any other object. He further asserts that it would be of greater significance to observe identity not just as an individual essence but instead, it should be seen as a set of traits, capacities, attitudes, and so on that the individual holds on to for a significant amount time which would thereby help in distinguishing them from the group. Brubaker and Cooper (2000) opine that through the combining of social categories and the bases of an individual's self-respect, the word identity has been successful in creating a figurative connection between two critical aspects of social and psychological reality.

Conflict between Classical and Folk Identities

Satchidanandan (2010) considers 'folk' to be something that is ever "vibrant, evolving, and flexible" and on the other hand, he considers

'classical' to be "ordered, rigid, and inflexible". This can be considered to be one of the significant areas where the divide exists between folk and classical forms. However, he argues that the rigidity in this structure is the result of the British Rule in India and also English education that had helped further and cement upper caste cultural values. M. N. Srinivas (2003) speaks of a process called Sanskritization through will castes that were placed lower in the social hierarchy, would gain traction upwards in the societal ladder through the emulation of rituals, customs, habits, and practices of those castes that were towards the upper echelons of the caste hierarchy.

These two ideas compounded together played a significant role in establishing the idea that Indian civilization had its roots in particular Sanskrit texts (Satchidanandan, 2010). "The idea of the primacy of the Sanskrit component became the determinant of action, policy and structure, not only for the rulers but for many of the ruled. What had been fluid, complex and even unstructured, became fixed, objective and tangible." (Cohn, 1989) The development of a kind of folk fundamentalism and hegemonizing nature of the classicism to hold on to its purity has led to a kind of stagnation of folk art forms and thereby also led to the naturalization and sustenance of the categorization (Satchidanandan, 2010).

Tapping into Indigenous Knowledge through Knowledge Systems

Researchers around the globe have started recognizing the immense knowledge capital that is contained indigenous societies around the world and therefore, a number of scholars have been increasingly observing indigenous knowledge systems. This trend is observed not just in developing countries but in developed countries as well. In a study on similar lines, conducted by Hassan O. Kaya from the University of Kwazulu-Natal, South Africa, the researcher elucidates the possibilities that can be realized through the introduction of African Indigenous Knowledge Systems into the educational systems in Africa. This would enable the embracing of more sustainable living methods due to the fact that these indigenous communities have been living in sync with the environment for generations. It would incorporate in the learners' minds the appropriate attitudes that would ensure a balance in the usage of natural resources. This would, therefore, have its effects not just in those parts where they have been implemented but in the entire society as well (Kaya, 2014, pp. 91-92).

However, while on the path of leveraging and understanding indigenous knowledge and knowledge systems, one should be very careful so as not to blindly follow the Eurocentric schools of thought.

This is due to the fact that during an inquiry into the structure and logical coherence of indigenous knowledge as a "philosophy of knowing" should also look into and answer "questions of materiality, spirituality, and metaphysical realms". Therefore, there needs to be a conscious and deliberate engagement towards indigenous knowledge from the perspective that these epistemologies are critical in their own right and do not need to stand on the shoulders of Eurocentric notions. This is the point where the decolonizing and reclaiming of indigenous knowledge can take place (Dei, 2016, pp. 292-293).

Art for Knowledge Production

Through the leveraging of cultural resources such as folk stories, songs, drama, and so on in the teaching process, the learning process becomes more interesting on the whole. Furthermore, this would also ensure that the learners can get in touch with their roots in an interactive way. (Kaya, 2014, pp. 91-92). This can further be leveraged to educate the rest of the world the communities' identity and their relevance. On the same lines, this instance can be extrapolated to the other indigenous communities that reside elsewhere in the world thereby resulting in the preservation of culture and knowledge capital of these communities for further generations down the line.

Additionally, many tribal folk art forms are oral or verbal. This goes against the notions of the written hegemony. However, we should be able to break free from the Eurocentric notions and enable ourselves to be open to learn about the life of tribal communities from these oral records (Dash, 2019, pp.13-14).

Folk texts are a treasure trove of knowledge capital of tribal communities that may or may not be bound by temporal and spatial constraints. The content of these texts may range from personal to public, individual to community-related, life to myth, and so on. It reflects on the life and livelihood of the communities that they belong to (Dash, 2019, pp.13-14).

For instance, dance forms act as a repository of cultural knowledge and social practice to performers, community members, and outsiders as well. It communicates the information that would entail the present state of affairs, conduct of social affairs, and also the human experience. This is also central to the identity of a tribal society due to the fact that dance can either be an embrace or a challenge towards tradition and individualism. (Krystal, 2011, pp. 4-7)

Conclusion

The knowledge capital contained in folk art forms proves to be a treasure trove of information regarding tribal communities whose histories have not been documented due to various factors such as Sanskritization, their dependence on orality, lack of textuality, and so on as mentioned above. By leveraging innovative techniques while also going back to the roots through leveraging indigenous knowledge systems, the society as a whole can be benefitted.

The vast knowledge capital possessed by tribal societies around the world have within them a lot of hidden potential that can transform the world. However, while leveraging these systems, utmost care must be taken to ensure that these transactions do not result in the assimilation of cultures, but instead lead to a more cohesive world view.

This would also help prevent the extinction of large databases of data regarding the different civilizations that have walked this Earth. A proper learning of the knowledge capital would ensure that cultural preservation and not assimilation takes place.

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Shift in the Representation of Widows: Re-reading T V Chandran's *Susanna*

■ **V. H. NISHAD***
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Abstract

In a society which follows hard patriarchal norms, it is not bizarre that films portray widowhood as the end of life. But Susanna (2000) the Malayalam film, tries to accommodate the protagonist Susanna in a liberal perspective. A prostitute by profession, Susanna engages five men at a time, a contemporary parallel to the marital relations of Panchali of the Mahabharata. Asking tough questions about morality, this film tries to redefine the term 'widowhood'. This study, using an exploratory methodology, enquires how Susanna changes the portrayal of widows in Malayalam movies.

Keywords: portrayal, stereotyping, Malayalam Cinema, patriarchy.

Introduction

As per Webster's dictionary definition, a widow is a woman who has lost her spouse or partner by death and usually has not remarried. In *Susanna*, a 2000 Malayalam film directed by T. V. Chandran, the protagonist Susanna (Vani Vishwanath) is a widow of Tomachan, the son of planter Varkey. Following Tomachan's death in an accident, Susanna becomes a widow unsettled in life along with her newborn child. Her life takes an unexpected turn when her father-in-law, Varkey, presents himself as Susanna's new caretaker. To make Susanna's life more secure and cushier, he introduces to her four friends who belong to the elite social class. This article tries to explore the various aspects of widowhood and also attempts to

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see how the film *Susanna* breaks society's conventional notions of widowhood.

Susanna's Life and Status

Susanna's life is made to turn a new leaf when her father-in-law demands her to call him 'Chetta' (elder brother) instead of 'Appachaa' (father/father-in-law). Planter Varkey cunningly convinces her that she should do so because the one who called him 'Appachaa' is now no more. Without knowing much about this mouse-trap set by Varkey, she agrees to that and becomes a mistress to him at first and eventually to his four wealthy friends.

Immediately after befriending Susanna, her four lover-friends along with planter Varkey launch 'Susanna Associates'. Like Varkey, these new lovers of Susanna, namely Col. Ramachandran Nair, Prof. Noor Muhammed, Lawyer Ramakrishna Iyer and Retd. High Commissioner K P Govardanan Pillai, are stalwarts in society. They are renowned and considered to be the best in their professions. Susanna Associates sprouts out of their social, financial, and human capital.

Susanna bonds with five men, which draws parallels to the marital status of Panchali in Mahabharata. If it was Kunthi's tongue-twister that made Panchali to be the wife of the five Pandava brothers, in Susanna's case it was her deep silence that gave planter Varkey the confidence to move ahead and forge a relationship between Susanna and the five men.

Each of these men have their own sexual fantasies and erotic absurdities. While Noor Mohammed (Narendra Prasad), an English professor, teaches her Shakespeare and insists on bondage, the wheel-chaired Retd. High Commissioner, K P Govardhana Pillai (Bharath Gopi) makes Susanna walk nude in front of him for his visual pleasure. Ramakrishna Iyer (Charuhasan), a lawyer, who produces serials on feminist themes becomes an anti-feminist when he uses her in cruel ways for sexual pleasure. Among her lovers, only Col. Ramachandran Nair (Nedumudi Venu), is an exception. The Colonel is still upset that he could not marry his childhood crush Amminikutty. It may be because of this reason that he is always in a 'love/lover-missing' mood and longing for Amminikutty.

Initially, Susanna obeys and obliges the five middle-aged men's sexual fantasies. But as things begin to come under her control, she asserts dominance over the men. It is at this point that Susanna transcends the 'traditional widow' role. Unlike a typical Indian widow who becomes a scapegoat of patriarchy and rigid social customs,

Susanna emerges as a powerful woman who can stand on her own and pursue her dreams.

Women's Status and Studies in India

Before India's independence, little research had been carried out on women's issues and women-based subjects. The primary concern of the researches was to 'depict a linear and glorified account of a women's position' (Desai & Thakkar, 2001) without any reality check. During the first two decades of Independence, the studies concentrated on the dual role of women, that is, taking up jobs along with managing the domestic chores, and the conflicts that emerged.

The post-1975 studies on women were different and they exposed the shocking condition of women even after many years of Independence. The late eighties, nineties, and twenties were challenging since studies and research wanted to showcase women's position and status in the light of globalization and in sync with the newly emerged marketplace. Women's negotiating space for assertion became very vocal by then. For the last two decades, researchers and writers have been engaging themselves to study the representation of women in Indian films. Sowmya Nandakumar (2011), Gunjan Sharma (2015), Sibal Vatika (2018), Aysha Hanna (2019), and Snigda Deshmukh (2020) are a few who have contributed to a better understanding of women in Indian cinema.

Kati Patang (1971), *Sholay* (1975), *Prem Rog* (1982), *Water* (2005), and *Baabul* (2006) portray a stereotyped representation of widows. Due to the portrayal of widows as an extension of certain common traits, Bollywood narratives constructed a particular perception of widowhood. Critics argue that while mainstream Indian cinema has been inching away from stale narratives, and even discovering narratives that focus on women, Bollywoood's portrayal of widows is problematic. "It has remained mostly static for decades now. They are almost always shown as blank, emotionless beings who are constantly blamed for every mishap that occurs in their lives. Apart from being extremely divorced from reality, these portrayals don't do much for changing the gendered ways in which we view women", argues Tanya Jha (2018) in her article *When Will Bollywood Portray Widows as Complete Humans*.

In Malayalam cinema, things are not much different. In films like *Uyarangalil* (1984), *Nokketha Durath Kannum Nattu* (1984), *Onnu Muthal Poojyam Varey* (1986), *AchuvettanteVeedu* (1987), *Akaasadoothu* (1993), and *Parinayam* (1994), the female protagonists or supporting characters are widows who are vulnerable to male

gaze and patriarchal stereotypical conventions. Widow characters like Devi Menon (*Uyarangalil*), Kunjoonjaamma (*Nokketha Durath Kannum Nattu*), Aleena (*Onnu Muthal PoojyamVarey*), Rugmini (*AchuvettanteVeedu*), Annie (*Aakasadoothu*), and Unni Maya (*Parinayam*) are presented as the mundane widowhood-followers facing constant questioning from either family or society. They just confine themselves to their homes and stop socializing in fear of 'unwanted' moral policing. However, *Susanna* breaks this 'widow model' by presenting a female protagonist who speaks out, travels alone, and socializes with men.

Speaking Images

There are certain occasions in which Susanna's expression of selfhood in public and private become rather vocal. Whenever she meets Ramesan (Colonel Ramachandran Nair's son) and his teacher friend Joseph, Susanna is more confident and assertive than the stereotyped ordinary (widow) woman. In a gendered society in which the status of girls/women is given a low priority, the status of a widow would rarely be any different. However, Susanna fights against such odds through her boldness and life experiences. Though she lives the life of a secret sex-worker, Susanna's public life is safe and secure until her men become weak. She could make friendly conversations with Ramesan and there is an occasion in which she was even ready to travel with him without knowing the travel route. It also shows Susanna is least bothered about society's gaze on her. She believes in her free will and the urge for freedom of expression.

As the relationship between the five men and Susanna becomes more complex and strong, she develops an indefinable bond with them. In one of scenes, Ramakrishna Iyer is drinking alcohol and in the backdrop a relaxed Susanna is reading one of her favorite books. She mimics Iyer's old sexual perversions by parading in front of him in skimpy clothes. This action of Susanna is a referral to her nude parade which was forcibly induced by Iyer once. Such scenes are galore in *Susanna*. There is another poignant scene where a rebellious middle-aged Susanna is smoking in front of her younger self's photograph. T.V. Chandran, the director of the film, has made this a piercing cinematic montage by inserting the painting of Jesus Christ behind the window grid. Susanna of the two time periods and the Christ in the middle (through the window grid) become a frame fingering revolt inside her.

Susanna's conversations with the priest are noteworthy. They speak about life, sin, and pseudo-morality of society. According to

Susanna, her life is in companionship with the so-called sins. The priest is envious of her maverick life and he develops a secret crush on Susanna. Before leaving the church, the priest presents her with a painting that foretells Susanna's destiny. The painting resembles Suasanna's repeated nightmare of her being attacked by a mob.

Susanna's birthday is yet another occasion that depicts her newly achieved womanhood as a widow. Though in her fifties, lovers are queuing up to satisfy Susanna and she dances before them presenting herself as the 'Mrs' of each lover. This indicates that though Susanna has not publically admitted, she is happy to be their secret wife. Her transition to widowhood makes her boldly embrace her identity as Mrs. Susanna Muhammed Varkey Pillai Nair Iyer.

Susanna's Encounter with Bhargavi

Another female character who demands close reading in *Susanna* is Bhargavi, Col. Ramachandran Nair's wife. While Susanna represents widowhood, Bhargavi (Urmila Unni) represents wifehood. In normal parlance, 'wifehood vs widowhood' is the state of 'security vs 'insecurity'. But in *Susanna*, the widow becomes secure as time passes while the wife becomes insecure, breaking the stereotypic notions. Many critics read the conversation between Susanna and Bhargavi to be an exceptionally bold and beautiful one. Neelima Menon (2019) sums up the interaction like this: "though supposed to be a conversation between the 'other woman' and the wife, it ends up as a moment of sisterhood between two women trapped in relationships of abuse and dependence."

Like Susanna, Bhargavi is also a victim of fate. Wavering between her husband and son who are obsessed with another woman (Susanna), Bhargavi longs for a better deal. There are two occasions when they meet each other. During their first encounter, instead of cursing and abusing Susanna—the norm in conventional films when a wife meets her husband's mistress—a lovely session between two kindred spirits blossoms. Bhargavi consumes alcohol with Susanna and they talk at length about women's status in marriage. 'When a man decides to be a man, he remains within the family. Whereas when a woman decides to be a woman she will be an outcast,' laments Bhargavi. In the drinking scene, in an air of euphoria, Bhargavi and Susanna sing this verse to each other, loudly mocking society. Bhargavi also criticises the system in which married men can have multiple relationships while women do not have the liberty to choose multiple partners. Throughout their encounters and conversations, Bhargavi's hidden admiration for Susanna is visible. She realizes that Susanna is

living a life that Bhargavi can only dream of. When Bhargavi meets Susanna for the second time, Susanna had just survived a bomb attack. Bhargavi consoles her soulmate. This further bonds the two and leaves the audience to reminisce about their first encounter where she tells Susanna, 'I can relate with you'. Their encounters mock the double standards, sickening patriarchy, and similar issues in Kerala society.

Susanna's Language

How do words matter when we speak about gender politics? Language is a system that defines our individuality. There are incidents in which Susanna uses language as a tool for asserting her bold identity. Apart from Shakespeare, Susanna reads and quotes Malayalam writer V K N, Brazilian writer Jorge Amado, and Greek writer Kazantzakis. Susanna's tongue is rich with political readings and quips. This is why once Susanna comments on romance on a pessimist note: 'From my experience, romance is not a pleasant thing.'

Conclusion

What filmmakers, poets and writers have assiduously created over time about 'femininity' and 'love' get an unsettling jolt in T. V. Chandran' *Susanna*. She is not the stereotypical woman that the Malayali audiences are used to, either in mainstream cinema or otherwise, points out C S Venkiteswaran (2010), a popular film critic in Malayalam. In T V Chandran's *Susanna,* the protagonist breaks all conventional notions held by traditional Kerala society. She wears modern outfits, drives on her own, smokes, drinks, overtly speak about sex, reads great literature, and travels per her will.

The narrative in *Susanna* spans over three decades: seventies to nineties. Like in many of T V Chandran's other films, in *Susanna* also, he crafts a complex human personality, a widow: Susanna.

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Mirroring Social Prejudices: Reviewing *Pariyerum Perumal BA. BL*

■ **JASEELA S.**[*]

Abstract

*I*ndian cinema has played an essential role in portraying the caste politics of Indian society. Some directors, especially from South India, have shown the courage to bring to light the views of the oppressed class and their traumatic life experiences through their movies. These movies have constructed a new domain and discourse in Indian cinema. Most of these directors themselves belong to the oppressed community, and they portray their own experiences authentically and realistically.

'Pariyerum Perumal BA. BL' is a Tamil film released on 28th September 2018 and directed by Mari Selvaraj. The film is an anti-caste drama. It goes through the highly emotional struggles of a subaltern youth, namely 'Pariyerum Perumal,' who aspires to become a spokesperson for dignity and human rights for his community. Almost a standard feature of our society, where everything is determined by caste, the protagonist, Pariyan, undergoes different forms of humiliation regarding his caste or identity. It also addresses the categorisation of class and gender in contemporary society through the instance of Tamil Nadu in 2005. The name means 'The God who mounts the horse'. However, the cinema proves that his life experiences contradict his name.

The study is a review of the cinema 'Pariyerum Perumal BA. BL' by taking into account social prejudices. It also considers the picturisation and text of the songs in the cinema to analyse the social constraints of the period. The study adopted the research method of qualitative content analysis.

Keywords: Pariyerum Perumal, caste politics, social prejudices, class and gender, honour killing

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Introduction

Cinema has been a great medium that offers a reflection of the socioeconomic and political changes in the society. It is a form of mass media which has not only been a piece of art but also a great tool of social reforms and a mirror reflecting the social issues prevalent in the society.

In the world of cinema, the social problem genre has had an important place throughout cinematic history, producing significant films from the early silent period to the studio era and on into the contemporary moment. Many social problem cinemas received attention through portraying caste, class, race, gender, disability, politics, or other subjects.

From the beginning of the Indian cinema, filmmakers like Satyajit Ray, V Santaram, Satyen Bose, Raj Kapoor, Shyam Benegal, Sanjay Leela Bhansali, Prakash Jha, Mani Rathnam, Bimal Roy, Mehboob Khan, Amir Khan, Rajkumar Hirani, Madhur Bhandarkar, and many others, through their hard-hitting and realistic films, have made people give some serious thoughts over the prevailing social and political issues in the society.

Post the 90s, when the Indian society woke up to globalisation and liberalisation, new-age cinema makers too broke traditional Bollywood's definitive cinematic boundaries. There are hundreds of such films which were based on social issues and realistic characters trying to reflect what and how are things taking place in society. Earlier, most of the films were made with the rural background in their backdrop. But these days, with urbanization taking place across the country at a rapid pace most of the films being made these days focus on urban lives also. After 2000, Indian films comes with new issues. Today's films clearly reflect the changing pattern of lives in villages and towns, new social ethics, and the impact of modernisation and globalisation.

Some prominent films like *Manam oru kurangu* (1967) by Cho. Ramaswamy, *Thevar magan* (1992) by Kamal Hasan, *Kizhakku chirimayilee* (1993) heralded the rise of social problem films in Tamil cinema. Recently, Pa. Renjith's *Madras* (2014), *Kabali* (2016), *Kaala* (2018), M. Manikandan's *Kaaka Muttai* (2014), Mari Selvaraj's *Pariyerum Perumal BA. BL* (2018), Vetrimaaran's *Asuran* (2019), etc. construct a new domain and discourse in Indian cinema by telling stories of so-called 'untouchables'.

Dravidian ideologues like Annadurai and Karunanidhi were experts in writing dialogues and screenplays to propagate the Dravidian ideology. Those films was a predominant factor in the emergence of the political

party, Dravidar Munnetra Kazhagam with a thrust on anti-caste activities. These movies revealed the social and bureaucratic oppression. From the early decades of the 20th century, Dravidian movement maintained a relation with anti-caste tradition from the North, especially with Dr. Ambedkar and his activities. Many directors adopted Ambedkarite ideologies in their cinemas. Mari Selvaraj's *Pariyerum Perumal BA. BL* is one such prominent movie in this category. It portrays the social, political, and cultural background of Tamil Nadu through the depictions of Pariyerum Perumal's life experiences. Pariyerum Perumal is the main character in the cinema, which means 'the God who mounts the horse'. However, the cinema proves that his life experiences is contradicted to the name, because of the struggles he faced by the antagonists.

Pariyerum Perumal BA. BL offers a new face to the Tamil cinema industry. It is very significant in its way of addressing different categorisations such as caste, class, gender, etc. through the social prejudices portrayed in the cinema. It is very important to use the mass medium of cinema as a tool to convey the social, political, and cultural issues of the contemporary society. So, studying how cinema uses its elements to convey its message is very significant in the era of media. This study inquires how this film stands distinctive from other anti-caste dramas and social problem films.

Objectives

The general objective of this study is to find out the representation of social prejudices through the portrayal of various characters in the cinema. For the effective evaluation some of the important elements from the significant scenes are taken. These include dialogues, properties, background, and denoted and connoted meaning from the scenes.

Here, the study has two specific objectives that supported the general objective of the study:

1. Find out the way of depicting social constraints of the period through the picturisation of the songs in the cinema *Pariyerum Perumal BA. BL*

2. Analyse the text of the songs and its contextual variances in the cinema *Pariyerum Perumal BA. BL*

Method of Review

The study has adopted the method of classifying the scenes based on the analytical units fear, vengeance, humiliation, isolation, acceptance, anger, arrogance and greed which are pre-dominantly depicted through various characters and contexts in the cinema are thus classified. Examined the main elements such as scene, time, dialogue, properties, and background. Meanings and expressions thus observed are classified under units of analysis and interpretations are made. Reviewed the cinema, considering caste as the major category. Different phases of caste subjugations are identified from the Cinema and observations are interpreted.

Reviewing Scales

For the purpose of scientific review, a scale is prepared. According to the scale, the scenes are pinned and located. This scaling is based on the emotive units. The scenes thus identified are sub grouped and highlights are discussed.

Sl No	Units for Review	Scene wise identification
1	Fear	**Honour killing**
2	Anger	**Relationship trauma**
3	Vengeance	**Humiliation in the College**
4	Isolation	**Gender - Revealing Identity**
5	Greed	**Class – Customary question**
6	Arrogance	**English Enigma**
7	Acceptance	**Education as Resistance**
Analysis of Songs – Discourses and Scenes		

Depiction of 'Honour Killings'

The movie portrays the gory face of caste violence through Karuppi's murder. Karuppi represents a section of an oppressed caste and is portrayed to be voiceless like other victims.

The cinema depicts many deaths as honour killings. These take place in homes, rivers, cesspits, and railway tracks. Here, the caste violence is carried out through honour killings, although it appears as normal deaths to the society. The gory face of the caste oppression here is the cruel,

unkind old man. The victims are portrayed as voiceless beings. The old man is shown to carry out these brutalities for the sake of saving the caste honour and thereby, provide a service to God.

However, as he couldn't complete his assumed role of the 'moral custodianship' when Pariyan escapes from the brutal attack, he commits suicide. It is moral panic which forces him to this act of self-execution.

Relationship Trauma

When Pariyan goes to the reception of Jo's sister, her relatives thrash Pariyan in an unexpected way and one among them eventually urinates on him. They call Pariyan a dog and asks among themselves, "How dare he come to our home and sit equally before us?" Jo's father further asks Pariyan if he thinks that studying together would make them equal. The scene depicts that both the act of shaming and inflicting humiliations marked by power through physical and psychological violence. Here, the privileged society refuses even the friendship of two between different castes.

Pariyan cannot expose his feelings towards Jo. When the lecturer asked his feelings towards Jo, he wants Jo to be more than a friend or a lover, an angel. He equates her to his dead dog Karuppi or the last ray of hope in his life.

Jo's relatives with the fear that Jo is determined to marry Pariyan. In order to protect their caste honour, they assign the contract killer, the old man, to kill Pariyan. Although, he knows that Pariyan is a good person, he still decides to kill him because sympathy, love, acceptance, good behaviour, etc., hold no ground in the face of caste honour. He attacked Pariyan and sets up the situation like an accident. But his plan fails. Here, Karuppi comes as a saviour (spiritual) for rescuing Pariyan and she is awash with blue. He learns that the old man is the contract killer sent by Jo's family. Then Pariyan gets the strength to resist all of those trying to attack him.

He tells to Jo's father "I am not less than you in anything—in studies, in brain power, in muscle power. In work you are no match for me. My hands have held the plough. But it has also wielded the swords! I will be here, I will study what I wanted. Do what you can.". Here, Pariyan has gained the confidence to say what he thinks. His words carry confidence, strength, and protest. Pariyan defeated him through the power of words. We can see Jo's father's face change expressions.

Humiliation in the College

Cinema speaks of the ways in which students are oppressed and humiliated in a democratic law college. There is a thirst for power which ends in fight between people of two caste groups in the Government college. 'Other caste' students identify Pariyan and his villagers through the village name and subject them to ragging. Here, the caste-based insults and humiliations from the educational institutions stands as the part of social delineation. The upper caste students only attack and humiliate the lower caste students and indirectly ridicule their appearance.

A English lecturer humiliates Pariyan in front of the all students and call him "A chicken shit who comes through the quota system for laying eggs". This dialogue is directed at students of the oppressed castes. However, the cinema takes a standpoint which communicates that this misunderstanding of the reservation system is due to ignorance.

After facing various humiliations from different people Pariyan garners the strength and courage to come forward. When Pariyan decides to sit in the front benches, Sankaralingam is determined to put him back in his place. When he is shoved into the lady's toilet by the upper caste students, although he gets humiliated, he is not subdued. Pariyan storms out to the crowd including the Principal in a protesting way. He appears with head held high. Here, Pariyan becomes assertive and vehement. He expresses his anger and protest towards the antagonists.

Discrimination occurs even in democratic spaces such as buses. An old man offers a seat for Pariyan near with him. However, on learning his village, the old man moves away from him.

Gender-Revealing Identity

Initially, Pariyan didn't want to own up his father because of his gender identity. He is a 'Karagattam' (folk dance in Southern Tamil Nadu) dancer, dresses like a woman, and dances. So, Pariyan kept telling others that his father rears bullocks. After getting the strength to show his identity Pariyan brings his father to meet the Principal. His father is loving and innocent in his appearance. Pariyan's father faces abuses and humiliations regarding his identity from Sankaralingam and his friends. He is subjected to transphobic slurs. They make him run half naked on the road following which he meets with an accident. Pariyan's father belongs to the LGBT community and he represents thousands of people who are abused and humiliated in this way.

Class–Customary Question

Pariyerum Perumal BA. BL opens with Pariyan's pet dog Karuppi in his village Puliyankulam. Pariyan's village sheds light on an under-privileged community. It points out the economic backwardness through their appearance. The society considers the under-privileged, economic backward community as lower class.

In a scene pariyan's friend asks another, "Why should we put up with these insults?". He replies, "They have everything. Our fields and farms are with them. We have only our empty stomach. So, we have to shut the hell up until the day your father and mine stop working in their fields." This a direct representation of the power relations. It highlights the caste and class system in the contemporary society and it can certainly be considered as one of the social problems in the Indian society. In many scenes, cinema depicts the economic backwardness of Pariyan. He learns the attributes of urban life from Jo. The movie not only portrays the rural life but also tries to bring out the modernity of Tirunelveli town.

English Enigma

Being from an under-privileged village and Tamil-medium educational system, Pariyan and his friends found it difficult to understand English—the language used by teachers. Although good in studies, Pariyan is weak in English. When Pariyan expresses his feeling towards the way of English learning, the lecturer deems Pariyan lazy.

Although a Government college is considered to be a democratic space, questioning of teachers especially by students from oppressed castes is frowned upon. The lack of knowledge in English is considered to be a source of shame. His demand for classes in Tamil gives and assertion to the idea of education in mother tongue.

Education as Resistance

"Education is an instrument to liberate the Dalits from illiteracy, ignorance and superstitions and thus enable them to fight against all forms of injustice, exploitation and oppression"- Dr. B R Ambedkar

The cinema reveals its ideology in many significant scenes. In the scene of Pariyan's law college admission, Pariyan claims he wants to become like Dr. Ambedkar. It poignantly evokes Ambedkarite politics. Dr. B R Ambedkar was the first law minister of India and the man who fought for the Dalit community. Through Pariyan's ambition to become like Dr. B R Ambedkar, the cinema clearly says that the education of

law is the key to get the liberty of oppressed. On his first day of college, Pariyan introduces himself as *Pariyerum Perumal BA BL* with a line over it'. He wants to become BA BL that is why he adds it even while studying for it.

In another scene, the interaction with RKR Raja makes him take a decision to become a lawyer to liberate himself and his people from the caste oppression from the hands of the Police. The scene points out the oppression even from the troubleshooters of the society and understands the reason behind the ambition of Pariyan, which is to become like Dr. Ambedkar. People don't want to seek revenge but they rather want to get power through education.

In another scene, the new Principal also points out the power of education to eradicate oppression. The new Principal understands that Pariyan is the victim of caste prejudices. So, instead of taking disciplinary action, he explains his own subjective experiences of discrimination as a son of shoe mender, a traditionally oppressed caste and how he survived the worst of the caste prejudices to become a law college Principal. He is an Ambedkarite and considers education as the key to liberty. He gives freedom to Pariyan for doing whatever he wants and to become like him. His logic says, "Let him die fighting, instead of killing himself." The Principal carried a photo frame of Ambedkar in his table.

Questioning the Status Quo

Pariyan forgives his oppressors and willingly opens a conversation with them. Jo's father says sorry to Pariyan for what they did to him, makes Sankaralingam shake hands with Pariyan, and appreciates him for not disclosing the issues to Jo. Still Jo didn't understand anything. She has a happy face. Pariyan mentioned the freedom that offers Jo. However, in the case of Pariyan, who belongs to an oppressed community, the situation is entirely different. When Jo's father asks him "My daughter is so obsessed with you. Don't you feel the same over her?" Pariyan replies, "I don't know. Before I could understand it, you tore me into pieces. I have to die so many times before I can say what I feel.". Through these words Pariyan points out his community's position in the society. Whether he wants to become Ambedkar, or he wants the lecture in Tamil, or he wants to express his affection to Jo he is taught a lesson that he is not free to do so. Some are subtle, some are brutal, some can even get lethal. When Jo's father says to Pariyan, "Let's see, things can change tomorrow. Who knows it.", he replies, "I know Sir, As long as you are the way you are, and expect me to be the

dog, you want me to be nothing will be change. Everything stands as the same." The main argument and politics of the cinema are hidden behind this reply. It showcases the oppressors' attitude towards the oppressed. Pariyan mentioned that the perception of the upper caste needs change. He remarks that till the upper caste men want to be themselves and want oppressed as dogs, nothing will change. Thus, he demands the privileged to take onus of the inequalities that they have imposed on the oppressed communities over centuries and demand justice for them. Unlike other anti-caste cinemas, *Pariyerum Perumal BA. BL* ends with hope for the future generation. Millions of youngsters, from the coming generations, who love, live, and make this world transcend caste boundaries, would destroy the caste hegemony.

Depiction of Social Constraints through the Picturisation of Songs

The movie *Pariyerum Perumal BA. BL* is remarkable in many ways, and the treatment of its songs is also distinct. Like many other cinemas, Pariyerum Perumal doesn't use the songs merely for the portrayal of romantic scenes and entertainment. This cinema uses songs as a tool to convey the ideology and politics of the cinema through the portrayal of the social constraints. It approaches a new style of singing through the rap vocals and angry protest music. The way it uses songs to neatly layer the cinema in such an intricate manner that everything the audience sees or hears, triggers something within and without. Its music is composed by Santhosh Narayanan.

The first song 'Adi Karuppi..En Karuppi..' is a painful song about Pariyan's pet dog Karuppi. Its visuals depict the funeral of Karuppi, her murder by the upper caste guys, and the relationship between Pariyan's family with Karuppi. The song showcases the village landscape and economic backwardness of the villagers. The song mourns the death of Karuppi. The oppressors kill the dog mercilessly by tying it to the railway track to get dismembered by passing trains. So, the song obviously sheds light on the social constraints of caste and honour during the period. Caste killings go beyond the boundaries of caste and humans and take the lives of even other living beings.

The second song 'Vanakkam vanakkamunga..' introduces Pariyan's village life and days in college. Economic backwardness, caste-based exclusions, class-community bonding, and other characteristics of the villagers are depicted in the song. It pictures the village as primitive and undeveloped, and it portrays the lives of the under-privileged community. In the depiction of Pariyan's college life, the song , which includes the fights between different caste groups, poster proclaims 'Red

has many meanings', visuals of Pariyan studying Tamil books, notebook covers featuring movie stars, etc., gives a clear idea about the social situation of 2005.

The third song 'Pottakkaattil poovaasam..' is the picturisation of a burgeoning relationship in the college campus between an under-privileged boy and a privileged girl. It also depicts the campus violence around them. It combines the typical romantic scenes with the violence stirred by casteists. The shots include the fights, protest of political parties, caste-based issues, and the good times of Pariyan and Jo. It also exposes the different economic status of Pariyan and Jo. So, the song clearly speaks about the social situations in the college campus through the portrayal of the political activities, caste issues, inter-caste relationships, etc.

The fourth song of the cinema 'Naan Yaar..' is an angry protest, which exposes the idea that Dalit lives matters. Here, the song picturises the humiliations, assaults, and abuses faced by Pariyan, while also showcasing various honour killings faced by the oppressed caste. We can see the visuals of venomous creatures, blackboards filled with zeroes, and humiliations faced by Pariyan through the frequent shots. The song showcases the caste killings in homes, rivers, cesspits, railway tracks, and so on. It focuses on the gory face of caste hegemony. In this song, Pariyan, Karuppi, and other people of the community, are painted with blue—the colour of Dalit resistance. The song infuses Pariyan with awakening, strength, and recognition. The picturisation of the song takes into account the social prejudices of the contemporary society in Tamil Nadu.

The fifth song of the cinema 'Engum pugazhthuvanga..' addresses a new aspect in the film as the gender identity of an individual. The song introduces a folk dance in Southern Tamil Nadu (Karagattam) which is performed in the village festivals. Here, Pariyan's father comes as the Karagattam dancer with some female dancers. He dresses like a woman and dances. The song showcases the emotional bond of Pariyan's family. His father is a loving and innocent man, but is feminine even when not working. Through introducing Pariyan's father, the cinema addresses an individual from the LGBT+ community. This is an attempt to bring to light the plight of the community members.

The sixth and the last song of the cinema 'Vaa rail vida polaamaa..' enforces the politics of the cinema through a single frame. The picturisation is simple but meaningful. The song brings forth the status quo of the contemporary society through two tumblers. The two glasses fill the frame. One carries black tea and another carries lighter milk tea. First is drunk by Pariyan and the second by Jo's father. The scene shows

that the milk tea is slightly higher than the black tea. The two glasses divided by a jasmine flower which drops from Jo and it represents her. The song hopes for a better tomorrow, but the shot points out the status quo still remains.

Analysis of the Texts of the Songs and its Contextual Variances

The analysis of the six songs in the cinema is done through the textual analysis of its lyrics. The first song of the cinema starts with the line "Karuppi en Karuppi.." and it is presented in the pristine form of a vocal language. It announces the gory face of caste hegemony. Through the text, the song sheds light on the deep relationship between a man and his pet dog, and the exploitations faced by an under-privileged community. The lyrics introduces the different kinds of humans and their attitude towards the under-privileged. The song is a warning for the oppressed to be alert.

The second song starts with the line "Vanakkam vanakkamunga". It is the song that welcomes the audience to Pariyan's village. Through the lyrics Pariyan and his natives address themselves and opens up their ideology to the guests. The song explains the geographical area of Puliankulam village. It introduces the folk or cultural tale of Puliankulam. Through the song, cinema tries to familiarise the culture and ideology of an under-privileged community.

The third song that starts with the line "Pottakkaattil poovaasam" is poetic and is used to tell the blossoming inter-caste relationship between Jo and Pariyan. The lyrics are written from the point of view of Jo.

The fourth song is an important one which starts with the line "Naan yaar?". Here, the song is high in lyrical value and expresses one's anger and protest against oppressors. The lyrics opens up the humiliations, discrimination, abuses, and harassments faced by the oppressed community that includes Pariyan. Through the lyrics, Pariyan searches for his identity and he gains more strength and courage to say what he feels. Here, Pariyan becomes the voice of the voiceless. The lyrics exposes the ways of killing them to maintain caste pride. Pariyan changes to an assertive and vehement person from an innocent youth. Here, the oppressed identifies his position among the society and it changes him.

The fifth song starts with the line "Engum pugazhthvanga" and it addresses another oppressed section of the society—gender minority. Here, the lyrics of the song is taken from a traditional folk tale and combined with the lively folk dialogues. It uses the 'Nellai' slang used in Tirunelveli. The song is used to perform the 'Karagattam' dance which is performed by Pariyan's father.

The sixth and the last song of the cinema starts with the line of "Vaa rail vida polaama". Here, we can feel that the cinema has reached a peaceful situation. It may last only for a short time, but the song lies at the climax of the cinema which seems like an apology to the oppressed communities. Here, the cinema brings a higher caste girl who doesn't consider caste pride. The lyrics of the song is a welcome note of hope to a casteless society. It gives the nostalgic feeling of childhood which doesn't affect caste-based discrimination.

Conclusion

The study is conducted on the movie *Pariyerum Perumal BA. BL* directed by Mari Selvaraj in 2018. An attempt has been made to find out the representation of social prejudices through the portrayal of various characters in the cinema. A qualitative content analysis has been adopted as the method of the study. This research helps obtain a broad understanding of the movie's political ideology through the analysis of its content. Cinema poignantly evokes the Ambedkarite ideology. In the movie, Mari Selvaraj has made an attempt to portray a kind of categorisation constituted by the external agencies of caste, class, and gender, and its consequences faced by the oppressed community.

Through the analysis conducted, it can be proved that the cinema represents social prejudices mainly through the caste, class, and gender issues. It addresses the socio-political realities of the period. Cinema portrayed a hierarchal society belonging to Tamil Nadu, through the life experiences of a subaltern, Pariyerum Perumal. Movie mainly focuses on the portrayal of caste politics in the contemporary society.

The study proved that the songs in the movie are used as a tool to announce the politics of the cinema. Through the six songs, the cinema portrays the social, political, and cultural realities of a society. It gives strength to cinema in a remarkable way. Influence of the text of the songs and its contextual variances gives an authentic and pristine understanding of the social situation in Tamil Nadu. The text of the songs are presented as direct, simple, and strong. It has greatly influenced the cinema to portray the experiences, struggles, and protest of the oppressed in a raw manner. Overall, *Pariyerum Perumal BA. BL* is distinctive in the social problem films through its content, picturisation, dialogues, and ideologies.

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