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Editor's Note

This issue of *Communication and Journalism Research* contains quality research papers from various fields of study viz Mass Media, Political Science, Language and Literature, Election Studies, Film Studies etc. The articles in this issue focus on topics like media influence on elections, emergence of new media, citizen journalism, representation and misrepresentation of gender, caste, and race in films and news etc. The authors have approached these topics of relevance from the perspectives of their respective fields and meticulously presented the results. A reader of this issue will be enlightened with newer ideas, methods and approaches that the authors have adopted in their research paper.

A majority of researchers in this issue deal with negation of human rights visible in various strata of society in variegated forms. Zacaria T.V's article "Developmental Activities and Human Right Issues in India: A Study of Life-livelihood Debate in Kerala" problematizes how the developmental measures upheld by various governments in Kerala in the wake of creating employability for ensuring the right to livelihood of a minority adversely affected and threatened a majority's right to live. The researcher establishes that these imbalanced developmental strategies of governments have proved to be faulty as they negated basic human rights of many. Ms. Neha Pande's "Documentaries on Tibet and Human Rights Violations: A Study," probes into the negation and violation of human rights in Tibet caused by Chinese occupation of the region. Similarly, the article "Effectiveness of Social Media in Promoting Human Rights: A Critical Analysis" by J.K. Panda and Santhi Mathai explores the role of social media and citizen journalism in exposing violations of human rights and their significant roles in safeguarding the same. "Reality Bytes: Anand Patwardhan's Documentaries on Human Rights Issues" by Abdul Muneer V also deals with issues of human rights as portrayed in the select documentaries of Anand Patwardhan.

Media-related articles also have found a significant space in this issue thanks to their in-depth analysis and innovative ideas. Obed Ebenezer, in the article "When the Media Makes Heroes: Malala Yousafzai and Journalistic Ethics" conducts an inquiry into the role played by media in moulding Malala Yousafzai as an international icon. The researcher, by holding the banner of journalistic ethics high, critiques the undue and unbalanced coverage extended by media on the issue.

Jallikkattu protest in Tamilnadu had been sensational and the wave had captured Tamil diaspora across the globe by sensitising about the quite need of protecting Tamil cultural identity and performances thereof. Tamil diaspora

unprecedentedly responded to the issue through the new media and registered their protest. Rashmi Raja V.R. and Dr. C. Velayutham in their article “The New Media and Tamil Diaspora Identity: A Case Study of Jallikattu Protests” attempt to explore the new media’s crucial role in gaining visibility for the Tamil Diaspora community which was given far less attention by the mainstream media. At the same time, placing the information society paradigm to study media communication in Muslim contexts, K.A. Nuaiman’s research paper “Community Paradigm in Media Studies: A Response to Hamid Mowlana” problematizes Hamid Mowlana’s proposal to employ an Islamic community paradigm so as to study media in same and similar contexts.

Aswini K. P. and Sikha N in their article titled “Portrayal of Children in War-struck Regions: A Study on the Movies *Turtles Can Fly* and *Bekas*” investigate into the veracity of portrayals of children in the select movies that depict children in war-struck regions. The researchers identified that the movies have succeeded in realistically portraying the onslaught of war encountered by those children. At the same time, “Popular Cinema and the (Re)construction of the Left Popular in Kerala” by Muhammed P uncovers the political implications of films made in Kerala. He argues that what can be termed as “red films” made by left-leaning filmmakers undertake the construction of a new “Left popular” in the state which in result contributes to the imagining of a new “people”.

The research paper “Vijay Tendulkar’s *Kamala*: Masculine Violence and Media” by C.G. Shyamala critiques gendered and prejudiced approaches of media while giving coverage to issues of relevance. The researcher depends on various episodes in Vijay Tendulkar’s play *Kamala* to establish her argument that media have unjustifiably contributed to the construction of masculinity in line with patriarchal structure of Indian society. At the same time, in the article “Privately Employed, Print Oriented, Professionally Educated, Less Experienced, and Badly Paid: A Professional Profile of Kerala Journalists,” Meljo Thomas Karakunnel and Muhammadali Nellyyullathil attempt to find out the interrelationship between the desired act of processing of news by journalists and their professional and personal life situations.

Othering and marginalization encountered by the Blacks on racial grounds and Dalits because of caste system have always worked as dehumanizing mechanism. Umer O Thasneem’s efforts to bring out similarities in the institutionalization of discrimination based on any of these social phenomena are realized in the article “Caste and Race: Mechanisms of Dehumanization.”

When the Media Makes Heroes: Malala Yousafzai and Journalistic Ethics

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Abstract

Malala Yousafzai was relatively unknown before her blog “Diary of a Pakistani Schoolgirl” was published by *BBC Urdu* in January 2009 about her experiences of living under the Taliban rule. Propelling into prominence, she gave interviews in print and on television, was nominated for the International Children's Peace Prize, was the victim of a Taliban assassination attempt, was featured in the 2013, 2014 and 2015 issues of *Time* magazine as one of "The 100 Most Influential People in the World", was awarded Pakistan's first National Youth Peace Prize, became the recipient of the 2013 Sakharov Prize, spoke at the headquarters of the United Nations, and was the co-recipient of the 2014 Nobel Peace Prize.

Gender, race, ideology and religion along with a pinch of politics played a major role in creating, or rather “manufacturing” the personality and identity of Malala: a brave, courageous child fighting passionately for a cause, in spite of numerous risks and even the threat of death. Drawing on her autobiography *I Am Malala*, and on the narratives of Adam B Ellick and Irfan Ashraf- the journalists who introduced Malala to the world through *BBC Urdu* and *The New York Times*, this paper examines, in light of prevailing concepts of journalistic ethics, the role played by the media in moulding Malala as a heroine, and its consequences.

Keywords

Malala, Journalistic and Media Ethics, Human Rights, Undue and Unbalanced Coverage

Introduction

Say the name “Malala”, and one can hear about education, of girls going to school, of the United Nations, of the Nobel Peace Prize, and of the violence of the Taliban. One usually does not associate the media with Malala, and certainly the notion that there was a violation of journalistic ethics and human rights by the media with relation to Malala will sound a bit far-fetched. However, this paper seeks to underline the fact that the media played a

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prominent role in the creation of the personality of Yousafzai Malala, and that the Taliban's attempt on her life was but a grave consequence of it.

A Brief History of Malala

Malala Yousafzai was born on 12 July 1997 in the Swat District of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province in Pakistan. She was named after Malalai of Maiwand, a warrior-heroine of Afghanistan. The literal meaning of her name is "grief stricken". Her father, Ziauddin Yousafzai, ran a small school called the "Khushal School". She grew up in a school. As a toddler, Malala used to walk around the school, and sometimes the female teachers even taught class with her sitting on their laps. By the time she was three or four, she knew enough to be placed in classes for much older children.

Ziauddin Yousafzai liked to engage in political discussions and soon became locally known as a reputed local speaker and activist. In 2007, Irfan Ashraf, a news reporter who worked for *Dawn News* went to Swat to report on the aftermath of an earthquake. While he was there, he noticed a cleric, Maulana Fazlullah who was gaining a quick popularity among the people. Fazlullah, who was the son-in-law of Sufi Muhammed who founded "Tehrike-Nifaz-e-Sharia-e-Mohammadi" (TNSM) or "Movement for the Enforcement of Islamic Law", a militant group that sent men to fight in Afghanistan, introduced himself as an Islamic reformer and an interpreter of the Quran. He was the leader of the Taliban in Pakistan. He set up a FM Radio station and began to broadcast from daily seven to nine in the morning and again from eight to ten in the evening. In the beginning he talked to people about adopting good habits and abandoning bad practices. He asked men to stop smoking and using tobacco, heroin and hashish. He even told the correct way to do their ablutions. Then slowly he began to warn people to stop listening to music, watching movies and dancing-such acts would invite the wrath of God, he said. Many women were impressed by his charisma and gave him their gold jewellery and money. Then he closed down beauty parlours, banned shaving, told women not to go to bazaars, and stopped health workers from giving polio vaccinations. Next, Fazlullah began holding a "shura", a kind of local court. People liked this as justice was speedy, and began going to him and his men to resolve grievances about anything from business matters to personal feuds. The punishments were usually public whippings.

In the process of reporting the rise of the Taliban in Swat, Ashraf came across Ziauddin. Many people were afraid to talk openly to journalists, but Ziauddin was very vocal and liberal. He became an source, and as their relationship progressed, became friends. He was also becoming well known in the local media circles as an outspoken activist who was not afraid of speaking his views.

In 2008, Aamer Ahmed Khan, the head of the *BBC*'s Urdu service and his colleagues discussed a novel way of covering the Taliban's growing influence in Swat: Why not find a schoolgirl to blog anonymously about her life there? (Cooke, 2012). Their correspondent in Peshawar, Abdul Hai Kakar, asked Ziauddin if he would be willing to allow one of the students in his school to blog about the closing down of schools. He could not find anyone willing to talk because of the fear of the Taliban, but he suggested that his daughter could be the one to write instead. To protect her identity, Kakar chose a pseudonym, "Gul Makai", the heroine of a Pashto folktale. The entries, which ran on *BBC* websites in Urdu and English from January to March 2009, were a hit, and were also regularly reproduced in local Pakistani media.

Around the same time in 2008, David Rummel, Senior Producer for News and Documentary at the *New York Times* recognised that a story on the closing of the Swat schools could be more powerful, than reports on floggings, bans, killings and suicide attacks which were becoming more and more common as the Taliban established their foothold. Subsequently, Adam B. Ellick, correspondent for the *New York Times*, contacted Irfan Ashraf about the possibility of being a "fixer". In journalism, a fixer is a person, often a local journalist, who is hired by a foreign correspondent to help arrange a story, and to act as a translator and guide, and to gain access to local interviews that the correspondent would normally be unable to do on his own. Ellick wrote:

We need a main character family to follow on both the final days of school (Jan 14–15) and again on the possible new days of school (Jan 31-feb 2)... And most of all, the family and daughters should be expressive and have strong personalities and emotions on the issue (as cited in Brenner, 2013).

When he read this, Ashraf was reminded of a young girl with "bright brown eyes" and a "piercing gaze" whom he had seen in the computer screen of the editing console of the *Dawn Television* news in Peshawar earlier in 2007. When he enquired about her, the bureau chief had told him that she was "Takra jenai" which in Urdu means "a shining young lady" and that her name was Malala. Ashraf immediately suggested her name to Ellick.

On 14 January, just eleven days after her diary began to be published, Irfan Ashraf arrived with a cameraman at Malala's house in order to shoot the documentary. The documentary *Class Dismissed* was aired that spring, and Yousafzai and her father became famous on the international scale for their work on girls' education. Following this, she began to appear in television on *Geo TV*, *AVT Khyber*, *Daily Aaj*, and on *Toronto Star* for various programmes including interviews and to publicly advocate for female education. By December 2009, it was an open secret that it was Malala Yousafzai who had written the *BBC* blog "Swat: Diary of a Pakistani schoolgirl".

Later, Malala met Richard Holbrooke, the Ambassador of the United States to Pakistan and Afghanistan; and also had a meeting with Major General Athar Abbas who was the chief spokesperson of the Pakistan Army and its head of public relations. In October 2011, she was nominated for the international peace prize of Kids Rights by Archbishop Desmond Tutu. Shortly after, she was invited by the Chief Minister of Punjab Shahbaz Sharif to Lahore to speak at an education gala. She was also awarded Pakistan's first ever National Peace Prize, where she met the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani.

As her profile became more and more public, she started receiving death threats from the Taliban. However, her father was reluctant to accept the protection offered by the police. On October 9, 2012, while she was returning home in the afternoon with her friends in the school-bus after writing an exam, two bearded young men boarded the bus and asked, "Who is Malala?" Thinking that the young men were journalists seeking to interview her, the other girls looked towards Malala. Pulling out a pistol, he fired three shots at her in point blank range. The first bullet went through her left eye socket and out under her left shoulder. The second went into her friend Shazia's left hand. The third went through her left shoulder and into the upper right arm of another girl, Kainat Riaz (Malala, 2013, p.).

Malala was immediately driven to the Swat Central hospital. Soon, the army took charge and airlifted her to Peshawar. She was later shifted to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham, UK. The assassination attempt received worldwide media coverage and produced an outpouring of sympathy and anger. She made a rapid recovery. On July 12, 2013, she spoke before the United Nations. The day, which was also Malala's birthday was declared as "Malala Day" by the UN.

On 10 October 2014, Yousafzai was announced as the co-recipient of the 2014 Nobel Peace Prize along with Kailash Satyarthi. On 12 July 2015, her 18th birthday, Yousafzai opened a school in the Bekaa Valley, Lebanon, for Syrian refugees.

The Making or "Manufacturing" of Malala

After the Taliban's attempt on her life, Irfan Ashraf, in an anguished article titled "Predatory Politics and Malala," wondered if he and the journalistic community were indirectly responsible for the attack on Malala. In later talks and interviews, he blamed the *BBC* and the *New York Times* for unnecessarily exposing her to dreadful consequences. In an interview with Marc Hermann that was published in the *Pacific Standard*, he said: "We needed a doll, didn't we? We needed this story that will fill the belly and we needed Malala to say these things. Everyone else is scared to say things" (2012).

This is revealed when one examines the circumstances that led to Malala becoming known in the international media as a girl who stood up for education and her rights.

Malala's diary which was published as "Swat: Diary of a Pakistani schoolgirl", was compared by many, including the former first lady of the United States, Laura Bush and by the *Washington Post* as a modern version of Anne Frank's *Diary of a Young Girl*. But whereas the diary of Anne Frank was spontaneously written, and discovered only later by her father, Malala's diary was written for the sole purpose of publication. Her experiences were taken down by BBC correspondent Abdul Hai Kakar over the phone. She recounts:

I had never written a diary before and didn't know how to begin. Although we had a computer, there were frequent power cuts and few places had Internet access. So Hai Kakar would call me in the evening on my mother's mobile...He would guide me, asking me questions about my day, and asking me to tell him small anecdotes or talk about my dreams...Then he wrote up my words and once a week they would appear on the BBC Urdu website...I was a bit shy to start with but after a while I got to know the kind of things Hai Kakar wanted me to talk about and became more confident. He liked personal feelings and what he called my 'pungent sentences' and also the mix of everyday family life with the terror of the Taliban (Malala, 2013, p.129).

This raises up a question of considerable seriousness about the authenticity of her diary. Was it was Malala's own narrative or was the reporter trying to elicit a formatted response and later polishing it. But responding to accusations that he had coached her, Kakar told that her words "ran unedited" (as cited in Brenner, 2013).

However, her diary started to receive attention, and newspapers began to print extracts. She says "I began to see that the pen and the words that come from it can be much more powerful than machine guns, tanks or helicopters...And we were learning how powerful we are when we speak" (Malala, 2013, p.131).

Soon after this, Irfan Ashraf who had been hired as a fixer by the *New York Times*, went to Malala's house in order to shoot the documentary on behalf of Adam B. Ellick. The documentary was intended to focus only on the plight of education and not on the Taliban's brutality. But when the documentary was released, the editors added additional video clips of Taliban floggings. Ashraf spoke out, saying that the "NYT's morbid fascination with the horrors of the Taliban presented Malala as a symbol of resistance in a time when she was still living with her family in Taliban-controlled Swat Valley...the editor overlooked the horrible fact that the child protagonist was within reach of the merchants of

death” (2014). The *New York Times* explained that the gory scenes were actually part of the Taliban’s tactics and that they were only reporting the real life of Swat residents. In his article, “*Predatory Politics and Malala*”, Asraf admitted that:

Back then, the exercise was something of a thrill for all of us, so much so that it made me blind to journalistic ethics and to the security of my friend Ziauddin. It didn’t occur even once to me that there was a threat in this situation for the then pre-teen Malala. This was partly because the documentary was about education and making video packages was part of a daily routine (2012).

However, the international media realized that a young girl’s voice of innocence can be much more powerful than weapons of war and destruction. Jennifer Braunschweiger, editor of the *More* magazine underscores this point: “Why is it that a girl’s voice can be so powerful? Perhaps it’s that even when the world goes haywire, we all want our kids to have the same things: a full stomach, a warm bed, a comforting hug. A safe place to learn and a safe place to play” (2013). Malala acknowledged this fact in her autobiography: “The more interviews I gave, the stronger I felt and the more support we received. I was only eleven but I looked older, and the media seemed to like hearing from a young girl” (2013, p.117).

And this fact made her bold. She was no longer worried about hiding the identity of “Gul Makai”; in fact she notes in her autobiography that “it seemed like everyone knew I had written the BBC diary” (Malala, 2013, p.161). Aamir Ahmed Khan, the head of *BBC Urdu*, was quick to pass on the blame of revealing Malala’s identity upon her father, Ziauddin. An article in the *Time* magazine titled “Pakistani Heroine: How Malala Yousafzai Emerged from Anonymity” which was based on interviews with Khan, states that “the teenage blogger shot by the Taliban had been anonymous on the BBC’s Urdu service - until her family decided to take her public” (Cooke, 2012). The article referred to the instance in 2008 where Ziauddin Yousafzai had taken Malala to a local press-club event in Peshawar, where she gave a speech titled “How Dare the Taliban Take Away My Basic Right to Education?” that was widely publicized in Pakistani newspapers and on TV.

But this is a disturbing fact, because Ashraf in “Malala: The Journalistic Ethics of Source Well-being”, that was published in *ViewsWeek* points out that “much before her father could disclose anything, journalists in Peshawar and Swat [the writer included] knew that Malala was writing diary entries for the BBC using her pen name “Gulmakai.” Therefore, I assume from my association with journalism in the region that it was not difficult for the Taliban to know who was writing against them. Normally, journalists covering the so-called ‘war on terror’ from Peshawar and Swat cultivate good relations with the Taliban”.

He continues: “If writing a diary was a commitment between Malala and the BBC correspondent Abdul Hai Kakar, who leaked Malala’s identity to other journalists in Peshawar?” He also stressed the fact that the BBC Urdu chief cannot absolve himself of the responsibility for what happened to Malala by shifting the blame on her father. “Despite knowing well that Malala’s secrecy was slippery and the revengeful Taliban would settle scores with the child protagonist once they got the chance, the BBC encouraged the 11-year old child by providing her a platform to write what she could not say publicly against the Taliban” (2014).

Irfan Ashraf goes on to assert that Malala’s security was deliberately ignored or was not even an issue for consideration “as long as the poor child served the editorial interests of both these elite media outlets[the *BBC Urdu* and the *New York Times*]” (2014). But, security for its own was evidently important for the *NYT*, because Adam Ellick did not come to the Swat valley to shoot the documentary himself, but instead sent Ashraf, because, in Malala’s own words, “it was too dangerous for foreigners” (2013, p.133).

The question, whether eleven-year Malala was mature enough to understand the consequences and implications of what she was doing, remains unanswered. This matter has been whitewashed by the *BBC Urdu* and the *New York Times* by pointing out that the consent of Malala’s father was taken before publishing and broadcasting her views and face.

The next issue of importance, whether Malala was mature enough to become famous is also unanswered. Although, this issue may tend to be more psychological in nature, the fact that Malala was denied a normal childhood by being in the centre of media attention must not be ignored. When a child is exposed to fame, the development of his/her personality is also influenced by it, at times leading to an over-inflated sense of oneself.

Ashraf underscored this point in an interview with Marc Hermann when he asserted that “(when) the international media came. They started talking about her and she knew that she had become important. She had become a very big voice... I want to give her agency. But we made her this icon. I don’t know if, at that age, you can understand what it means to become an icon” (2012). Adam B. Ellick also conceded that he was “part of a system that continuously gave them awards ... which emboldened her ... and made her more public, more brash, more outspoken” (as cited in Brenner, 2013).

From a child whose first published words were “I am afraid” (Malala, 2013, p.130), where even a man shouting on the phone scared her, Malala became bold and even rash to the extent that on the talk show *A Morning with Farah* she said, “If a Talib is coming, I will pull off my sandal and slap him on

his face” (as cited in Brenner, 2013). Later, even after receiving direct threats from the Taliban, she refused to stop speaking and also turned down an offer of protection from the police.

Because of her rising popularity, Malala was able to meet Richard Holbrooke, the Ambassador of the United States to Pakistan and Afghanistan; and also Major General Athar Abbas, chief spokesperson of the Pakistan Army and its head of public relations. After, she was nominated for the international peace prize of KidsRights by Archbishop Desmond Tutu, in October 2011 she was invited by the Chief Minister of Punjab, Shahbaz Sharif to Lahore to speak at an education gala. Malala started to openly attack the Taliban. At the gala, she talked publicly about how she had defied the Taliban edict of closing down girls’ schools by attending school secretly, and that she was not afraid of anyone (Malala, 2013, p.179).

She was also awarded Pakistan’s first ever National Peace Prize, by the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani. She spoke at the Sindh assembly, and even had schools named after her. She was quickly turning into a hero. The media continued to give wide coverage of her activities, so much so that she admitted that once “so many journalists thronged to the school that day that it turned into a news studio”.

Even after the Taliban threatened to kill her, Malala was not troubled. She believed that the Taliban would not attack her because she was just a ‘child’. “People often said the Taliban might kill my father but not me. ‘Malala is a child,’ they would say, ‘and even the Taliban don’t kill children.’” (2013, p.131, 136). Even when her father wondered if they should stay quiet for a while, Malala refused:

I don’t know why, but hearing I was being targeted did not worry me. It seemed to me that everyone knows they will die one day. My feeling was that nobody can stop death; it doesn’t matter if it comes from a talib or cancer. So I should do whatever I want to do.

‘Maybe we should stop our campaigning, Jani, and go into hibernation for a time,’ said my father.

‘How can we do that?’ I replied. ‘You were the one who said if we believe in something greater than our lives, then our voices will only multiply even if we are dead. We can’t disown our campaign!’

People were asking me to speak at events. How could I refuse, saying there was a security problem? We couldn’t do that, especially not as proud Pashtuns. (2013, p.188,189)

Even when the police informed them that Malala's national and international profile had attracted attention and death threats from the Taliban and that she needed protection, and offered guards, her father was reluctant to accept the gesture. Ashraf speaking later in an interview with the *Pacific Standard* said that this seeming courage was not inherent, but rather "manufactured" because of the coverage given by the media and the encouragement offered by the public opinion.

Irfan Ashraf also accused the media for turning Malala's advocacy for education into a solid campaign against the Pakistani Taliban (2012). By highlighting the issue of education, Malala was used as a tool to attack the whole structure of the Taliban and all its associated activities. However, it has to be remembered and reiterated that the Taliban did not attack Malala Yousafzai the schoolgirl. The Taliban attacked Malala Yousafzai, the icon.

While the international media was quick to condemn the barbaric and cowardly attack of the Taliban upon a young school girl, it has not introspected about its own role in making Malala a target. Aamer Ahmed Khan, chief of the BBC Urdu, does not regret finding Malala and helping take her voice to the public. He said:

If I was to sit here at my desk today and think, oh my God, if we hadn't found her, this would never have happened, that would actually mean that I am not taking into account the contribution that children like Malala make to a cause that we so strongly believe in. Would you be talking about the state of education for girls in Pakistan if it had not been for her? (as cited in Cooke, 2012).

While there is no doubt to the fact that the issue of girls education has been made visible for discussion, the underlying question if Malala's right to life was denied due to the role played by the media has continued to evade serious discussion. Only Irfan Ashraf who has since claimed to have "disassociated [himself] from such projects" has cast doubts on the journalistic integrity, ethics and standards that has been followed, and is being followed by what he terms as the "elite media". He wondered if the media professionals in the West would put their own children in the path of harm the way they have allowed themselves to do with children in poor countries (2014).

Other Issues for Consideration

It is interesting to note that both the *BBC* and the *NYT* had the idea of using a child's voice rather than an adult's to speak against the oppression of the Taliban. But, Malala was not the only female child to go to school in secret. However, after the blog was published and the documentary broadcasted, the security of the other girl students have been compromised. The safety of

students who go to Khushal school has also been greatly affected, as now the identity of the school has been made public, thus making it more vulnerable to possible attack by the Taliban in future.

While many have pointed out that it was only after the shooting that the world has been made aware of the atrocities and oppression committed by the Taliban, the question that is not discussed is whether it was right, whether it was in tune with journalistic and ethical standards of protecting the identity of sources, to expose a teenage girl to the heights of fame, and ultimately, to the danger of death. The fame given by the media, which made her bold, also gave her a bullet in the head.

It may be true that the media helped the world become aware about the effects of Taliban rule, and on growing terrorism. It raised awareness about the lack of education, the oppression and difficulties that women face in developing regions. It even made a young teenage girl the youngest awardee of the Nobel Peace Prize and one of the most famous personalities of the time.

But at what Cost?

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Documentaries on Tibet and Human Rights Violations: A Study

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Abstract

The European Union along with other member states such as Canada, France, Germany, Iceland, Japan, New Zealand, Poland, Switzerland, the US and the UK at the 30th session of the UNHRC in September 2015 condemned the mass arrest of Chinese Human Rights lawyers and directed the PRC to provide main reasons behind the instability. China has been for long criticised for forcibly occupying Tibet and exploiting the people and natural habitat. Human Rights issues like death of political prisoners due to torture and lack of medical care, failure of PRC to provide education, childhood mortality, forced sterilisation and maternal health in majority Tibetan areas, religious repression and Tibet's right to Self Determination have been covered by several documentary filmmakers. The present study strives to analyze the documentaries made on the Human Rights issues in Tibet.

Keywords: China, Culture, Documentary, Human Rights, Language, Religious Freedom, Self Determination, Tibet.

Introduction:

Tibet for long has faced repression by the People's Republic of China. Despite International pressure, human rights situation in Tibet remains grim. More and more issues involving Tibet have gained international attention. The protests against rising oppression and atrocities on Tibetans have forced PRC to highlight legal justifications before the international community. The Tibet in exile government and activists for free Tibet has made tireless efforts in raising issues of human rights violations in China occupied Tibet. (Democracy, 2016) However, because of strict surveillance by the Chinese authorities, it has been extremely difficult to establish information flow between Tibetans and Tibet population in exile. China ranks the lowest in the World Freedom Index (Classement de la liberté de la presse 2016 | RSF, 2016) which suggests its authoritarian characteristic. The two legal demands of Tibet, Right to territorial integrity and right to self determination protect the nation's demand for economic, political, religious and cultural freedom. The International

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Commission of Jurists also recognises Tibet's historical claim to sovereignty. China believes the historical claim it makes and therefore, denies Tibet the right to determine its future. The right to self-determination in Chapter 1, Article 1 (2) of the UN Charter states: "The purposes of the United Nations are: ...To develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principles of equal rights and self-determination of peoples..." and explains the logic behind Tibet's demand for self determination. Importantly, Right to self determination is the right of the peoples and not of a group or an individual. Therefore, Tibet's characteristic as a distinct group supports its demand for self determination. The United Nations on several instances like in 1961 and 65 has also asked China to respect Tibet's right to self determination.

In 1980 Hu Yaobang visited Tibet and conducted a survey on the effects of 20 years of communist rule. He found forced collectivisation had reduced the economy to nothing. The inadequate infrastructure and total dependency on China reminded him of colonisation. His six point reform policies suggested that the Tibet Autonomous Region should exercise its autonomy, Tibetan farmers must be exempted from taxation, tailored economic policies for Tibet must be drafted, central government should provide more subsidies for the improvement of local economy, all efforts should be made to develop and preserve Tibetan culture, education & science and participation of Tibetans in local administration should increase and Han cadres must be withdrawn. (Schwartz, 1994) War propaganda has been an inseparable part of covert operations carried out by authorities. Tibet too has witnessed the same. From the beginning, the Chinese government has claimed that the People's Liberation of Army had liberated Tibetan nomads from abusive monks who ill treated them like feudal serfs. (B.Roberts & A.Roberts, 2009) However, it is worth noticing that as of December 2015, out of the total number of 2081 known Tibetan political prisoners, 967 are monastic including those detained, disappeared or sentenced. (Democracy, 2016)

More than 140 Tibetans have self immolated themselves as a resistance against Chinese repression (Democracy, 2016) Chinese authorities have accused the Dalai clique for inciting the immolations. Tenzin Phuntsok, self immolated in December 2011 while protesting the Chinese policies and rule in the Karma Township Chamdo, Tibet Autonomous Region (Tibetan Dies after Self Immolation in TAR – Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, 2011) Chinese authorities have taken punitive measures against families and villages of self immolators. (Annual Report | United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, 2016)

Some Tibetans have become frustrated because of the prolonged torture done by the Chinese authorities. After the execution of two Tibetan prisoners for attempting to escape from Drapchi prison in May 1990, several printed posters

were pasted in the streets of Lhasa which threatened violence against government officials. "If directly or indirectly any harm comes to the life of one of the patriotic Tibetan heroes presently in prison, then we will not be able to forsake the unity of Tibetan race, and the Chinese who are chiefly responsible will receive retribution without hesitation. This is a warning to the communist Chinese invaders that they will have to bear complete responsibility." (Schwartz, 1994) The predominance of religion and the ideology of non-violence have prevented them from starting an effective independence movement.

On 6 March 1992, two days after the UNHRC voted against a resolution directly criticising China for human rights violations in Tibet, Tiger-Leopard Youth Association issued a letter addressed to the Secretary General of the UN, US president and the Tibetan government in exile hinting that Tibetans were considering violence in their struggle for independence. (Schwartz, 1994)

Documentary captures the actual, photographs it, edits it and shapes it. It then provides form and pattern on the basis of direct observation. (Gierson, 1946) When the filmmakers and critics in the first world countries during the 1920s and 30s started using the term documentary regularly as a discrete practice of filmmaking, it was perceived as a form of democratic and social pedagogy. (Kahana, 2008) The filmmakers are able to raise social discussion, address a public belonging to many spheres and impose itself as a form of mass communication. (Chaney, 1993) It is essentially a transitional medium and carries fragments of social reality from one group to another, one time to another and from one place to another. (Kahana, 2008)

Several documentary films have been made on the Tibet issue by independent filmmakers as well as Tibet government in exile with the objective of highlighting the history, reasons and consequences of the Tibet issue. Several filmmakers have attempted to raise concerns of the Tibetan population inside Tibet and in exile.

Objectives of the Study:

1. To find out Human Rights violation issues addressed by the films
2. To examine the issue of Right to Self Determination addressed by the films

Methodology:

Thematic Content analysis of four documentary films made from 2004-2008 was done. The following films were selected for the study:

1. Buddhism What Remains of Us by Francois Prevost & Hugo Lattulippe (2004)
2. Dispatches - Undercover in Tibet by Tash Despa & Jezza Neumann (2008)
3. Leaving Fear behind by Dhondup Wangchen & Jigme Gyatso (2008)
4. Tibet – unveiling the Truth – the sufferings in Tibet by Golong Rinchen Sangpo (2008)

The above mentioned films were selected on the basis of a simple criterion i.e. ‘Films made inside Tibet’. The period of study has been deemed essential in the history of Tibet as the country saw one of the biggest uprising in 2008 followed by several self immolation instances and stricter surveillance in China.

During the analysis of each film, 4 broad provisional categories Religion, Freedom, Dignity of life and Culture & Language were identified. Each provisional category was further analysed and the following 8 themes emerged:

1. Tibet before and after annexation by China
2. Religious Freedom
3. Culture & Language
4. Torture
5. Nomadic Life and Chinese Rehabilitation Programmes
6. Exploitation of Natural Resources
7. Support from International community against human rights violations
8. Self Determination

Data Analysis and Interpretation

The themes that emerged after elaboration and refinement of categories have been analysed in detail below.

Tibet before and after Annexation by China

In ‘Unveiling the truth – The sufferings in Tibet’, the old interviewees have a common experience to share. They narrate how China exploited the rich

and wealthy Tibetans when it annexed Tibet in 1959. The Tibetans were tortured and killed. “Our life became very much like that of a wandering dog in the distant places. There was not enough food or clothing. We faced many problems such as being subjected to the three punishments of squeezing, beating and rounding up. Therefore, forceful ruled and being made to plead guilty for something we were not responsible for.” (Unveiling the truth – The sufferings in Tibet) The old generation share their stories about how their parents were arrested and killed by the Chinese authorities on no charges. Many of them were not allowed to even visit them. Many Tibetans were orphaned and were left to starve. “Hat of being an evil person” was put on several people and caused great suffering. They also agree that Machu (Yellow River) was blocked by human corpses in areas such as Dengshong, Denglag and Domdoe. Many sons were made to dance at the cremation sites of their fathers and vice versa.

Many interviewees told that the Chinese authorities confiscated their wealth and arrested them. Several lost their families and were orphaned at a very young age and have struggled for dignity of life since then. Scarcity of food compelled Tibetans to feed on grass and excreted dung. Many interviewees were sentenced to imprisonment soon after the annexation and they spent 7 years in the prison. The troops left them with no food, no clothes and no wealth.

Only about 5% of Tibet population survived around 1958. Many monks and layman Tibetans were arrested and tortured. “They kill the people they want to kill and arrest the ones they want to arrest.” (Unveiling the Truth– The sufferings in Tibet) The Interviewees strongly feel that China will continue to torture them and their suffering will never end. They also feel unification with their compatriots in exile will help them attain freedom and only then will their suffering end. They suggest Tibetans inside and outside Tibet must act towards getting Tibet back into their own hands. They think collective action is the only method. (Leaving Fear Behind)

The older generation thinks if the Dalai Lama returns to Tibet, if all Tibetans are able to meet him, only then he could work towards attaining freedom for Tibet. It is also revealed that many young Tibetans under the Chinese have not heard the Dalai Lama. They are over whelmed to watch the video smuggled by the narrator. (What Remains of Us) On one hand the Old generation is deeply worried about the safety of the Dalai Lama if he returns to Tibet and on the other they also see his return as the only hope. The younger generation expressed their desire to escape from Tibet to either India or Nepal through the treacherous journey across the Himalayas. (Dispatches - Under Cover in Tibet) Every year at least 3000 Tibetans attempt to escape. One such interviewee who managed to escape with great difficulty sharing his experience said that on 30th Sept 2006, 75 refugees including 13 children attempted the one month trek. Chinese bodyguards spotted the group. They were armed with guns

and started to open fire at the group. The Western climbers recorded the action. They also helped Lobsang Chocden hide who eventually had a successful escape. One Jamyang Samten, was arrested and taken to prison where he alleges he was imprisoned, interrogated and tortured. "If I made a minor mistake during interrogation, they would beat me with chains." He was released after 5 months with a final warning. He then managed to escape to India. (Dispatches - Undercover in Tibet)

Religious Freedom

In all the films, the interviewees are of the opinion that Religious freedom in Tibet is nothing but a blatant lie. They argue "If religious freedom was granted then Tibetans should be allowed to meet His Holiness the Dalai Lama." They are forced to forget the Dalai Lama. (Unveiling the Truth – The sufferings in Tibet) According to the Tibetans, it constitutes a breach of Samaya. Such official injunctions are unpalatable, yet nothing can be done about it. Every interviewee in the films expresses the desire to meet the Dalai Lama at least once before they die. "The Dalai Lama is the Buddha of the Land of Snows, he is the Lama of the Land of Snows. He is the Leader of the land of Snows. The manifestation of Avalokitesvara is the Dalai Lama. If we cannot have faith in him, then it is the same as having no freedom of religion." In 'What Remains of Us', majority interviewees hear the Dalai Lama for the first time in their life through the message the narrator secretly carries to Tibet. "Today I have met you! I feel the sun of the world shines once more. Keep me in your heart, have the strength to build peace in the world." The interviewees in 'Leaving Fear Behind' consider the Dalai Lama to be the most precious for all Tibetans and they feel there is no religious freedom in Tibet because he is not in the homeland. They keep him in all their prayers and have tremendous faith in him. "I only have to hear his name and I am filled with faith, devotion and deep, deep sadness. The situation is hopeless, I feel exhausted. It is as though I were walking alone, with no destination, endlessly." (Leaving Fear Behind) Several interviewees share that they do not have the permission to possess the photos of the Dalai Lama so they keep them secretly. If the government finds them, they confiscate them or even arrest the person. The narrator in the film tries to find the photograph of the Dalai Lama at a road side shop but is unable to spot a single photograph. She spots the photograph of fake Panchem Lama and confronts the vendor if he is aware. There are instances quoted by the interviewees about the arrests of monks and nuns. "Gekyoe Nyima Woesser the head disciplinarian of the Tingkyab monastery was arrested for demonstrating his loyalty for Tibet. He was later sentenced to 8 years imprisonment in the reform – through-labour camp in Siling. He was even restricted to meet his family or relatives." Tibet has one religion and that is the mantra. The interviewees also spoke about how the local authorities and governors are taken to China and are forced to announce publicly that they do not wish for the Dalai

Lama's return. Tibetans who agree to do this are highly paid and they have to sign legal document. The Tibetans agree that this helps China in painting the picture they want the world to believe.

“In Lhasa one is living on edge all the times. If I am in my room reading, I have to be constantly careful because the security officers in the monastery come to check regularly. If you delay in opening the door even by a few seconds there is trouble. They force their way in and interrogate you. If they find any speeches of the Dalai Lama in your room, they monitor the political stance and don't need a reason to arrest you.”

Culture & Language

The Tibetans are running associations that help them preserve the language and culture in the villages. The Interviewees say they were worried about losing their culture and therefore started such associations in Tibet. Despite unfavourable conditions, they have managed to run these associations. They teach Tibetan language as they feel it is under threat. They believe they are a minority and China has relocated Han Chinese in Tibet. Tibetans deny all claims that China makes about improving the Tibetan culture and preserving the language. They believe that if China wants to preserve the language and culture, then it must withdraw all Chinese people living in Tibet areas. Expressing his insecurity about losing the culture and language, the Dalai Lama in a speech said, “Our peaceful culture is in danger, our people is facing genocide. Even the physical existence of Tibet is threatened with extinction.”

The Tibetans are insecure about the safety of their culture and language as they tell that even in Tibet offices, they speak Chinese. In the universities, the Tibetan students are forced to learn Chinese. They feel it has become useless to learn Tibetan and also that younger generation finds difficulty in speaking Tibetan. China has built schools in the old areas like Golak and Tibetans are forced to send their children to these schools. It is noted by them that the old and new generations do not speak common language. Many Tibetans believe that it is better to escape to India and receive learning at schools established by the Dalai Lama.

Torture

The United Nations repertoire on torture says that the use of torture is still widespread in China. However, China claims that the government has made efforts to control torture. A former political prisoner explains how Chinese authorities use steel wire to torture forced labourers if the work assigned to them is not completed on time. “They forced me to take off all my clothes. Then they laid me down on the floor and whipped me from head to toe. The steel wire struck me all over the length of my body.” (Dispatches - Under cover in Tibet)

Many Tibetans suffer psychological damage as a consequence of torture. Such techniques are used to reinforce their claim on Tibet. Chinese use handcuffs in different ways. There are types that bind just the two thumbs together. Others are separated so that they cut into the flesh of the wrists. They handcuff the person and hang her/him from the ceiling and then beat the person with iron bars. But if the person is left hanging from the ceiling for too long, the hands get ripped off because of the body weight. To prevent this they use a metal device to hang people which can auto adjust according to the person's height. This prevents hands from getting ripped off but allows the cuffs to bite the flesh (Dispatches - Under cover in Tibet)

The Chinese also use Dian Bang, an electric baton. They throw the person in a pool of water and use the baton. When the person is under water, the electricity travels from the sole to the crown and when the person is out of water, she /he feels pain where the electric prod has touched. (Dispatches - Under cover in Tibet)

Imprisonment is also a psychological torture. Many interviewees complain that once they are released from confinement, they do not get any job and are unable to earn a living or pay for medical care.

Chinese authorities force women to undergo sterilisation. Over half a dozen women from one village underwent forced sterilisation. The Chinese policemen visit households to fetch women. If anyone resists, they are threatened. The women are either forced to pay huge fine or they are forced to get sterilised. "Those who can't pay the fine have to have a sterilisation. If you have good connections you can buy a sterilisation certificate but those who don't have the money, have to have the forced sterilisation whether they like it or not. I cried when I was lying on the bed after the sterilisation, I cried thinking that I was forced do have a sterilisation when there was nothing wrong with me. I was feeling sick and giddy and couldn't look up. It was so painful. Apparently they cut the fallopian tubes and stitch them up. When they opened me up they pulled them out by the roots. It was agonising. They didn't use anaesthesia. They just smeared something on my stomach and carried out the sterilisation and I was only given Asprin for the pain there was no other drug." (Dispatches - Undercover in Tibet) Coercive birth policies, forced abortions, sterilisation and tracking of menstrual cycle are regular techniques of torture.

An interviewee in 'Undercover in Tibet' told that China ordered them to attend conference about socialism. The main purpose of the conference was to carry out mass sterilisation and to fine those who were with more than two children. Five of them protested, they shouted for independence and demanded China to leave Tibet. They were immediately arrested and taken to the nearest town. They wanted to know if any American or British groups had encouraged

the protest. Three of them were convicted for 15 years. They also lost their voting rights for 5 years after the release.

Nomadic Life and Chinese Rehabilitation Programmes

The interviewees, majorly Tibetan Nomads expressed deep dissatisfaction over the forced rehabilitation programme by the Chinese. The nomads are being forced to settle down in concrete houses against their will. “In the old society, we were fortunate enough to enjoy complete freedom to live-in or visit any place we wanted. (Unveiling the Truth-Situation in Tibet) Many agreed that they were stripped off their freedom of movement. Nomads are not allowed to graze their cattle in the pastures. The Chinese argue that this has been done under the pretext of setting up civilised cities. The buildings look decent from the outside but the condition inside is horrible. Chinese also argue that relocation is important because living in mountains is difficult. On the contrary, the Tibetan interviewees argue that the Chinese are merely interested in their land and valuable natural resources and therefore China wants to exploit the same. It is also considered illegal to refuse the offer made by the Chinese. (Leaving Fear Behind)

The interviewees feel China has increasingly controlled their Nomadic way of life. The government claims that rehabilitation is being done to improve the living standards of the nomads but any such claims are rejected by the interviewees. The living conditions are grim. They say they are made to relocate in isolated locations which are not connected with the city. There are no schools and hospitals. Houses are in a bad shape and one can see the noticeable police control around the settlements. The land is confiscated and the nomads can no longer return to the pasturelands. They also do not believe the claims made by China that such measures are being undertaken to protect the flora and fauna of the place. “Life here is incredibly hard. People here are suffering from hunger and hardship. They have no jobs and no land. The only way they can fill their empty stomachs is by stealing. Nobody wanted to move here. If you ask questions dressed like a Chinese, they won’t dare to tell you the truth. We are violently oppressed and don’t even have the basic human rights. Not even Freedom of speech. The government makes false claims about its achievements and people can be wrongly convicted for crimes they don’t commit. It is just like living through the Cultural Revolution again. Everybody is so depressed, they look awful. Their faces have become pale, their eyes are sunken. Everybody is afraid of speaking the truth.” (Dispatches - Undercover in Tibet)

Exploitation of Natural Resources

Tibet is a very rich and powerful country because of the landmass and the natural resources. The interviewee in ‘Unveiling the Truth – The Sufferings

in Tibet' says "The Yak is dear to you not because you love the animal, but because you yearn for its blood." Tibetans feel Chinese communists have no sympathy for Tibet; they only want to feed on the rich natural resources of Tibet. They reveal, they are forced to stay in concrete houses and the nomadic community is forcefully being made to settle down in these "socialist villages".

Everything is up for sale in Tibet. Gold, Silver, Largest source of Uranium and even oil has been found. Tibet has become a goldmine and a garbage dump. Tibet accuses China for taking all its wealth. (What remains of Us)

Support from International Community against Human Rights Violations

Several messages of non – violence were sent to the United Nations by three generations of Tibetans but they have been ignored and they have received no response. They only received acknowledgment of receipts.

In response to the 1989 protests, China imposed the Marshall Law. U.N. and U.S. condemned the move by China as reports showed extreme torture by the Chinese authorities. Since then, China has restricted media and reporting. Free Tibet 2008 campaign by the Americans resulted in higher control over the foreigners. The Tibetans desire support from the international community. They urge the world not to believe the picture China paints before the world.

In 'Undercover in Tibet,' the interviewee is of the opinion that, had the western climbers not witnessed the killings of Tibetans while they were trying to escape to India, the world would not even know.

The film 'What remains of Us' questions the role of United Nations on Nov 24, 1950, March 1988 and 2008. The film also discloses the appeal letters sent by the Dalai Lama to the UN informing the organization about the human rights violated by China. In the letters he has written about several cases of murder. Life and property are no longer safe. The Tibetans emphasise that outside world must look into the matter.

Tibetans reveal that they received information about foreign countries particularly America providing help to Tibet but it did not translate into something very useful. The older generation look up to the West for support.

Self Determination

The films ‘Under cover in Tibet’ and ‘What Remains of Us’ were shot undercover and arrest warrant against the filmmaker of ‘Unveiling the truth – The sufferings in Tibet’ was issued soon after the Chinese authorities came to know about his intention of making a film on the atrocities and oppression faced by the people of Tibet. However, Golong Rinchen Sangpo managed to escape to India. Dhondun Wangchen (Leaving Fear Behind) recorded 108 interviews in the eastern areas of Tibet from 2007-08 and captured the opinion of the Tibetans on the 2008 Olympic Games in China. Soon after filming, he alongwith his assistant was arrested. Despite the threat people expressed themselves hoping that the violation of their human rights will stop. (Leaving Fear Behind)

“No matter how much the Chinese government claims that there is freedom and happiness in Tibet, the fact remains that they do not allow a mother and her son to meet every day. We (Tibetans inside Tibet) dare not rise up against the Chinese but we do certainly know what suffering and oppression means. In short, would anyone describe it as happiness when parents and children are not allowed to meet each other? Is this really freedom?”(Unveiling the truth–The sufferings in Tibet) After the annexation of Tibet in 1959, several rich Tibetans were sentenced to life on false charges. They were left with no food, no clothes and no wealth. “A hat of being an evil person” was given to several. “Chinese government admonishes the Tibetans that they should not speak negative things about the Tibet to the outside world and should say that there is happiness and freedom in Tibet. There is no freedom.” (Unveiling the truth – The sufferings in Tibet)

The situation in Tibet is dangerous and grim. Tibetans explain that they could only support the Beijing Olympics had China not misrepresented the situation. They express that the repression is growing stronger and Tibet has not witnessed any freedom promised by China before the International community. There is no freedom of speech. Lhasa is heavily guarded by CCTV cameras and is under close surveillance. Lhasa is a highly militarised city, “talking politics on the streets can put you and your family in jeopardy.”(What Remains of Us) “We shall pursue our peaceful struggle for freedom. We struggle for freedom, not against the Chinese people. It is not a battle to win or lose. The issue is the survival of a precious heritage that we happen to possess. Unfortunately many Chinese remain ignorant of this,” the message from the Dalai Lama in the film ‘What Remains of Us’ emotionally moves all the stakeholders in the film. The interviewees express deep desire to meet the Dalai Lama at least once before they die. Majority of the old Tibetans believe that only if the Dalai Lama returns to Tibet, will they be able to attain freedom because Tibet was free when the Dalai Lama was in his homeland. However, many of them are even sceptical about the Dalai Lama’s safety. Many stakeholders in the film ‘What Remains of

Us' also feel hopeless and powerless. The old generation expresses its helplessness and the young generation expresses the desire to escape to India.

Tsangyu Wangdhev (Unveiling the Truth – The sufferings in Tibet) says “Although I am physically under the Chinese rule today, in my hearts and hearts, I crave for freedom.” In the film ‘What Remains of Us’, on being asked by the interviewer to express their opinion, many Tibetans say they cannot say anything because China is crushing them. They say that they do not have the right to raise heads as there is constant pressure on them and China is too strong.

The interviewee believe that Tibet was always self sufficient and China has destroyed its religion. They strongly feel that there was sufficient to feed themselves in their homeland and China has done nothing but exploit them.

Tibetans also feel it is important to follow the Dalai Lama’s Middle way policy. They show deep gratitude towards their religious head the Dalai Lama. They believe that the spirituality, their compassion which is deeply connected with Buddhism is also a source of inspiration for international community as it propagates peace. The interviewees strongly believe that Tibet was never a part of China and deserves freedom. Majority of the people inside Tibet believe in the middle path policy which aims at complete autonomy. The majority believe that Tibet has the right to self determination as its unique culture, religion and language must be protected. They also strongly believe that China has violated several human rights violations and dignity of life has suffered for long.

Conclusion and Discussion

This paper has attempted to study the issues of human rights violations in Tibet as highlighted by the filmmakers in the films.

The study reveals that there is significant difference between Tibet before and after annexation. The old generation expresses that Tibet was free, happy and prosperous before China annexed it. The old generation strongly condemns China’s mass killings in 1959 which left several nomads orphaned. Many succumbed to hunger and starvation. China’s merciless authoritarian rule has left them in pain and suffering.

The analysis reveals that there is no religious freedom in Tibet. Chinese authorities have attacked monasteries and monks. Arrest, detention and torture by the authorities on religious leaders and monks & nuns are a common activity. Tibetans are not permitted to even carry photographs of their religious leaders. Anyone with possession of photograph can be arrested and tortured. The Chinese authorities have forced them to denounce the Dalai Lama but the only

hope with which they are motivated to live is the return of the Dalai Lama. They believe that the only solution to their problems is the Dalai Lama.

It is obvious from the analysis of the films that China has continued to violate human rights in Tibet for more than five decades now. Tibetans are under constant monitoring by the Chinese authorities. They live under surveillance of heavily armed police personnel. Their freedom of speech and expression is curtailed.

The study reveals that Chinese authorities use several techniques of torture that leaves physical and psychological impact on the political prisoners. Forced sterilisation under no medical care is an example of violation of human rights.

They are not permitted to establish any contact with the outside world and compatriots in exile. If they are caught escaping to India or Nepal, they are captured, interrogated and tortured or killed. Foreign media is restricted and China only communicates information it wants the world to believe. China has tried to wrongly project Tibet and Tibetans many times. It tried to present a 'Happy Tibet' before the world during the Beijing Olympics but all its efforts failed when 33 monks accidentally got an opportunity to interact with a team of international media delegates. They shouted free Tibet slogans and also shared heart wrenching stories. 2008 uprising was a result of the frustration amongst Tibetans against the atrocities of the government.

The living conditions are grim. The Tibetan nomads have been forced to relocate to distant locations which are completely cut off from the city. Their lands have been forcibly acquired by the Chinese under the pretext of development and infrastructure building. Tibetans nomads who are skilled farmers lose their land and cattle and do not get an alternate job. This has left many unemployed and economically deprived. They receive negligible economic assistance from the authorities.

Tibetan culture and language is under serious threat as Han Chinese population has grown in many Tibetan areas. China has even renamed Tibet and it is now called Xixang.

Tibetans also urge the international community to build pressure on China to improve human rights conditions. Tibet also raises concern over the little effort made by the United Nations and the United States of America. Several cases of detention of Tibetan protestors abroad have been seen in the recent past.

A state must protect the population it governs. It must promote the economic, cultural, social and spiritual welfare of the people. Above all, it must

encourage human rights and fundamental freedoms and must promote self determination and equal rights. Therefore, when a State represses people, curbs their fundamental freedoms, destroys their culture and economically exploits them, it no longer has the right to claim the territorial integrity. (Democracy, 2016). Unfortunately China has failed to perform any state duty and therefore, has no rights to govern the people of Tibet.

The Dalai Lama's middle path policy has been accepted by most of the Tibetans who want complete autonomy and not independence from China. However, China has failed to improve human rights conditions in Tibet and therefore, any solution to the Tibet discourse is farfetched. Tibet is a large landmass with unique people and culture. Its biggest strength is its religion and faith in the Dalai Lama. The country has the right to self determination but no efforts are seen from China's side to give complete autonomy to Tibet.

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The New Media and Tamil Diaspora Identity: A Case Study of Jallikattu Protests

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Abstract

The new media spring has brought several issues including the Diaspora community into the limelight thus making the presence of citizen journalists felt. The minorities generally do not find a place that easily on the television but the internet and other new media do map their representation. It is said that after the internationalization of the media occurred, there are no long distances. Hence this paper analyzes the news articles on how the Tamil Diaspora community across the world reacts towards the *Jallikattu* protests which happened from 8th to 23rd of January, 2017 in Chennai, Tamil Nadu.

The main objectives of the research are:

- To analyze new media's crucial role in bringing the "Tamil Diaspora community" to limelight.
- To examine the cultural identity of Tamil Diaspora represented through the new media in reference to selected *Jallikattu* related articles.
- To understand the human rights issues involved in the *Jallikattu* protests by the Tamil community.

Content analysis of selected articles from online news media related to Tamil Diasporic community's protests for *Jallikattu* during January 2017 was analyzed.

Outcome of the study:

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- The new media has played different roles namely the ‘defender’, ‘violateur’ and ‘educator’ of human rights in reference to the Tamil Diasporic community’s protests for *Jallikattu*, wherein especially the role of educator has topped.
- The usage of the words, namely “Tamil pride”, “cultural icon”, “Diaspora” was seen maximum in number and the motto behind the movement of the Tamil Diaspora can be traced as “to save their culture”.
- Any mass mobilization definitely has to be addressed with ‘human rights frame’. The Tamil Diaspora who fights for *Jallikattu* as their cultural identity, seek their rights back through the protest can thus be seen.

Keywords:

Diaspora, Jallikattu, Cultural Identity, Human Rights

Introduction

Globalization plays a vital role in shaping up the developing countries, especially the Indian sub continent. It helps in breaking the borders across the nations and has literally shrunk it into a global village like how Marshall McLuhan likes to call it. In fact theories say that one of the key resultants of globalization is the Diaspora.

“Diaspora” is the term often used today to describe practically any population which is considered ‘deterritorialized’ or ‘transnational’ - that is, which has originated in a land other than which it currently resides, and whose social, economic, and political networks across the borders of the nation-states or, indeed span the globe” (Vertovec, 1999) Many scholars have understood that the Diaspora community’s presence cannot be ignored and thus the importance of Diaspora literature can be mapped.

According to the definition given by scholar Martin Baumann, “The idea of Diaspora has been celebrated as expressing notions of hybridity, heterogeneity, identity, fragmentation and (re) construction, double consciousness, fractures of memory, ambivalence, roots and routes, discrepant cosmopolitanism, multi-locationality, and so forth” (Baumann, 2000). Hence there tends to be a constant identity crisis around the Diaspora community that needs to be addressed.

A similar growing trend like the Diaspora studies is the new media and digital technologies. Off late it has become the most used public forum where the people tend to discuss about their all walks of life, and get benefitted out of the various aspects of Web 2.0 (As given by scholars Tim O'Reilly and Dale Dougherty) such as the Blogs, wikis and the RSS. "People treat Computers and New media like they are real people and places" (Reeves& Nass, 1996)

Jallikattu or *Sallikattu* is a traditional sport which is typically practiced in many parts of Tamil Nadu especially during the *Thai* harvest festival, where an indigenous breed bull is set free at the *Vaadi Vasal* or the gate, and human males are allowed to combat with the animal male and winning over the animal by stopping it eventually makes the winner. Many animal welfare associations were much concerned about the safety of the animals used in the sport and also questioned about the public's safety during the sport and after filing a case towards it; the Supreme Court of India issued an outright ban on the traditional sport, *Jallikattu*.

One cannot turn a blind eye towards the global wide protests in order to call off the ban and to continue the sport where the demonstrators and the protests grew up to gain so much attention during the time period of 8th January to 23rd January of 2017 in which the Tamil Diaspora also played a major role.

Hence, combining the new two emerging trends of Diaspora and New media with special reference to *Jallikattu* the present study aims to find out as to how the Tamil Diaspora community intends to look at their identity through the new media, through the protests for *Jallikattu*. The study also delves into the human rights perspective that is involved in the protests and how is the new media's role in elevating the issue to the common public.

Identifying the Literature Review

The etymology of the word Diaspora comes from Greek word *Diaspeirein* where "Dia" means across and "speirein" means to scatter. The Wikipedia definition for Diaspora states that it denotes a set if scattered population who originally belong to a smaller geographic location, dispersed because of voluntary reasons such as better living or compelled reasons like natural disasters or wars and conflicts in their homelands.

According to scholar Eliezer Ben Rafael, the Diaspora community might wish for themselves to be absorbed by their new homeland, but when they attach to their dispersion, they have a sense of enduring loyalty, and thus want to remain away from the "others". (Rafael, 2010)

According to John Durham Peters, “Diaspora suggests a dislocation from the nation or state or the geographical location they pertain to, and relocation in one or more nation or states or countries. He also says that originally the word Diaspora only had the meaning of Jews living outside Palestine, although which today has gathered a hybrid spectrum of meanings. (Peters, 1998)

Steven Vertovec quotes about the three different meanings that can be assigned for the word Diaspora especially among the South Asian religions, namely **Diaspora as a social form** where he traces about their history and geography of the immigrants come under, **Diaspora as a type of consciousness**, where he analyses on their identity and behavior, and the third one being **Diaspora as a form of cultural production** where he looks at their (re) production of social and cultural phenomena. (Vertovec, 1999)

But the definitions given by Homi K.Bhabha, also speaks about the issues of Diaspora and identity, where he says, “In the process of their juggling act of two or at times more than two nation- states, they become the cultural hybridity that prevents national territories and entertains differences without any stipulated hierarchy.” (Bhabha, 1994)

Though the Diaspora as a community is very homogeneous in nature, scholars have tried to analyze a pattern within them. Robert Cohen in his study on *Global Diaspora: An introduction*. gives the general characteristics of Diaspora as follows:

- Dispersion from their original homeland often traumatically, to two or more foreign nations.
- A collective memory, myth about their homeland, which includes their history, location, suffering and also achievements.
- A strong ethnic group consciousness sustained over a long period of time based on distinctiveness, a common history, a transmission of common grounds of culture, and heritage.
- A possibility of distinctive, creative, enriching life in their host countries with a tolerance of pluralism. (Cohen, 2008)

Another renowned Diaspora scholar explores about the theorizing the Diaspora paradigm and the cultural identity associated within it. In his essay, he denotes that the upward mobility, the irresistible flow of capital is very high in rate in the twentieth century and people thus on one hand people tend to destabilize the quintessential identity paradigm, which leads to a static sense in the cultural identity. Whereas on the other, “localism” or “nativism”,

simultaneously increases as resistance to the global forces from the locals does. (Chiang, 2010)

In William Safran's essay on *Diaspora: myths of homeland and return*, he traces the qualities that goes in pattern with the expatriate minority community. 1. Their own or their ancestor's dispersion from a specific homeland to another country or place. 2. Experiencing a feeling of antagonism and alienation from their host culture and a constant feeling that they will never fit in. 3. Have a commitment to the maintenance or the restoration of the homeland. 4. Treasuring the collective past. (Safran, 1991)

To narrow it down further to prove a pattern for the present study, scholar Martin Baumann who conducted a research on Tamil Diaspora in the part of East Germany concluded by saying that, "The Tamil Diaspora in the above said geographic location, enter into their third decade of living in their new homeland, and they purposely intend to root their culture and traditions in the adopted country of residence. The building of temples in a foreign nation is a classic example" (Baumann, 2000)

Jallikattu or *Sallikattu* (in Tamil) has to be traced back for more than 4000 years ago, or at least roughly four millennia back. The Wikipedia states the other names of the traditional sport as *Manjuvirattu* which means bull chasing or *Eruthazhuvuthal* which means embracing the bull. According to Iravatham Mahadevan, who is a specialist in Indus and Brahmi scripts a very well preserved seal was found at Mohenjodaro, in the 1930s which proved the traditional sport initially originated from the Indus valley civilization. (As said to Mr. T.S.Subramanian, *Evidence of Jallikattu in Indus valleys, The Hindu*)

Jallikattu also has traces in many Tamil Sangam literature texts, like *Kalithogai*, *Aichiyarkuravai* and *Malaippadukadam*.

“கொலேற்றுக் கோடஞ்சுவனை மருமையும்

புல்லாலே ஆய மகள் “

**-கலித்தொகை முல்லைக்கலி பாடல் 103 வரிகள்
63-64**

The above said is verses of *Kalithogai*, which is considered as one of finest Sangam Tamil literature texts. The rough translation for the above said would be "This cowherd girl will not hug him he who fears the sharp horns of a killing bull, even in the next birth."

The meaning of the name *Sallikattu* can be seen as two words compilation, *Salli* meaning silver or gold and *kattu* is to tie. *Sangam literature*

has mentioned about the traditional sport where, it is actually played to select the bridegroom wherein the tamer of the bull is said to be the winner.

The evidences of the traditional sport in TamilNadu were found in the place called Kaikiyur near the Nilgiris, by an art historian, Mr.Gandhirajan in the year 2004. According to him, “To look through the socio political context, the traditional sport *Jallikattu* was aided or tailored in favor of the Zamindari system because during those days many zamindars who wanted to demonstrate their power, converted it into a gallery sport, which was not the case initially during the Nayakars rule in Tamilnadu over 500 years ago. (As said to Mr. T.S.Subramanian, *Bull chasing, an ancient Tamil tradition, The Hindu*)

He also adds up saying that in those days, in the Tamil *ethos*, the taming of the bull has stood for the meaning of a powerful man and virility.

To take a closer look on why the Jallikattu ban was taken more seriously in local sense, one has to look into the context of indigenous animal breeding. According to Mr. Karthikeyan Sivasenapathy, Managing Trustee of Senaapathy Kangayam cattle research foundation there are umpteen reasons which contribute to the decline of the indigenous breeds is that the Animal Husbandry department is not supporting much to protect the native breed of bulls of Tamilnadu. He also says that there have been many corporate biggies whose greed in conquering the local milk industry to call out for the ban of the traditional sport, *Jallikattu*.

Right from Arab Spring, to the good-bye videos from Aleppo, Syria, it is the internet or the new media which is playing a major role in advocating the public to participate in every ongoing movement to create and tailor social changes. The methods of activism keeps evolving just like the technology and like how the co founder of Twitter Biz Stone said, “The internet reduces the number of barriers of an individual to participate in activism global wide”. As early as in 1930s, the Frankfurt school of thought scholars had already analyzed that there would be new forms of media which would take over the mass culture. The Frankfurt school of thought also generated one of the pioneering models of critical cultural studies that analyses the processes of cultural production, political economy, and the audience’s usage of cultural artifacts through the new forms of media”(Kellner, 1995)

To throw more light on the usage of social media for activism or movements to create social changes, one can look at the essay *Social media as a tool for protest* by Marco Papi and Sean Noonan. “The key to inspire any protest movement is to inspire and motivate individuals to begin from their comfort zone like homes, to the chaos of the streets and faces off against the

government. Social media allows the organizers of the protest to do all the above said in a cost effective manner. “(Papic, Noonan, 2011)

According to John Michael Roberts in his essay *new media and public activism*, new media is a *snapshot* of modern political and participatory society by the way of political economy- with just a dash of deliberated attempt of democracy thrown in for a good measure. (Roberts, 2014)

To dig deeper, the word Internet activism itself is found in various names, such as Cyber activism, online activism, digital campaigning, electronic advocacy, clicktivism or hashtag activism. One of the pioneer e-campaigns which used hashtag activism as its method to reach out for more people was often associated to *2014 Chibok kidnapping* where an Islamic extremists group had kidnapped a group of school girls in Nigeria. The hash tag used was #bringbackourgirls which received almost 2 million tweets.

Scholar Sandor Vegh in his essay on online activism: the case of cyber protests against the World Bank, categorizes online activism into different types namely: advocacy/ awareness, organization/mobilization and action/reaction. According to Athina Karatzogianni in her article “*beyond hash tags: how a new wave of digital activists is changing society*,” Digital activism is becoming an everyday occurrence where we have even new forms of digital activism emerging. Instead of simply bypassing the political movements, it takes the advantage of new technologies and thus provides an alternative way of organizing the economy. One such example would be live streaming of videos from wherever and whatever one wants to show the world. (Karatzogianni, 2016)

Theoretical Framework

The present study uses Louis Althusser’s Ideological State apparatuses theory, which is considered to be the most influential works done by the French structuralist Marxist scholar. The theory speaks about how a society as a model functions in reproducing the relations of production by which they function. According to Althusser, the state apparatus is complex but consists of two distinctive apparatuses namely Ideological State Apparatus and Repressive State Apparatus. (ISA and RSA) ISA are the assortment of institutions in ideological practice including religious, political, legal, media and literary agents which will foster an ideology that would be sympathetic to the desires of the state.

On contrary, RSA can be classified as the one which massively and predominantly function by repression, including the government, police or the army for which Althusser states that “this is done by the state functions by violence” Although they are mostly overlapping, the predominant difference between the state apparatus is the RSA chiefly functions in the public domain

whereas the ISA functions within the private domain. For example: If one fails to go to church, he/she tends to become an outcast in one's community and might not be accepted in the society. Hence, the fear of not being accepted in the society can be considered as the ISA whereas the fear of violence can be categorized as the RSA.

Theorizing ISA and RSA with Present Study

Though the theory of state apparatuses is as old as 1970, it can be easily applicable even today due to its ever-evolving nature. As said by Althusser media also plays the role of institution in ISA by disseminating dominant ideologies. The new media which is consumed by the public also is pregnant with a lot of ideology markers such that the public's opinion is largely shaped up. To fit in the present study, the example of Tamil Diaspora community is taken. The usage of ISA through new media can be seen when a Tamil Diaspora person, fearing if he does not participate in the protest for Jallikattu he might not be considered as a Tamilian or might not be accepted in his society, which is hybrid and minority already in his new homeland.

The RSA through new media can be seen when the protests were immediately called off after the unverified videos where police were seen to torch the public property and harm the public. No opposition protest was filed or recorded from the side of the Tamil Diaspora community after the videos went "viral". Hence it is evident that the RSA is being overtaken the ISA as Althusser rightly says that "State functions by violence".

Methodology Used

Content Analysis of selected online articles, videos, which are related to Tamil Diaspora protesting for Jallikattu and Human rights violation which happened post the protest was taken. The timeframe is during the month of January 2017.

Parameters of the articles are as follows:

1. Content and details of the article
2. Vocabulary, word choice and complexity of the language (Jargon usage)
3. Tone of the news article
4. Stance of the reporter or agency
5. Identifiable agenda of the news item
6. Accompanying picture or info graphics and its influence

7. The details of the protest (place/people/method of protesting)
8. Function of the article
 - To entertain
 - To inform
 - To persuade
 - To examine or explore the issue
 - To describe or report
 - To instruct

Unit of analysis are as follows:

1. Head line and Lead line
2. Article's content
3. Photographs and Infographics
4. Sound bites and visuals/video footage

Research Findings

- Out of the online articles analyzed, all of them used the word “Diaspora”, “Expression of solidarity”, and “Tamil Pride” through which the categorical marking can be taken as the Tamil Diaspora across the globe wants to seek kinship, wants to have a sense of togetherness, a home away from home by either demonstrating or participating in the protest.
- Like any other minority community, the Tamil Diaspora across the globe faces insecurity thus resulting into an identity crisis could also be seen the aphorism of the protest for Jallikattu.
- According to the famous semiotician, Ferdinand De Saussure, “No term has its meaning independently but rather acquires it in relationship to and nuanced difference from related others” It can also be substituted in the case of Tamil Diaspora's protest for Jallikattu. Together they came forward in the form of protest to transform into something else that stood to say that their struggle for identity is real.

- According to William Safran in his book, *Diasporas in modern societies: myths of homeland and return* “he says any Diasporic person is a dyadic model of two self: new and old. He desperately tries to become the new without actually letting go of the old self”. Similarly the course of protest can also be seen where, they do not want to let go of their old self, hence came forward for anything that reminded of their Tamil pride and culture.
- According to Robin Cohen in his definitions of common Diaspora characters, “A diasporic person always has a strong ethnic group consciousness and troubled relationship with his present host society” This could be visibly seen in the Tamil Diaspora protest for Jallikattu where many of the demonstrators wore Dhoti or the *Veshti* and *saree* even if they might lack a sense of identity in their new homeland. Also many placards shown in the visuals were showing Tamil slogans, again symbolizing their collective history in a foreign nation.
- The protest which was seen through the analyzed articles saw a combination of all three types of internet activism, namely 1. Awareness/advocacy when the Tamil Diaspora spoke about the Jallikattu ban and the corporate greed behind to conquer the local milk business and to create an artificial decline on the native breeds of bull. 2. Organization/mobilization when words like “We are expecting more crowd to join our protests” or the invites which called for the Tamil Diaspora to take part in the protests. And 3. Action/reaction when the videos of them picketing or marching were shown.
- The places of the protests can be traced out of the analyzed articles, which were mostly seen to be as either Indian embassy of that particular nation or Consulate General etc. If the mob was bigger and displaced in nature, they moved to parks and open arenas. The next priority of the place of the protest chosen was in front of any famous buildings of their respective nation. This could also be seen as their dire need to get registered in the history of new homeland but s a representative of their old home.
- The method of protest unlike the Indian case was very silent. The procedures followed were picketing, placard holding, silent marches. There was no hate speech against the Government, or the state actors, or defamation of any individual. In only 1 instance, there was slogan shouting reported in the protest staged in front of the PETA headquarters in the US in order to gather their attention.

- According to Yun Chiang, identity paradigm was a way of objectifying the collective meanings, because at times it also involves the claims of authenticity for many selective cultural symbols. This was also evident from the articles where there were 3 news items which quoted people pertaining to Tamil Diaspora saying that Jallikattu was a Tamil identity and not as Indian identity.
- The Tamil Diaspora that protested from various parts of globe was homogenous in a way unlike the crowd Marina or Thamukkam Maidan saw. The demonstrators were elite class literates, who either worked for MNCs or were Indian students studying in foreign institutions. While they were protesting, the anger they had for their identity struggle was not shown on their faces unlike the case of Chennai protests. Instead only written slogans or placards spoke for it.
- The agenda of the protesters at times even went off the track from Jallikattu. They also spoke for animal breeding, and some against corporate culture and the multinational companies' greed of conquering the local milk business in India and many other countries. William Safran, in his book, *Diasporas in modern societies: myths of homeland and return* also say that a Diasporic person is most common to feel a sense of alienation and antagonism towards his host society for the fear that they might not fit in there. Similarly, even when many of the demonstrators were actually a part of MNCs or the corporate biggies, they said they were against it in their protests' agenda.
- All the analyzed articles had followed hash tag activism a.k.a clicktivism. The keywords which were converted into hash tags in order to make it even viral were **#SaveJallikattu**, **#JusticeforJallikattu** **#SaveTamilpride** **#Tamizhanda**.
- Articles followed hypermediacy technique since they were online news articles, attaching of several sound notes, videos, photos were simple. Videos of the protest arena, and mostly silent marching with the placards were seen. Also in reply threads, there were posts demanding for coverage for similar Tamil Diaspora protests across other countries.
- The vocabulary used for almost all of the articles analyzed, used simple languages, no jargons. At times even repetitive words were used, they were "Tamil Diaspora", "cultural pride", "to our brothers and sisters" which again can be related to the tendency of a Diasporic person to cherish or treasure their collective past.

- The tone of the articles analyzed, expressed the stance of the news items as pro Jallikattu and it also had the function of “to instruct “people to join the movement and express their solidarity morally. The agenda of the article was as such to tell that the Tamil people who were protesting in various parts of Tamilnadu and not alone in doing so.
- The articles were also analyzed on the human rights perspective. It goes as follows:
 - a. The articles in relation to the “unverified” videos of the TN police indulging in vandalism had the function of “to educate “the public about the human rights issues involved in it. The articles reported on the damage of the public property and how the Tamilnadu police simply started attacking the common public without prior warning thus playing the role of educator of human rights.
 - b. Any mass mobilization for that matter should be decoded through the lens of human rights. The whole protest itself can be seen as a protest against cultural imperialism, and anti hegemonic activism. Thus in here, the media plays the role of defender of human rights through the articles analyzed.
 - c. In countries where the press was regulated by the state actors, especially in the south of China and Singapore, there were articles which spoke about how the authorities did not permit the demonstrators to assemble in the public places for protest, but how they wanted to morally stand up for the Tamil community. This again proved that the individual’s right was intervened and the media stands as the protector of human rights.

Conclusion

The new media spring has surely made a vast difference in people’s ways of consuming information. It has brought out many innovations to bring equality in the current capitalistic world. Though the digital technologies are being criticized for their big data or other criticisms like virtual virtuousness will not help solving any crisis, in recent times, many youth and students’ protests are actively initiated by the new media. The present study states that the new media has played a dynamic role in bringing the minority community of the globe, the Tamil Diaspora into limelight during their Jallikattu protest through hash tag activism. An active website for web analysis and statistics states that during the month of January there was around 1.5% of the people had used the world Jallikattu in their networking pages. Also the present study has delved into how the cultural identity of the Tamil Diaspora community was seen during the protests through the news articles. Thus it is understood that the new media

had actively advocated for the role of educator and defender of human rights and had given a positive representation of the minority community.

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Developmental Activities and Human Right Issues in India: A Study of Life-livelihood Debate in Kerala

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Abstract

It seems that many projects initiated by post independent governments of Kerala with the intention to bring development, particularly to generate more number of employment opportunities have resulted in serious violation of human rights, that too the right to life of thousands of underprivileged sections of people living in the project area. It is a paradox that when the right to livelihood of a relatively small number is guaranteed, the right to life of a large section of people is brutally denied. The situation becomes more complicated when the governments that are preoccupied with a modernist perception on development did not pay attention to the question of environmental degradation and allow the projects to continue to operate. The present study is an effort to analyze those human rights movements in Kerala with an inclination to challenge the existing development paradigms with a focus on selected issues from industrial and agricultural sectors.

Keywords

Life-livelihood Debate- Cross Movement Pollination- Green Marxism

Introduction

It seems that a large number of initiatives intended to guarantee means of livelihood and to bring economic prosperity have become detrimental to right to life of thousands of underprivileged sections of people living in the project areas. The conditions of the victims become more vulnerable when the state extends unprecedented support to the so called agents of development. The economic backwardness along with the alarming rate of unemployment put governments under acute pressure to follow pro-modernists policies. In short, the negative impact on natural environment and the resultant health hazards thus leads to a dichotomy between right to life and right to livelihood.

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Objective of the Study

The present study is an effort to analyze those human rights movements in Kerala with an inclination to challenge the existing development paradigms with a focus on selected issues from industrial and agricultural sectors. It also tries to analyze the contradictions between the two fundamental human rights; right to life and right to livelihood in the context of environment degradation caused by the modern industrial and agricultural practices in the state of Kerala in the post- independence period. It also tries to expose the shortcomings of those liberal policies especially its impact on inter-generational justice.

Theoretical Framework

The study is mainly held within the theoretical framework of new social movements particularly its two prominent variants; environmental and human rights movements. The theory of cross movement pollination is also used in this study to explain blue-green coalitions/conflicts and the inter relationships between environmental activism and human rights movements.

Methodology

Historical and analytical methods have been used for collection and analysis of data. Both in-depth interviews and informal interactions were extensively used for the collection of empirical data. Information was also collected from reports, journal articles, newspapers, periodicals and internal documents. Interviews were organized in person as well as by phone. This study is mainly depended on primary and secondary data. The Primary data include information collected from the fields, activists, scientific reports and various publications of non-governmental organizations representing the victims, political parties and trade unions, reports by experts committees appointed by Government of Kerala and various government orders and communications. Articles, books and reports in newspapers and periodicals constitute secondary data.

Industrial Pollution in Chaliyar River Basin

The establishment of Grasim Industries at Mavoor in Calicut district was a landmark in the history of industrial development in Kerala. Providing 5000 employment opportunities directly and another 10,000 indirectly it developed into one of the largest industrial units in Kerala in terms of employment generation. It is to be admitted that the permission to this factory was sanctioned in a context, when people had little idea about the environmental impact of industrialization. As the production started in 1963, it began to cause heavy damages on the natural environment. The operations of the factory unleashed a series of environmental problems in the area. There was absolutely

no control over the emission of industrial waste. The factory used to discharge untreated toxic effluents into river Chaliyar. There was no system for controlling gas emissions, which led to drastic air pollution. Moreover, the irrational extraction of raw materials from Kerala forest caused serious damages on bio diversity. Nearly 30000 traditional workers like basket makers, fish workers and sand miners lost their employment (Rajan, 1984). A review of the 40 years long operations of this industry seems to expose the hollowness of industrial development carried out at the cost of natural environment. It was in this context the people living in the nearby villages started a movement to protect their right to life from industrial pollution. Alarmed by the fear of retrenchment, the industrial workers and their sympathizers refused to sensitize the rationale of environmental activism, and come forward for the protection of their right to livelihood. (Anas, 1999). The following discussion would further explain this new discourse.

The wide perceptual gap between the workers and the environmental activist was firstly manifested in the issue of mass fish death due to the water contamination caused by the discharge of untreated toxic effluents. However, the workers in the factory turned up with a propaganda that the fish death was due to some 'other reasons'. Interestingly, some of them took the pain to collect the dead fish and destroyed it secretly. Dr. Vijayamadavan has recollected that some of the KSSP members who were also workers in the factory had given him wrong information about fish death. They had also advised him not to visit the area. This incident indicates that the trade union movement in Mavoor had developed a tradition of resisting the environmental activism blatantly. The management had also tried to accommodate maximum number of local people either as workers or as contractors. In short, exploiting the acute unemployment prevailed in the area; the factory management was able to abort the early attempts of environmentalism. A stake in the factory was returned with a perceptual change in favor of the management. Thus, People who were in the forefront of agitations turned to be a part of workforce with a conviction to protect the industry (Vijayamadavan, 2009).

It was in this context, the Achutha Menon Government passed the Forest Produce Act 1978, which mainly authorized the government to affect a periodic hike in the royalty rate. It also introduced a system for regulating the process of collecting and transporting the raw materials from the Forest areas. Above all, the government took a strategic decision to nationalize the 30,000 acres of Forest Land in Nilambur Valley, which was used by the company for eucalyptus plantations. When the public welcomed the Act, the management and trade union leadership in Mavoor strongly objected to it. C. Chathunny Master, the leader of CITU union in Mavoor was the main critic of the new Act. He strongly argued that the decisions of the government would inversely affect the prospects of Grasim Industries. He even described the closure of the factory for

period of 39 months as an after effect of this act. In effect, it was considered as the common opinion of the trade union movement in Mavoor (Chathunny Master, 1987).

There was a feeling that most of the labor disputes in Mavoor were the result of a 'collaborationist kind of trade union leadership'; a collective effort to pressurize the government to continue its liberal policies towards the factory. In the opinion of Jayakumar, an environmental activist associated with Center for Nature Studies (CNS), the threat of closure was used as a smoke screen tactic to divert attention from the environmental impact of the factory. "By threatening to close the factory, the management hopes to pitch the workers against the government and thus browbeat the government into offering raw materials at grossly subsidized rates". He further added that "in the past the, management has been charged with indulging in declaring many lockouts, to split the environment movement between affected villagers and plant workers for whom the factory was a source of survival" (Raman, 2005).

The labor agitation in 1985 and consequent closure of the factory, it is alleged that, was a pre-planned movement against the environmental activism in Kerala which induced the government to pass the Forest Produce Act 1978. When the prolonged closure of the factory led to the suicide of 13 workers, the environmental issues related to the factory became completely irrelevant. The period also witnessed a cross pollination of environmental and trade unions movements in Mavoor. The regular members of the Chaliyar movement identified themselves with the GROW led social movement trade unionism and in the process, the environmental issues submerged with human rights. Finally, it culminated in a situation, where ecology became a non-issue in Mavoor. The social movement unionism led by GROW union finally succeeded to amend the environment friendly provisions of Forest Produces Act 1978. The new Ordinance promulgated by the Governor of Kerala exempted the Grasim industries from the purview of periodic revision of the royalty rate of Bamboo and eucalyptus. Assigning the 'status of Public Sector Undertaking', the new Ordinance also allowed Grasim industries to avail concessions given to the government sector companies. Thus, the 39-month long labor struggle failed to achieve anything substantial for the working class except their right to work (Vasu, 2010).

The period after the reopening of the factory in 1989 witnessed a series of conflicts between the two movements. As mentioned earlier the labor dispute in 1985 and consequent closure of the factory ultimately resulted in the collapse of Chaliyar movement. Nevertheless, the reopened factory, rejuvenated by the public support, began to discharge industrial waste in an unprecedented manner. This led to serious health hazards in the neighboring villages. As a response to the new developments, Vazhakkad Panchayath organized a health survey to get

a clear picture of situation prevailing in affected areas. The result of the survey exposed the alarming situation in the area. It found that 199 people died of cancer within the Panchayath area during 1989-94 periods (Ullath, 2009). It also revealed high rate of morbidity in the Panchayath area. Interestingly, the trade union movement in Mavoor responded to the findings of the survey in a reactionary manner. They described the survey as a preplanned drama to defame the factory management. For them, it was the excessive use of pesticides, which caused cancer in the surrounding area. In the press conference, they explained various precautionary measures taken by the management to deal with the issue of industrial pollution. They were also proud of the functioning of the Monitoring Committee working under Revenue Divisional Officer. The press conference organized by the trade union leaders, in fact, became a public relation work for the factory management. The leaders of the mainstream trade unions were in the forefront of this campaign. According to K. K Abu, former President of Swathanthra Trade Union (STU), this response of the trade union movement would cause heavy damages on working class politics in Kerala. He criticized the trade unions for openly supporting anti-people policies of the factory management. The veteran trade union leader described the new development as unheard in the history of Kerala trade unionism. The Cancer detection camp conducted by the Regional Cancer Centre (RCC), Thiruvananthapuram became another setback to the trade union movement in Mavoor because it reinforced the findings of the health survey (Chandrika Daily, 1996).

Endosulfan Issue in Kasaragod

The aerial spraying of Endosulfan over the cashew plantations in Kasaragod district in Kerala with an intention to increase/retain agricultural productivity and consequent health hazards is another issue which falls under the purview of this study. In spite of the repeated warning signals (such as mass deaths of bees, fishes, frogs, birds, foxes and also congenital deformities in domestic animals like cows), the irrational pesticide spraying went on producing abnormal health problems such as increased rate of cancers and gynecological abnormalities, neurobehavioral disorders, congenital malformations in girls and abnormalities of reproductive tract in males. Several scientific studies conducted by national and international agencies held in between 1998 and 2002 collectively argued that there was a relationship between Endosulfan and the health problems in Kasaragod (John, 2011).

The right to life campaign in this issue was initiated by Leelakumari, an agricultural assistant. The agony caused by the premature death of her elder brother, due to exposure to Endosulfan induced her to work for the victims living in worst affected areas in Kasaragod district. Her main contribution was in the field of litigation in which she received significant support from SEEK

and Thanal, two important non-governmental organizations working in the field of environment protection. The free legal service given by Adv. Daisy was also noteworthy in the initial stage of the movement (John, 2011). Sree Padhre, a freelance journalist, was also active in the movement particularly in environment communication. He published several articles in Kannada and Malayalam languages. 'Why this negligence' (Udayavani), 'Cow born handicapped due to pesticides' (Sudha Weekly) and 'Life is cheaper than cashew' (Evidence Weekly) are some examples. It was with his support Nupur Basu, a reporter from NDTV prepared a detailed story on Endosulfan issue which was later telecast as breaking news. Sree Padhre was also instrumental in the formation of Endosulfan Spray Protest Action Committee (ESPAC), the first organization of Endosulfan movement. It was his email messages that encouraged people like Anil Agarwal, the director of Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), New Delhi and C. Jayakumar, Founder Director, Thanal, Thiruvananthapuram to come forward to support the movement. The role of Dr. Y. S. Mohan Kumar, a medical officer with professional ethics, deserves a special reference. An exception to the so-called 'commercialization of medical profession', a man of social commitment, Dr. Mohankumar used his knowledge in Medical science to strengthen the movement against chemical pesticides (Ibid).

It is significant to note that the workers in estates, particularly in Cashew Plantations in Kasaragod district, under Plantation Corporation of Kerala (PCK) and those working in Hindustan Insecticides Limited (HIL), a factory in Ernakulum district producing Endosulfan have come forward with an argument in favor of the pesticide. The workers in the Cashew Plantation argue that if Endosulfan is not sprayed on the cashew plants during the flowering season, it will inversely affect the productivity of cashew nut, and thus the employment prospects of the working class. They hold the view that it is more effective and cheap compared to other pesticides. It seems that the working class is ventilating the arguments of the Plantation Corporation of Kerala. The protests of the trade unions movement in HIL tend to be more strong and ideological.

There is a section within the trade union movement in Kerala, who analyzes the anti Endosulfan struggle as a part of neo colonial agenda of multinational corporations to control the pesticide market of the world. The Endosulfan is a generic pesticide, which was originally invented by Bare, a famous Pesticide manufacturing Company in Germany. After the expiry of patent, Indian companies like Coramandal, Excell and HIL began to produce and export Endosulfan, which badly affected the business prospects of the MNCs like Bare, Union carbide and Monsanto. Endosulfan thus emerged as a cost friendly pesticide (its cost for one acre of crops falls in between Rs 50 to 75, whereas a substitute would cost Rs 200 per acre). It could be used against

nearly 44 pests affecting around 25 crops. Moreover, Endosulfan has no side effect on pollinators like bees. The World Endosulfan market has an annual business of 40 million liters which worth 300 million US dollars. India is the largest producer of Endosulfan, which constitute 70% of the total production. There are three major MNCs in the global pesticide market, which wanted to monopolize the entire pesticide market. They are mainly producing non-generic pesticides, which are more costly, compared to Endosulfan. Therefore, these MNCs wanted to stop the production of cheap pesticides like Endosulfan in order to monopolize the global market. The European Union is the main force behind the anti Endosulfan agitations for the reason that the ban would mainly benefit its economy. The trade union movement has also pointed out that there are no negative reports from states like Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal and Maharashtra, which use one third of the national consumption (Cherian, 2012).

V.B. Cherian, who leads the trade union movement in HIL, alleges that the MNCs have succeeded to influence the mass media, NGOs and various political parties including the main stream left. He criticized the CPIM and its leader V.S. Achuthanandan for having been yielded to the corporate propaganda against Endosulfan, one of the cheapest pesticides widely used by thousands of small-scale farmers. He is of the opinion that the present turmoil is a part of electoral politics, which exposes the dominance of populist policies in mainstream left politics in Kerala. He has also targeted Center for Science and Environment (CSE), and Thanal for their active role in anti Endosulfan movement. With the help of Right to Information Act, he collected information to prove that the CSE has received Rs. 53 crore from European Union as financial assistance for its various research programmes. He described *Thanal*, a Thiruvananthapuram based NGO, as the agent of MNC in Kerala. He is skeptical about the role of *Thanal* in Geneva Conference and questioned the rationality of allowing an NGO to represent a nation in an international conference.

Contrary to its stand in the silent valley issue, the mainstream left in Kerala has been in the forefront of anti-Endosulfan agitations and was instrumental in using its organization framework for mobilizing public support in favor of the victims. V.S. Achuthanandan, the veteran leader of the main stream left in Kerala and the driving force behind the green leftist movement in Kerala, has made significant contributions in this regard. Mass organizations of mainstream left, particularly youth organizations like DYFI played an active role in the movement. For example, the DYFI organized a *sathyagraha* in front of HIL to stop the production of Endosulfan. The mass media network of the main stream left was also enthusiastic in giving coverage to this issue. The Chintha Publishers, one of the publishing companies under CPIM has published a work on Endosulfan issue (John, 2011).

The Ecological Disaster in Plachimada

Plachimada struggle against the industrial pollution is another example for livelihood –life debate and thus fall under the purview of this research. The unusual kind of water extraction by the Coca-Cola Company and consequent environmental impacts made human life helpless in Plachimada. According to one estimate, the factory extracted 1.1 million Liters/day. The survey conducted by Perumatty Panchayath found that factory had annual water based production of around three lakhs liters (Jayakumar, 2010). As the water resources depleted to the minimum level, the gravity of pollution reached dangerous heights. The water quality analysis held at the environmental laboratory of IRTC exposed high levels of hardness, salinity, alkalinity and other chemical components such as chlorides, sulfides etc. which are not in conformity with the drinking water standards. The study conducted by Centre for Development Studies (CDS), Trivandrum found that of the 33 open wells situated within a radius of 500 meters from the cola factory, water in 31(94%) wells had become non-potable during the period 200-2004.

The high power committee in its report has mentioned about 17 deaths due to diseases such as kidney failure, cardiac diseases, etc during the period 2002-04. The death of Smt. Mylamma, the leader of Plachimada agitation who had been suffering from psoriasis itself reflects the seriousness of the health problems created by the industrial pollution in the region. Arsenic detected from the industrial waste seems to cause psoriasis.

Low birth weight was another significant health problem that was common in the affected area. The study conducted by M/s V.T Padmanabhan, Omji John and Mustafa noticed a significant fall in the birth weight of children born in Plachimada after and immediately before the operations of the factory. According to this study cadmium on the health of mothers caused low birth weight. For this purpose, they analyzed data kept in the registers at the Anganavadis in Plachimada and Vijayanagar colonies for the period 1996-2003. The following table illustrates that while 15 % of the children born before the operation of the factory were LBW, which rose to 31.1 % during 2001-03 periods. (Jayakumar, 2010).

Birth weight of children born near Coca Cola Factory during 1996-2003

Period	Under 2.5 kg	Over 2.5 kg	Total	Under 2.5 (%)	Over 2.5 (%)	Total
1996-2001	11	62	73	15.1	84.9	100
2001-2003	14	31	45	31.1	64.9	100

Source: Report of the High Power Committee on Plachimada, 2010

The concluding remarks by the High Power Committee with regard to the health hazards in Plachimada draw special attention. It predicts that there is chances of future diseases as the critical impact of metal pollution takes time to appear. The biomagnification process in relation to heavy metal pollutants may affect more people in the future. Children born with low birth weight may have long term health problems.

It seems that the people of Plachimada and nearby villages had perceived the concept that free access to clean water is an inalienable right. It was because of this perception that they could not accept the alternative for a Jananidhi Project in Plachimada, a water supply scheme sponsored by the Japanese Government based on the neo liberal principle, 'pay and use'. For them, water constitutes the base of life. They even treated it as an object for worship. There is a God of water by the name Varunan. In short, the village community in Plachimada considered water as a spiritual entity with a pivotal role in human life. To quote Velloor Viswanathan,

“Water is a gift from God. The God of water is Varunan and it is the medicine for all sorts of diseases. It is the base of our life” (Pariyadath, 2006).

As the operations of the factory resulted in a water crisis with a double jeopardy of scarcity and contamination, people felt humiliated and made them restless. In the words of Mylamma,

“Suddenly we felt terribly helpless, facing the fact that we were robbed. Our precious water resource had been stolen... lakhs of liters every day... Where would I get some fresh and pure drinking water anymore? How many kilometers should we walk to fetch a drop of water? (Vikas, 2008)”

Furthermore, the World Water Conference held in 2003 in Plachimada in connection with the anti-Coca Cola agitation mainly emphasized the universal character of right to water. The Plachimada Declaration approved by the conference includes following four statements in with a direct reference to right to water (Vasudevan, 2005).

1. Water is the basis of life; it is a gift of nature; it belongs to all living beings on earth.
2. Water is not private property. It is a common resource for the sustenance of all.
3. Water is the fundamental right of all people. It has to be conserved, protected and managed. It is our fundamental obligation to prevent water scarcity and pollution and to preserve it for generations.

4. Water is not a commodity .We should resist all criminal attempts to marketwise, privatize and corporatize water. Only through these means can we ensure that the fundamental and inalienable right to water for the people all over the world.

The history of Plachimada agitation presents a different story about the interface between environmental and trade union movements in Kerala, which was mainly manifested in the form of cross-pollination of environmental, human rights and working class movements in the context of globalization and its neo liberal policies.

Conclusion

. The political document adopted by the 19th Party Congress of CPIM seems to be important in analyzing the ongoing life- livelihood debate. It endorsed the arguments raised by the environmental movements in different parts of the country particularly in Mavoor and Plachimada. The sub title of the CPIM document ‘environmental issues’ reads,

“Environmental problems in India have been worsening and are reaching crisis proportions in several areas, with serious impact on livelihood, living conditions and health of the people, especially the poor and marginalized sections. These problems have been exacerbated by the policies of liberalization and globalization, by commercialization of common resources, and by the failure of government to regulate these sectors under pressure from MNCs, Indian Corporate and other vested interests. Huge tracts of forests lands are being diverted for mining, industries or commercial plantation at the expense of both the environment and livelihoods of tribals and other traditional forest dwellers. Water resources are being severely depleted due to overexploitation, contamination and release of untreated industrial waste and urban sewage. Ground water reserves are particularly threatened by unregulated water mining for industries, for privatized tanker supply in urban areas and for the bottled water and aerated beverages industry, squeezing out both small farmers and the urban poor.” (Political document, CPIM). To conclude, the working class movement and the environmental movements which represent right to livelihood and right to life respectively are in the process of cross movement pollination. The boundaries seem to shrink slowly with a predominance of right to life over right to livelihood. The contradictions seem to be disappearing. There are indications that the growing acceptance of theory of neo imperialism and green Marxist perceptions would result in a transition from blue green conflicts to blue green coalitions with a greater commitment to inter-generational justice.

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Portrayal of Children in War-struck Regions: A Study on the Movies ‘Turtles Can Fly’ and ‘Bekas’

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Abstract

This paper analyses how the children’s life in the war-struck regions is portrayed in the world movies. The researcher examines two Kurdish movies of global acclaim released in two different decades of 21st century. The movies were dissected based on the portrayal of war-struck regions, portrayal of children’s life, analysis of lead characters, perception of America in Kurdish culture and analysis of climax. The researcher has found out that the atrocities against children were portrayed realistically in these movies. The children who inhabit in war-struck regions express high levels of responsibility, emotional maturity and survival capacity compared to the ordinary children. The human right violation against children is recreated in the movies without exaggeration.

Keywords:

Children, War, War-struck Regions, Movies, Portrayal.

Introduction

Childhood is not only a phase of a human being’s growth, but also a period of transformation in many aspects. Compared to adults, children are too vulnerable to distressful situations such as conflicts and violation of peaceful atmosphere. The younger victims of war are haunted by the trauma for the rest of their life. Psychological disorders and emotional imbalance are common among them. The reports on the war crimes contain horrifying revelations about the young victims. Child soldiering is a common practice, so is the case with slavery in army camps. Besides, rape and sexual slavery regardless of the child’s gender have been frequently reported from all over the war locations.

Apart from their high death toll, children who have lost parents, who are maimed, diseased, sexually assaulted, forced to serve in the war front or engage

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in laborious jobs also are found in huge numbers. The war-struck regions are destroyed using mass-destructive weapons in most cases. After the war, no infrastructure would be remaining intact. Educational institutions, hospitals, markets and residential colonies are collapsed into dust. Even the basic facilities such as water, food and shelter would not be available. The survivors, regardless of their age group, suffer the ordeal in order to retain their life.

During the conflicts, children act like adults with no sign of innocence and immaturity in them. They are compelled to leave the school and play ground and work in army or other dangerous situations in order to find a living. Most of the children are orphaned and the eldest sibling is left with the responsibility of the younger ones. They manage to do the multitasking, including household chores, baby sitting and working for money, in such a young age. (ICRC, 2009).

As a popular mass medium, movie has always attempted to depict the reality such as war atrocities on civilians. War movie is a film genre concerned with warfare, typically about naval, air or land battles in the twentieth century, with combat scenes central to the drama (Wikipedia, 2016). In fact, many of the brutalities against common people left unrecorded during the hustle-bustle of war were brought into limelight by cinema. War movies are a serious genre aimed at portraying the horrors of war to the audience. Most of them attempt to convince the spectators about the uselessness of war and its brutalities. Through movies, the reality is recreated before the viewers.

One of the most chaotic regions is Kurdistan. The Kurds are the largest populated diaspora in the world without a state of their own. Their population is about 40 million, spread over different countries. The Kurds have a deep historical background of continuous struggle for existence. In fact, discussing war without mentioning Kurds will be incomplete. They have been frequently undergoing wars and invasions, and the people have been subjected to severe war crimes. Iraq launched the most brutal genocide campaign on Kurds in 1988. They used lethal chemical weapons on Kurdish people and resulted in the death of more than 5000 Kurds in the village of Halabjah. The US invasion in Iraq and the fall of Saddam Hussein in 2003, and the tensions between the USA and Iraq after Gulf War had created adverse conditions in Kurdistan. The existence of the country as a republic is not accepted yet.

For analysing the portrayal of children in war-struck regions in movies, two Kurdish movies are selected – *Turtles Can Fly* (2004) and *Bekas* (2012). They were released in the two decades of twentieth century and are based on the conflicts in Kurdish region of Iraqi-Turkish border and Iraqi Kurdistan respectively. From the news reports and historical records, it is clear that the locations mentioned in the movies are prone to conflicts and wars from the very

beginning. The children of these regions are victims of war. So, in order to derive findings on the topic, the researcher chose these movies.

Objectives

- To analyse the portrayal of children's life in war-struck areas as shown in the two world cinemas –*Turtles Can Fly* and *Bekas*.
- To analyse the depiction of survival capacity of children living in life-threatening conditions in films.
- To analyse the portrayal of emotional development expressed by children in war-infested areas in movies.
- To analyse the atrocities against children in war-struck lands as portrayed in films.
- To understand the state of children performing the responsibilities of adults during a chaotic atmosphere in cinema.

Methodology

The entire research design is revolving around qualitative research methodology. As the content of the films like the plot, characters, dialogues, performance and other visual elements are the basis of the study, content analysis is suitable for this research. As part of the research design, exploratory content analysis, narrative analysis, qualitative visual analysis and interpretative video analysis are employed in order to accomplish the objectives.

The research is based on the Media Representation theory. In this theory, representation refers to the construction in any medium (especially the mass media) of aspects of 'reality' such as people, places, objects, events, cultural identities and other abstract concepts. Such representations may be in speech or writing as well as still or moving pictures (Media Representation Theory, 2010).

Analysis

Plot, structure, characters, dialogues and performance of the two selected movies – *Turtles Can Fly* (2004) and *Bekas* (2012) - are the base for the analysis.

Turtles Can Fly (2004)

Turtles Can Fly is a Kurdish movie written and directed by Bahman Ghobadi in 2004. Well-acclaimed by the audience all over the world, it has

received numerous awards. It is the first movie made in Kurdistan after the fall of Saddam Hussein. The title of the film is a symbol of the joy, anguish and migration of the Kurds. Turtles live for long years, and their life is divided in the land and water which reminds the state of Kurdish people. Like the turtles, they move slowly towards their target (Ghobadi, 2005). The child actors of the movie were not professional actors.

Turtles Can Fly is the story of the Kurdish children in a village near Iraqi - Turkish border on the eve of American invasion of Iraq. They all find living from collecting landmines from fields. The head of the village lads, Satellite – as they call him, installs satellite dishes in the households for getting news of war. He develops a liking for a new girl in their area. She is accompanied by her handicapped brother and a blind toddler. It is a secret that the toddler was born to the girl out of rape by the army men. She wants to get rid of the child, but her brother does not allow her. Finally, she succeeds in drowning her son in the river and committing suicide.

Portrayal of War-struck Region in the Movie

The elements of war are clearly visible in the movie from the beginning to the end. The first overview shot of the village of Kanibo gives the idea that the place is hit by some disaster. Instead of concrete buildings and infrastructure, the village is packed with temporarily built tents and partially ruined housing. Geographically it is a dry, hilly land with limited presence of vegetation. Rusted vehicles, piles of metal objects and all kinds of armaments are stocked in the open spaces.

People have no proper settlements. Many families share a common tent. Most of them are refugees who stay there until they leave to the border. By the end of the movie, majority of the families leave as the war is declared. The prices of things have gone up due to the war and the people are in short of money. They are compelled to rely on barter system. Children collect mines and sell it with the help of middlemen like Satellite. In the market, they trade mines and radios for purchasing the dish and weapons. Struck by war means struck by poverty too.

The entire village is terrified because of the impending war. They have no resource to know the progress of war, so that when the dish is installed in Esmael's house, all the people crowd there to know the news. The elders in the village compel Satellite to interpret the news of war. The alienation suffered by the people is summarised in Esmael's statement in the beginning:

“Look what Saddam has done to us! We have no water, no electricity and no schools. They have deprived us from the sky.

They don't let our TVs work to see when the war will start."
(03.07)

Even the areas on the both sides of a valley are lying within different borders. The land is so close to the neighbouring nations that they got trapped inside the borders of different lands.

The use of chemical weapons had once killed a lot of Kurds and they fear the enemies will repeat it. There is scene in which the teacher of the village and some other people distribute masks for the villagers and instructs them how to use it. They also suggest to stay underwater or to go to high areas to escape from chemical attack. When the war was finally declared, the people rush to the hill to save themselves. Direct attack on the civilians is present only in one scene, in which the soldiers chase the children, rape Agrin and try to drown her and Hengov in a pond. However, the visuals are carefully shot in order to avoid any exposure of the minor girl during the rape scene.

The villagers entrust Satellite with the responsibility of getting weapons from the market in exchange of mines. No restriction or licensing is required for buying weapons. Large stock of guns and cartridges in the shops show that everyone is getting ready to face the combat. The arrival of American military troop and their helicopter also indicates that the war between America and Iraq has commenced. The last scene shows Satellite watching the American soldiers entering amass with weapons, signalling the final stage of invasion.

Portrayal of Children's Life in the Movie

The lead characters in the movie are played by children, who are non-professional actors. They were influenced by his life as a Kurd. The film maker Bahman Ghobadi himself clarifies that he picked up the kids from Kurdistan, because there are no professional actors in Kurdistan (Ghobadi, An Interview with Bahman Ghobadi, 2005).

The war has killed the civilians without any discrimination resulting in numerous orphan kids wandering in the streets. In the movie, we can see a number of such children without a guardian to take care of. The absence of adults makes them behave like grownups. In fact, the elders of the village depend on the children for many things.

The characterisation of Satellite and Hengov is a representation of the adult rivalry for power and authority. They do not accept the leadership of each other. In the market, Satellite is the one who purchases the dish and rents weapons. Even when he rents gun and cartridge, the shop keeper does not warn him of the danger and just asks him not to ruin them. Also, the children practice shooting without any adult supervision.

Child labour is intense in the region regardless of the age and security of the child. Mine sweeping being a major job, many children have been maimed in accidents. Hengov, Pashow and Satellite are visibly the victims of mine blasts. Even after they are disfigured, the children are forced to work in the mine fields for a living. Education is only a dream for them as the school has turned out to be a mere storage for weapons. Children practice shooting in school, instead of learning letters and the teacher argues with them.

Teacher: "Hey! Why aren't you listening? Teach them math and science!"

Satellite: "They know math and science. They have to learn how to shoot now. They have to learn how to use masks." (1.14.19)

The war compels children to abandon the carefree life of the tender age. Since they are unable to access the schools, education is stopped halfway. None of the children in this film is shown receiving any kind of education. Some of them update information with the help of media, just like Satellite. Shirkooh asking doubts to Satellite can be an instance for that. The children are never shown being sentimental over anything. Physical injury is the only thing that hurts them. They have no time to grieve on their lost childhood; instead they live in the present.

Analysis of Lead Characters

In this film, three lead characters are selected for analysis. They are Satellite (Soran Ebrahim), Agrin (Avaz Latif) and Hengov (Hireh Feysal Rahman).

Satellite

Soran alias Satellite is the lead character of the movie 'Turtles Can Fly'. The character was played by Soran Ebrahim, an orphan boy from Kurdistan. He gets the nickname 'Satellite' from his ability to install dishes and antennas. Satellite is a symbol of the teenagers who blindly follow the Western culture and try everything of modernity and sophistication. In spite of being an orphan, Satellite lives with his head high and that is the evidence for his survival capacity. Kanibo and other villages nearby depend on him for fixing satellites. People who want to clear mines from their fields approach Satellite for sending child workers. He does not depend on anyone, but makes others depend on him. Both children and adults of the village require his help for many things. He utilises his power to make others follow him.

Satellite ensures that he is always respected by everyone. He does not like being humiliated or belittled in front of the village children. In fact, his

sidekicks also share the feeling. Shirkooh even considers himself at the service of Satellite. The centre of power shifts to children when there are no adults to take that position, and it is a result of war. He keeps using English words and tries to appear modern among others. Towards the end of the film, Satellite realises the false claims of America. Shirkooh gifts him with a packet of red fish bought from America, and Satellite realises that he was fooled when its red colour goes in the water. It symbolically shows his realisation. He is a representation of those who perceive America as the saviour of the world and blindly follow what they say.

Agrin

Agrin is the only female lead actor in the film. Compared to Satellite and other village children, she is a direct symbol of grief and agony of war. Throughout the film, she does not express any deep emotion and not even a smile appears on her face. Her loose, dark shaded dress represents her distressing life itself. Only her shoes are bright coloured which is left behind after her suicide. Agrin is rather a feeble character in most of the scenes. She depends on her brother and he decides everything for her. She makes home, babysit and accompanies Hengov to the mine field with Riga. She keeps arguing with Hengov about Riga. During the army raid in their home village Halabcheh, she was gang raped by the soldiers. Due to the horrific experiences of the past, she frequently exhibits suicidal tendency. So, she cannot accept Riga, her child who was born of rape. Until the mid half of the movie, everyone believes that the toddler is her brother.

The society creates only rape victims, not survivors. She is afraid of the people asking about Riga, when he grows up. Moreover, it will negatively affect her future too. So, she thinks it is best to abandon the child before they pass the border. She decides to succumb to her past, instead of reviving her perception of life. She resists strongly against every attempt from Hengov to make her accept Riga as her son. It can be assumed that she holds a rejecting attitude towards Satellite only because of the inferiority complex resulted from her past. The society leaves the women to bear the shame of rape for the rest of her life. So, Agrin might be considering herself as undeserving to be loved.

In the climax, she succeeds with her consistent effort to avoid the child. She drowns Riga and kills herself. She does not fight back to her past, but fails even before the war starts. Her appearance in the movie reminds us of the deadly presence of war. She is not the representation of survival, but the symbol of escape into death which provides the ultimate freedom, in her perception.

Hengov

Hengov is Agrin's brother, who is visibly a victim of the war. He had lost both of his arms in the attack and is mentioned as 'the armless boy' by everyone. Only Agrin calls him his name. In fact, Hengov is the real war survivor of the movie. He lost his parents, he was maimed, his sister became a young mother of a war baby, they had to leave their home land, yet he is hopeful towards life. He has a unique ability of clairvoyance, which makes his character further complex. Sometimes, he does have dreams which apparently give a clue to some upcoming event. However, Hengov is not willing to sell his ability for anything.

Unlike the other kids, he does not accept the authority of Satellite. The interaction between Hengov and Satellite represents the ego clash between adults. Hengov is not ready to seclude from the society, despite his physical limitations. He works in the mine field, takes care of his sister and nephew without depending on others. When Agrin insists about leaving Riga before they shift, Hengov turns assertive. He considers him as a child rather than a symbol of their dark past. Though he does not understand the concerns of Agrin about her future, he is compassionate towards Riga and cares for him.

Hengov's life is full of tragedies. He became all alone in the world after the death of his parents, sister and nephew. Compared to his sister, he is daring enough to face the upcoming events. He does not try to escape from himself and the public. The boy bravely lives alone with his head high, whereas even adults fear the dangers of war. He truly survives the hardships of life by continuing his journey.

Perception of America in Kurdish Culture

The story is set in the time of American invasion of Iraq in 2003. Yet, America is perceived as a great nation. Satellite is the major character who keeps praising America and foreigners. He is proud of being able to speak English. According to Satellite, even the mines made in America are first class. He instructs the children to collect only American mines, because they are expensive. There is an awesome feeling towards foreigners among the Kurds in general. However, it is Satellite who expresses it the most. When Satellite injures himself from mine blast in an effort to save the toddler, the teacher of the village says half contemptuously:

"You kept saying USA, USA, until you fell on a USA mine". (1.21.33)

There is a set propaganda behind the presentation of America as a great place. People consider themselves as inferior to USA citizens, because they are

compelled to perceive it like that. After the declaration of war, helicopters shower leaflets for the Kurdish villagers, which reads:

“It’s the end of injustice, misfortune and hardship. We are your best friends and brothers. Those against us are our enemies. We will make this country a paradise. We are here to take away your sorrows. We are the best in the world.” (1.03.24)

The words clearly illustrate how the image of America is developed in the public psyche. They depict USA as a rescuer of Kurdish diaspora. Apart from the self-praising, it contains a tone of threat for those who oppose. It tells that America gains support by creating either admiration or fear.

In Kurdish culture, satellite is prohibited due to the obscene content broadcast in it. But they relieved the rule for watching news only, because of the impending war. The first transition after American invasion was the removal of this prohibition. Pashow informs Satellite that the US soldiers took the dish to the hill and the village children accompanied them to watch the prohibited channels. The invasion is not only geographical, but cultural also. By the end, Satellite himself realises the truth.

Shirkooch arrives to say farewell along with the hand of Saddam’s statue and a few red fish from America for Satellite. But, when Satellite examines the fish closely, he finds that they are ordinary fish painted in red. It is a symbolic representation of their perception towards America. The glorified image of the great nation was scattered when they realise that there will be no change in their life. USA was like a saviour for them until the invasion really happened.

Analysis of Climax

The story of the movie *‘Turtles Can Fly’* is not set in the chronological order. In fact, the climax of the movie is in the beginning. Agrin’s suicide forms the final part of the story, but her jumping off the mountain cliff is shown first. The flash back - flash forward format has been applied in it. After the suicide scene, the rest of the story takes place. The middle of the movie is the flash back of Agrin’s past.

In the climax, Hengov predicts that everything will end the next day, which Satellite misinterprets that the war will end. His ability of clairvoyance remains a mystery throughout the story. But, this time his prediction proves to be wrong. It was more related to his own life. After his leg injury, Satellite begins to realise the real face of USA. It points to the sudden transition in the traditional cultural setting of the society.

When Hengov sets out in search of Agrin and Riga after he had a dream, he sees Agrin's image standing on the military tanks. It is another clue of what happens to them. Before he could reach the spot, Agrin drowns Riga in the spring and kills herself by jumping off the cliff. Thus, the armless boy loses his entire family due to the war. He is a representative of the millions who are orphaned and maimed in the combats.

Satellite also gets his foot maimed and he begins to use the crutches to walk, like Pashow. He sees the American soldiers entering the village in clusters. The rest of the story is left to the viewers. The invasion might have brought even more serious harm to their lives. Otherwise, they could have been saved by USA, as they expect. The movie is all about how war tears apart the lives of innocent people, especially children. It shows the brutal deprivation of the right to live.

Bekas (2012)

Bekas is a Kurdish movie written and directed by Karzan Kader in 2012. Semi-autobiographical in nature, the movie was well received among the audience. It was honoured with several awards. The film is a semi-autobiographical work of Karzan Kader. The lead child artists of the film are non-professional actors (Kader, 2012). Instead of the usual dark tone of war movies, he had chosen for a different method in this cinema. The presence of children is used for balancing the traumatic effect of war with their innocent and humorous approach to life.

Bekas is the story of two brothers, Dana and Zana, in Kurdistan, who lives as shoeshine boys. They are orphans and victims of war, and they consider even Saddam Hussein as their topmost enemy. The boys admire the Hollywood hero Superman and believe that Superman would solve all their problems. They find that Superman lives in America and decide that they must leave to that place. They work so hard so that money can be piled for the journey. The elder boy Dana falls in love with a girl and gets distracted from their target. The younger Zana gets a donkey, which he calls Michael Jackson, and plans to set out to America on it. They would understand the difficulty to pass the border, but somehow manage to move on. The boys fight with each other, gets separated and eventually rejoins. The story ends abruptly leaving the viewers imagine the rest of their journey to the destination.

Portrayal of War-struck Region in the Movie

Though the movie is released in 2012, its story happens in the 1990's Iraqi Kurdistan under the horrid reign of Saddam Hussein. The whole movie is created in a light sepia tone to give the sense of melancholic atmosphere of the

war. In the opening scene, the children play and run along an arid land and congested, unpolished streets, which are notable characteristics of the place.

The ragged settlements behind the beautiful valley points to the harsh living conditions of the people. Their means of public transportation are so limited that they depend on carts. The streets are kept under surveillance by the army. In the scenes which show the children walking through the street paths, army men carrying gun pass them casually. Soldiers have become so common in their lives that they do not seem overwhelmed in the presence of military personnel.

The anti-Kurdish campaigns of Saddam Hussein have destructed their peaceful life. Zana buys a copy book after they have decided to go to America, and writes down the names of those who were mean to him. The name of Saddam Hussein tops the list. He knows that his parents were killed because of Saddam. Throughout their journey, Zana keeps asking Dana about Superman in order to ensure that he is powerful enough to destroy Saddam's army.

Zana: "Is Superman powerful enough to destroy all the bad people and bring back all the good ones?"

Dana: "Yes, he is. And he is very brave and he can fly too..."

Zana: "Kaka, so why doesn't he destroy Saddam? Everyone knows he's very bad with people and he has killed our parents too..."

Dana: "I don't know. Maybe he hasn't heard of Saddam." (43.35)

The journey to America is only a dream for the Kurds, as they are not allowed to cross even the border of a town. The rights of the Kurdish people are not accepted by the host countries like Iraq. When Zana and Dana try to pass the border on the donkey, the lieutenant insults them and drives them away. The scenes at check posts speak aloud of the restrictions imposed on the Kurdish population. Long queues of vehicles are put to wait for checking. Apart from checking the identity cards of the travellers, they examine every part of the vehicles including its trunk, chassis and even the luggage is not spared. It is obvious from the scrutiny by military officers that no one is allowed to escape from the country. Those scenes show how Saddam Hussein's army treated the Kurds living in their region.

Nearing the climax, Dana steps on a mine while walking along a deserted area. The war always keeps its active remnants of explosives in the land, even after everything is over. The lives of civilians are never considered during the execution of war strategies. The boy was walking so casually that nobody would expect a landmine being hidden there. Within a second, his

happiness fades in the fear of death. In war-struck regions death will arrive without any warning.

Portrayal of Children's Life in the Movie

The trend of using non-professional actors is followed in this movie too by its director Karzan Kader. He tells that he used his childhood experiences in Kurdistan in the film. The boys were inspired from himself and his elder brother, and the character of Baba Khalid was a recreation of his own grandfather (Kader, *People in the Arab World Have to Stand up to Follow Their Dreams*, 2012).

The story is set in Kurdistan in the backdrop of Saddam Hussein's anti-Kurd reign. The Kurdish protest against ethnic alienation resulted in their mass destruction by Saddam's army. Many people died and their families were orphaned. Considering the time period of the story, the two homeless brothers of the movie are the victims of this. Zana and Dana live in the street and earn from shining shoes in the market. They work for daily bread instead of learning in a young age. They keep their belongings in Baba Khalid's shop, eat and sleep in the street, and they bathe in terrace of a building. It is hard to lead the life as orphans, because people would take advantage of that state of helplessness.

On the other hand, Helliya is the daughter of a professor and belongs to a middle class family. She leads a seemingly happy and satisfied life with her family. War does not affect the people who have money and resources to relocate themselves to safer shelters. She seems to be ignorant about the hardships undergone by other children of her age. Helliya is not a victim of war; she is one of the few fortunate persons, who need not even survive it.

Baba Khalid's death leaves the boys completely alone. When the approach the smugglers to move to America, they try to drive the kids away. Jamal treats them exactly like some domestic animals. When Zana seeks help in a market to save his brother, we can see the attitude of the people. We may expect someone would listen to his plea out of humanity, but they push him away. They expressed the general disgust towards street urchins in this visual. They are not willing to spare even a moment for a kid's cry.

The war killed the adults and spared their children just to wander in the streets without shelter, food, schooling and security. The wicked people take advantage of the insecure life conditions of children. The amount of survival capacity is different in each person. In this movie, the kids are fully aware that the mistreatment from the society is because of their orphanhood. Their minds are filled not with innocence, but fury against Saddam Hussein and his army. The boys are symbols of the numerous child victims of war.

Analysis of Lead Characters

Three major characters played by children are selected for analysis. They are Zana (Zamand Taha), Dana (Sarwar Fazil) and Helliya (Diya Mariwan).

Zana

Zana is the youngest of all the characters. He is about six years old and has only his elder brother with him. Energetic, enthusiastic and innocent, he has all the charm of his age. His perseverance to achieve the target leads the entire story. He loves and respects his brother, no matter how hard Dana is to him. Besides, he yearns for the love of an adult and that is why he is inclined to Baba Khalid rather than his brother is. The mischievous nature of the little boy makes the funny moments of the movie. He believes that whatever he fancies is real – be it Superman or the never-ending journey to America.

The characterisation of Zana is rather feeble. He is not dominant over others. Though he has his own opinions and decisions, they are mostly controlled by his elder brother. Zana outshines his age with his sense of responsibility. Once they set a target, i.e. to move to America, he is dedicated his maximum. He works extra time and keeps planning. Even after he is left alone by his brother now and then, he does not care and stays focused. He behaves like an adult sometimes.

Emotionally, Zana is more intense than anyone else. He loves people from the bottom of his heart. It is obvious from the way he expresses his feelings for their late parents, Dana, and Baba Khalid. When they decide to bring Superman with them, Zana seems more concerned with bringing their late parents back to life. He is so excited about going to America for this reason. In the climax, when Dana steps on a mine, Zana does not leave him. His passionate love for his brother keeps him strong. He endures the hardships to be together always. We may wonder watching his stubbornness despite the physical threat he suffers. He is extremely resistant at times, even when his brother gives up.

Dana

Dana is the elder one of the duo, who has to play the role of a father, mother and brother to a young boy. He acts as a hero to his little brother. He is in the beginning of teenage and has the complexities of the age. The childish characteristic of selflessness is almost absent in him, unlike his brother. Despite maintaining his own existence, he is supposed to look after his brother too, which he fulfils successfully. Compared to Zana, the intensity of emotions is less in Dana. He is not very expressive of feelings. He is optimistic about the future and nurtures his dreams to a better day ahead.

Dana is a survivor of war just like his sibling. He lost his parents in an early age and he had to live in the street with his young brother. He does not give up, instead works as shoe-shine boy to make the ends meet. The boys are treated unkindly at every phase of the life, be it the theatre owner, smugglers or donkey owner. Yet, Dana keeps moving ahead and dreams about going to America. He has the courage to resist when both of them are mistreated by the elders. However, Dana is less resistant in comparison with Zana.

He behaves like an adult while handling serious matters. When Dana confronts with a deadly time on the mine, he bravely asks his brother to go away. He gives priority to Zana. When Zana goes to get help, he waits under the burning sun for a long time. He decides to move from the mine at last, but it was not an attempt of sacrificing his life. He removes his foot from it slowly and steadily, and finally he wins. It shows his ability to overcome the unexpected obstacles.

Helliya

Helliya is rather a minor character in the film. Yet, she has a significant role in the progress of the story. She appears only in a few scenes and has limited dialogues to deliver. Helliya is the daughter of a professor. She has a family and home, and belongs to middle class of the society. She is visibly elite and rich in comparison with other children. She is never found with the street urchins.

Though Helliya appears only a few times, she is dominant in nature. She understands that Dana is after her and behaves authoritatively. The way she talks is in a clearly dominating way. She questions him and commands as if he were a criminal. Apart from the authority between lovers, the disparity between social classes also is visible here. Helliya does not work to earn like the boys. She lives freely and is seen roaming around the street most of the time. She has no need of being responsible towards life.

Helliya cannot be considered as a victim of war. She has not lost anyone, anything. She is one of the persons who are not affected by war. So, there is no question of survival relevant in the case of Helliya. She is cared as a child and is dependent on her family. It is possible that she may not survive, if exposed to the horrors of war.

Perception of America in Kurdish Culture

Since the story is set in the 1990's, America is perceived as a great source of power. The characters in the movie are Kurdish diaspora, who are oppressed by the host countries. They yearn for power and freedom; two terms the world usually associate with America. Even the young kids like Dana are

aware of USA. The arrival of Superman's movie is received very well among the Kurdish children. They do not have many mass media, so that a film is a festive experience for them. In addition, Superman is American, which can possibly be the reason for his power, at least in the kids' mind.

Not everyone of the region has heard of America. Because, when the term is used by someone, they ask who it is or where it is. Dana explains to Zana that America is a big city full of buildings which are tall enough to touch the sky. They understand that it is a developed nation unlike the ruined Kurdistan. So, they would like to go to America. Whenever they struggle during the journey, they believe that it really worth a trip to the great place. Here the Superman is symbol of the nation itself.

Glorifying Coca-Cola is another instance for the love for USA. Dana gets trapped in the van while trying to steal Coca-Cola. He returns triumphantly with the bottles. It is an international brand, so that drinking Coca-Cola makes one international, as they say.

Zana: "You are international!"

Dana: "If you drink this, you'll be international too." (51.18)

The children use the word 'international' without knowing its meaning. But they know that being international is something very great. Later, when he sets out in search of Zana after their fight, he picks two bottles of Coca-Cola for him. Whenever they succeed, there is Coca-Cola with them. It is more of an advertisement of a popular soft drink.

The old man they meet on the way is a true representation of Kurdish culture. He does not know anything about America. He is against satellites and television programmes, because they spread immorality and Saddam introduced it to destroy their culture. He does not know Michael Jackson and when Zana imitates his dance, he calls it evil. The boys teach him a few words in English and give him a bottle of Coca-Cola too. By the end of their journey, the man begins to like them. Similarly, America is perceived as a heaven-like land where one can enjoy the ultimate freedom and power.

Analysis of Climax

The movie '*Bekas*' has a simple and direct climax. The story moves in the chronological order, starting from the first to the last event. There is no flash back, but the events happening simultaneously are shown in cut-to-cut format. The climax begins after the boys are packed in the sack and hidden inside the trunk of Jamal's car. The extremity of hostility between Iraqi army and Kurdish people is evident in this sequence. He checks the dickey thoroughly with his

gun's edge and does not let Jamal stay near the car. He asks him to move and turn back. However, he could not find anything and let them continue their journey.

Each check point is a test for the Kurds. They are not allowed to pass the boundary. We can see long queues of vehicles waiting at the border. Considering the history of 1990's Iraq, it was the period of Gulf war and the Kurdish uprising against the Saddam government. So, the army was extra vigilant to suppress any attempt of protest or migration to other countries. There is frequent mention of being killed by the soldiers if caught travelling illegally.

The children pass the border, and move on until Dana accidentally steps on a mine. It is a symbol of the hidden dangers of the war. Nobody would expect a mine on the path way, that too deserted and arid land. Living in a war-struck area has enabled them to identify a mine and to deal with it. An ordinary child may not know how a mine looks like or what happens if they release the foot set on its top. But these children know exactly that death waits in it. Zana runs to get help from a market, but in vain. Here again, the discrimination against children can be seen. People do not listen to Zana, even after he tells them to help his brother.

The story ends there without showing the rest of their journey or life. They might have continued the trip or cancelled it. It is left to the imagination of spectators. But, it gives the sense that no matter what obstacles come their way, the boys will overcome and move on. From the beginning to the end, they are presented as survivors of war and life. The movie ends with a positive tone. Survival through the hardships of life is the summary of this film.

Summary of Findings

- Both the movies portray children in war-struck regions as victims and survivors at the same time.
- Most of the child characters of both movies show high amount of survival capacity in life.
- The children who live in war-struck regions confront with unexpected situations in life, such as death, sexual violence, maiming, child labour, etc.
- Though the atrocities against children are condemned, they are victimised indirectly before, after and during a war. The threats of displacement and relocation occur before war. Direct attacks like murder, mutilation and rape happen during war. The active mines

buried in the land causes many of the children suffer even after the combat.

- Children are compelled to engage in dangerous activities such as collecting mines, for a living. Besides, no adult supervision is suggested during the use of war weapons.
- The children are prone to exploitation in war time. The children in ‘*Turtles Can Fly*’ are hired by adults for mine sweeping, which is apparently an unsafe activity. In ‘*Bekas*’, the boys are cheated by the smugglers, who offer to take them to the destination, but desert them halfway.
- The people of war-struck regions, especially the children, perceive America as a rescuer. Satellite of ‘*Turtles Can Fly*’, and Zana and Dana of ‘*Bekas*’ are seemingly proud of speaking English and knowing about America and its culture.
- Difference in the nature of war and the time periods result in different experiences. An impending war and on-going war bring distinct effects.
- In the absence of adults in responsible roles, children take their place. They take charge of the scene and even elders depend on them.
- The children are used for accelerating the process of westernisation and globalisation. Besides, they apparently consider their culture as inferior to American culture.
- The lead characters of both movies are played by native, non-professional child artists, yet they perform without displaying exaggerated emotions. Casting of real life characters in the movie has helped a great deal in the realistic representation of the children’s life in war-struck regions.

Conclusion

In the analysis of war struck regions, both the movies have depicted the war torn lands differently. The disparity is caused from the stories set in different time periods. In *Turtles Can Fly*, remnants of a direct attack and clues of an impending war can be seen in the backdrop. *Bekas*, on the contrary, does not show any sign of an ongoing war. There is only an insecure condition prevailing among the people. When the life of children is analysed, the direct attacks on children and the consequential nervous tensions are more present in *Turtles Can Fly*, whereas the emotional insecurity and orphanhood resulted from war is the core of *Bekas*.

It has been found that the children in these movies appear to be more responsible, surviving and emotionally mature, even though they lack proper education and development. The childish features usually associated with children are exhibited very little. The Kurds generally keep a positive mentality towards USA, contrary to the global perception of the same as a militarist nation. Climax of both the movies leave the story incomplete, challenging the imagination of the spectators.

In summarising, the portrayal of children in war-struck regions in movies can be understood from the movies *Turtles Can Fly* and *Bekas*. The human right violation against children is clearly visible in these movies. The ultimate victims of war are children, i.e. the future generation. The greatest virtue the elders could do to the younger ones is to stop the wars. Cinema can carry the idea of peace to a mass audience breaking the boundaries.

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Vijay Tendulkar's "Kamala": Masculine Violence and Media

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ABSTRACT

Media plays a significant role in exposing the drawbacks of institutions but there are instances where media itself is subject to criticism on account of gender discrimination and unethical professionalism. This paper attempts to trace the construction of masculinity in the Indian context and relate it to violence against women, where media is involved. The paper would brief the sociologist Connell's masculinity theory and then it would delineate the construction of masculinities in India. Masculinity rests on power that forces men and women to adhere to its pressure and authority.

Working within this framework, the paper would analyse how the protagonist, who is one of the leading reporters of his area employs deviant means to attain success at the cost of discrimination of women, patriarchy and abuse of the power of media. His working strategy not only hurts his ego but also ends in a crucial social position where he is subjected to disgrace for interfering in matters that involve people in more powerful social standing. This results in his gradual relegation to a subordinate masculine position from the earlier hegemonic one. His attitude of extreme discrimination against women and the use of women to climb the ladder of success suffer a reversal due to the influence of greater powerful forces that control his life and change his perception of media power. This way, one understands how media has its political games that affect the construction of masculinities, which is influenced by several factors that include age, class, gender, caste, status and social rank.

Keywords

Masculinity, Media, Power, Violence, Patriarchy.

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Introduction

This paper argues that the predominance of violence against women by men could be associated to the construction of masculinity in the Indian social milieu. This paper concentrates on delineating the way media creates or involves in situations in the play “Kamala” that bring success at the expense of women, thereby creating unhealthy relationships among people. Competition among men holding positions in society could be responsible for the continuing abuse of women and subordination of men thereby resulting in breach of human rights.

The sociologist Connell asserts that masculinity cannot be considered to be a monolithic concept because men differ from each other on the grounds of race, class, sexual orientation, age, (dis)ability, education and migration backgrounds. Some men differ from each other more than individual men and women from, for instance with regard to the same class or religion. It would be appropriate to use the plural term masculinities than the singular masculinity. The use of plural masculinities indicates that men and the attributes of masculinity keep changing due to changes in social, economic, cultural and political leanings. The attributes that are considered masculine or feminine at a certain period of time could be different over other periods of time.

Connell (1995) opines: “To recognize diversity in masculinities is not enough. We must also recognize the relations between the different kinds of masculinity; relations of alliance, dominance and subordination. These relationships are constructed through practices that exclude and include, that intimidate, exploit, and so on” (p.37). The recognition of men with other men worldwide is based on certain criteria that legitimize oppression and assure advantaged position of some groups of men with respect to others. Certain practices are employed by the privileged through which they establish their superior status in comparison with other men of different cultural, social, political and economic backgrounds. These practices range from exercising power, oppression, forced servitude, control of others, playing dominant roles in society, maintaining linguistic, educational and religious superiority, racial superiority, rigorously practicing class and caste distinctions and regulating freedom of exercising individual rights.

The dominant masculine asserts his supremacy over the others to claim his superior status. Foucault (1988) defines power as “the relationship in which one wishes to direct the behavior of another...” (p.12). In such an imbalanced relationship it is natural that one exerts control over the other and measures could be taken to assert one’s role in the other individual’s life. Such an authoritarian stance would deploy violence to instill fear in the minds of the suppressed. This way, the society internalises the status of individuals and

behave in the ways dictated by the superior groups of men. Gender hegemony operates not only through the subordination of women but also through the subordination and marginalization of other masculinities, which is true in the Indian scenario.

While not only men suffer, women are also made victims of male violence as Connell (1995) notices that "...the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women" (p.77). This could be the reason for the persistence of gender-based violence and inequality among men and in relation to women. Women are forced to abide by the norms set up by the dominant class. They are considered secondary to men because of biological differences and the need for care and protection. Men are endowed with social, political, economic and cultural opportunities in comparison with women because of their natural inclinations.

Analysis

Jaisingh Jadhav, a well-known journalist who works as an Associate Editor in English language daily lives in Neeti Bagh in Delhi with his educated housewife Sarita. The house runs by his orders and he is known to be a person who gives importance to his stature in society. His aim is to succeed in his field by adopting any means. He gets involved in a case related to the auctioning of women in Luhardaga flesh market in Bihar and resolves to expose the people who are involved in this crime. Jaisingh's stance is ironic because he has imprisoned his wife at home, not allowing her the freedom she deserves as an individual.

Sarita's condition is in contrast to the expectations of the society because Jaisingh has confined her within the house and it is only because of her presence at home that he is able to carry out his duties as a journalist. Sarita, who once led a life of complete freedom, is imprisoned by her husband after marriage. As Jain, Jaisingh's colleague mentions: "He's made a drudge out of a horse-riding independent girl from a princely house....Shame on you! Hero of anti-exploitation campaigns makes slave of wife! (I. 258-60). Jaisingh has restrained Sarita from going for a job or pursuing a career. She does not have an identity of her own. The play raises the issue of freedom that should be given to women when they are in a relationship or bond as marriage. The role of the wife is a matter of question in the play. Sarita has to depend on the husband for all expenses and the servant has to work to the liking of Jaisingh because he pays her salary. Such instances prove Jaisingh's dubious role in propagating humanitarian values in society. While he fights for justice for women, he treats his wife as a slave. His act of abuse is a form of violence that he perpetrates because of his power at home.

Jaisingh's attitude to his wife could be related to his idea of masculinity that grants a subordinate position to women in the society, especially the wife. Jaisingh cannot stand the fact that his wife may attain a position above him in society. In a patriarchal society, strict sex-roles are maintained. The man is the bread-winner of the family and the woman's role is confined to domestic chores and mothering. The happiness of a woman should rest in unquestionable service to husband. The man assumes the role of the protector and the woman is under his care. Jaisingh discloses to Sarita the issue regarding the Luhardaga flesh market in Bihar. Women are inspected by men before they are bought in the flesh market. They are subjected to inhuman treatment when they are personally checked by men, "Whether they are firm or flabby. Young or old. Healthy or diseased. How they feel the breast, in their waist, in their thighs and ..." (I. 201-03). Trading of women to meet ends is a practice where women are sold like commodities in a market with a price tag. Women are degraded since they are treated like animals that are mute and helpless. Each part of their body is inspected to ensure maximum amount for the best woman sold out. This situation in India is pitiable because it is violation of basic human rights. This trade involves gangster groups, underworld dons and politicians who make illegal money to run their business. The people who run the business are protected by the politicians and the police who obey the orders of the local persons. The police are given a share of the business profit and they could have a woman of their choice.

Jaisingh is interested in media coverage of the trade to expose the criminals. His intention is to draw the attention of the masses to this trade in Bihar by exposing Kamala, a poor victim of the black business. His intention is to gain fame and earn a higher position in his field. Jaisingh has purchased Kamala for two hundred and fifty rupees from the market and brought her with him. Sarita is shocked at the sight of Kamala who is in tatters. Her clothes speak about her poverty and the circumstances that would have led her to the market.

Jaisingh considers his purchase to be "dirty cheap" (I. 350), because "...a bullock costs more than that" (I. 312). Kamala had no bidders and Jaisingh decided to purchase her to serve his purpose. Kakasaheb, Sarita's uncle mentions that the world gives importance to journalism that brings news that could create an impression immediately. Media is more interested in keeping itself alive by bringing in news that could sell fast. In the competition to survive, they write "any old nonsense!" (I. 112). Jaisingh has not written any nonsense but he has made use of the opportunity where he can make a mark for himself.

Kakasaheb tells Sarita that journalism should maintain certain ethics. Journalism is not about providing facts but discussing issues. He says: "Why waste our country's time, and ours, writing accounts of them? What sort of

journalism is it that smacks its lips as it writes blood-thirsty descriptions instead of commentary? It's business isn't news -it is bloodshed!"(I. 135). Kakasaheb points to the situation in India where the media is not sincere in reporting major events or discussing issues of national importance. Media only provides detailed descriptions on minor issues such as arson or a riot where there is bloodshed, but does not detail news of significance. He explicates that it is not manliness to be bold to disclose shadowy incidents while remaining ignorant of the threat that is involved in such cases.

Jaisingh does not care about his personal security, while dealing with people in position. He has purchased Kamala to present her at the press conference. He is concerned about the technique he would use to present her at the press conference. As Jaisingh comments: "What's so unusual about the Luhardaga flesh market? Women are sold in many places like that, all over the country. How do you think all the red-light districts could operate-without that? That's not the point. The point is how we project Luhardaga- the technique of it. The art lies in presenting the case- not in the case itself!"(I. 421). Kamala is only a strategic tool that would secure status in his profession. Jaisingh is more concerned about his power and prestige than the condition of Kamala, who is only a means to achieve his desirable end.

Kamala thinks Jaisingh to be her master. In rescuing her from the market, Kamala believes that Jaisingh has the upper hand in matters concerning her welfare. Her relationship with Jaisingh is one of a master and servant. Kamala grants Jaisingh the stature of a master because she thinks it is her duty to serve him. Kamala could be compared to a docile, hapless animal that cannot plead its cause. Kamala is a poor, uneducated woman who does not know her rights. She is ignorant that in buying her from the market, her master has not shown any particular favour, but proposes to use her situation to his benefit.

Kamala believes that all women in her master's house have been purchased and questions the servant about her worth in the market. She thinks Jaisingh is rich and influential because there are more than two women in his house. Kamala realizes that Sarita and the servant in the house obey Jaisingh's orders without any hesitation. Jaisingh tells Sarita that Kamala would be sent to a women's home after the press conference because it is illegal to purchase a woman just as it is a crime to sell a woman. Sarita understands that Kamala cannot stay with her in the house because Jaisingh does not prefer her. He does not have sympathy for the woman, but regards her as his weapon to defeat a few powerful men and make money out of the profit he would get after the conference.

Jaisingh once lived in the shed outside a house in Karol Bagh in contrast to his present house with servants at Neeti Bagh locality. This means he

has been making business out of his profession. Kakasaheb tells him to play the game of generating news right. Kakasaheb understands Jaisingh's ulterior motive of presenting Kamala at the press gathering. "Mercenary journalism" (I. 456) refers to making profit out of news and increase profit. He makes the point clear that Jaisingh's attitude to creating news is not motivated by a just cause. He tries to instill in Jaisingh, the need to be scrupulous when it comes to matters that involve justice through the media. Kakasaheb tells Jaisingh that anybody could hire young reporters to bring in news regarding gambling, illicit liquor-brewing, red-light houses, bribery, corruption, rape and murder. When one adds spice to the matter, news is created about exploitation, intrigues and exposures. This way, it would lead to greater publicity for the media, more circulation, generating advertising and providing more income. A journalist who is scrupulous would wait for something really good to happen. Journalism should incorporate the true feelings of the general public. Media reporting is being reduced to mere information gathering without giving importance to the content of the news and the way it has to be presented.

Jaisingh forces Kamala to attend the press conference. She is neither allowed to bathe nor use decent clothes. Jaisingh intends to present her the way she has been bought from the market. Even when Sarita pleads with him to give her decent clothes to wear, he remains adamant. Jaisingh makes it clear that he is committed to the society. He is against the powerful who are exploiting the poor. He believes in upholding moral values and principles.

Kakasaheb is not convinced and he explains to Jaisingh that a true journalist is one who creates awareness among the poor about their true condition in their language. A press conference in English would reach the ears of a few educated and unscrupulous people and not the ordinary *junta*. Without their support, the press conference would be a failure. Kakasaheb makes him aware that no programme in service of the society would be a success without the involvement of the public that is ignorant of the language of the educated. The citizens of the county must be addressed in the local language. Jaisingh remains unmoved and decides to proceed with his plans.

At the press conference, Kamala is asked indecent questions. Just as women are physically abused in the flesh market, Kamala is verbally abused. She is asked questions on the number of men she would have entertained in bed and the money she would have made out of such illicit relationships. Jaisingh remained with her throughout, not preventing the press from asking such questions. In fact, he gives her confidence to sit throughout the session, even though she feels uncomfortable with the questions. Kakasaheb is disgusted with the way the press has made Kamala the laughing stock of the gathering. Kakasaheb points out that Jaisingh has "sold a woman- the poor and illiterate

woman -by doing so” (II. 431). He justifies that Jaisingh has been crueler to her in allowing her to face the press, without providing any moral support.

Jaisingh’s attitude at the press meeting is evidence that he gives more importance to the meeting than the condition of Kamala, who silently suffers the ordeal at the press conference. Jaisingh wants to prove his mettle as a journalist and show the power of the media in exposing the wrong-doers. In the process, he fails to understand the feelings of a poor woman as Kamala who is his only a bait to trap the criminals.

Kakasaheb’s remarks on Jaisingh’s unscrupulous methods of journalism hurt his manhood. Jaisingh refuses to have dinner and in order to satisfy his ego, he implores Sarita to have sex. When she refuses, he abuses her by calling her a bitch. Jaisingh treats Sarita as his domestic help who has to abide by his dictates. He cannot accept refusal. Sarita has to satisfy his needs. Her role is restricted to an object of pleasure; one that has to provide him comfort when he requires. Sarita’s position in the house and Jaisingh’s attitude to women in society is succinct from this incident.

The discussion between Sarita and Kamala later that night reveals that Kamala’s experience has made Sarita realize the injustice being meted out to her. Kamala’s innocent queries regarding the amount of money Jaisingh would have spent on purchasing her, Kamala’s acceptance of her fate as the servant of the master, her insistence on staying in the house with Sarita, serving Jaisingh, providing him pleasures, begetting his children and working hard for the family help Sarita realize that her position in the house is the same as Kamala’s. While Kamala can be purchased and sold from one person to the other, Sarita is made prisoner in her house by Jaisingh. Later, Jaisingh asks Sarita to make preparations for Kamala’s stay in the Women’s Home, aggravates the tense situation because Jaisingh’s treatment of Kamala and Sarita become apparent. Both of them are used by Jaisingh to claim his superior status in the society.

Jaisingh’s insistence that Kamala be sent away is to protect himself from the clutches of the police that considers the buying and selling of women a criminal offence. The state authorities that are supposed to protect the citizens of the society are involved in the crime, as in the case of the Bihar Police that has not taken initiatives to curb such practices. Jaisingh takes Kamala with him disregarding Sarita’s requests. Kakasaheb says: “Kamala is just a pawn in his game of chess” (II. 532). To this, Sarita replies: “Not just Kamala,...Me too...me too(II. 534). Jaisingh disregards his wife’s interests at every instance. Sarita refuses to play according to his whims. She fights for her will in the house. She derides his command over her and considers her freedom more significant than his success. She refuses to dress up for parties and formal gatherings because she is being paraded like a doll. She asserts that it is her will

that she would not attend parties. Jaisingh cannot accept Sarita's defiance but he attends the party without her. For the first time in their relationship of ten years, Sarita has shown the courage to defy him.

Jaisingh has made a slave out of Kamala, one who has to obey him under any circumstances. It is true that he is a self-made man. Yet, his male ego wouldn't let him lead a healthy relationship with Sarita. He does not grant Sarita the rights that are due to her. She is more a slave than a wife, according to Sarita. The question she asks Kakasaheb is pertinent in this context: "If a man becomes great, why doesn't he stay a great man? Why does he become a master? (II. 658). The master-servant relationship in marriage creates the feeling that men are supposed to rule over women, who are fit to be controlled.

Sarita intends to say that men maintain unequal power relations in marriage or in other relationships. Their status as bread-winners of the family or the persons who earn for the family earns them higher status in comparison to women. Sarita believes that men should learn to remain great and not create tension in relationships because women could also rise to the position. Kakasaheb mentions: "Because he's like that. That's why he's a man. And that's why there is manhood in the world....I gave your aunt a lot of trouble. As if it was my right. I didn't care what she felt at all" (II. 697). Kakasaheb asserts that manhood demands that the woman adjust to its dictates. This is true of all the people in the society, irrespective of class, social status and economic power.

Sarita, unable to accept Kakasaheb replies: "What a man does is manhood. Even if he washes people's dishes, that's manhood" (II. 704). Sarita argues that the concept of manhood should be changed because there are there are women who do what a man does. She asks: "Isn't being Prime Minister of India a manly thing? And isn't it an effeminate thing to grovel at the Prime Minister's feet?" (II. 712). Sarita contends that women are equally capable as men. The society is not ready to accept gender equality and maintains a parochial stance on the right to equality of women. Their argument ends when the news arrives that Jaisingh has lost his job because of pressure from "very big people" (II. 732) who are involved in the flesh racket.

Jaisingh cannot accept the fact that he has lost his job. He gets upset when on hearing the news. He resorts to drinks and lies motionless. Sarita sits beside him to console him. Jaisingh is trapped because of the influence of power and money of other men. They control his life and make him realize their position and it is wrong that he has tried to interfere in their matters. There is the gradual transformation in his masculinity that changes from the dominant hegemonic to the subordinated one because the social construction of masculinity involves the play of power among men of different social strata.

Though Jaisingh is educated and has the press behind him, the political leaders and other men who are more influential than him, suppress his motives.

Masculinity manifests itself when there is conflict among men and women in any social bearing. Jaisingh exhibits traditional masculinity that enforces its dictates on other men and women. His treatment of Sarita and Kamala reiterates his stand that he controls his life and is master of the house. He maintains the servant-master relationship with the women. His status is overturned by men of greater power and influence. In their presence, he is subordinated and hence he loses his former power. At this juncture, it would be appropriate to find out how he would behave with his wife. He is reduced to a puppet that has to abide by the decrees of those in higher positions than he is. His subordinate position indicates loss of authority and hence his masculinity is threatened. Sarita asserts that she would not continue to slave behind him. She would not allow anybody rule over her or abuse her. She would not be an object that would be used and thrown away.

When Jaisingh's power is threatened, he has to make allowances for Sarita. He cannot assert his manhood on her because he has failed to maintain his superior and unquestionable authority in the society. Jaisingh's control over matters at home, including his wife and servant, and his professional hold cannot restrict his degraded status in society. The play indicates how a man is forced to adapt to his subordinate position when he is controlled by other men of greater influence. A potent medium as media becomes the site of abuse of power and violence against men and women in divergent ways.

Conclusion

Media is the most influential tool that addresses several pressing issues that plague the society. The deterioration of the society due to unjust social practices is addressed by the media. Awareness on the perpetuation of injustice on men and women should be considered by individuals. The onus for building a society based on the principles laid down by the constitution should be the joint effort of the media as well as the citizens. It could be deciphered that it would be impossible to rid the society of its evils; they could be curbed.

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Abstract

Promoting human rights is a vital means to ensure their protection and respect. In the 21st century, the word 'promotion' by itself is simply associated with the media. With the wide range access to different types of media and with the ever growing interest of the people to keep abreast of the topics of the day, the media has become irreplaceable choice to spread information of any kind. A person's perception of reality is the result of their beliefs and in the age of information many of the beliefs are the result of the mainstream media. In last few years social media has played important role in the protection of democratic values and human rights. Social media is increasingly helpful to not only monitor emerging human rights emergencies, but also to uncover incorrect information. Crowd sourced expertise from social media can open up new opportunities for human rights organizations. Digital revolution and the emergence of social media that has significant implications for human rights work. Journalists, human rights researchers cannot cover all places at once and may be denied access to a potential human right incidents altogether. The surge in citizen journalism and social media platforms over the last decade has led to the evidence of a torrent of potential human rights violations. The main objective of this paper is to investigate and analyze the role of social media in the promotion of human rights and discuss the importance of a free Internet to the promotion of human rights and freedom of expression.

Keywords

Social Media, Citizen Journalism, Human Rights

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Introduction

The article 19 of universal declaration on human rights (UNO, 1948) and International Convention on Civil and Political Rights (1966) have acknowledged the free flow of information, freedom and pluralism of the media, and the freedom of expression and speech as human rights. These rights are very crucial and vital to protect the human rights of common people suffering from social disparities, suppression and sidelined by the dominant class. Despite of making commitments for human rights protection India has significant problems of human rights violation. ' There are increased restrictions on Internet freedom, continued marginalisation of Dalits, tribal groups, religious minorities, sexual and gender minorities, and people with disabilities; and persistent impunity for abuses linked to insurgencies, particularly in Maoist areas (West Bengal, Odisha, Jharkhand, Andhra Pradesh and Chhattisgarh), Jammu and Kashmir, Manipur, and Assam' (www.hra.org front page).

India has a vast and strong mainstream media. It plays crucial role in political change and agenda setting of the democracy. Indian mainstream media is a complex institution where number of factors play decisive role in its functioning. If we look at the growth of mainstream media in India ownership and control dimensions, representational dimensions, general social structural dimensions, and regulatory frameworks have been decided their line of action, understanding, and picking and presentation of human rights issues. It is popular notion that mainstream media in India is functioning under the parental guidance of state and effective control of market forces. Support the purpose of the state and follow the agenda of the stakeholders and investors has been seen as one of the main philosophy behind functioning of mainstream media. ' The significant corporate power and economic clout wielded by media owners has led to the perception that the media is a force vying for power outside the political process, ([south_asia_roundtable_report.pdf](#), page 10).

The pattern of guidance has influenced the power of mainstream media to examine and present the reality with principles of objectivity and reliability. This dynamics of power and market has set a gauge for mainstream media and often resulted in presentation of guided reality. This dominant framing of human rights tries to draw a pro- establishment vision for media and sometimes justifies the non-reporting of human rights violation of marginalized people, groups, minorities and people with different political view. Such obligations and control dynamics restricts the ability of mainstream media so issues of human rights sometimes overlooked or covered inappropriately.

On the other hand social media has emerged as a powerful tool of public interaction with no or minimum limitations and free from such restrictions. With its collaborative and interactive model of communication

social media has become one of the most preferred platforms of human communication now days. With mainstreaming of social media availability of information has become faster and available to each and every user who is connected to the network. Social media or digital media has altered the practice of conventional models of human interaction and role of communication in political and social change. 'Digital media changed the tactics of democratisation movements, and new information and communication technologies played a major role in the Arab Spring' (Howard & Hussain, 2011)

'Social media is an important new tool for promoting social and political change. Social media allows eyewitness accounts to be made widely available and expands access to information. Reporting is no longer confined to traditional sources of journalism. Through social media information has spread faster and farther, available now to local, regional and global audiences. In the context of human rights movements, this element of spreading messages and bringing attention to a cause is crucial' (Yeaza, 2014)

Social Media and Human Rights: Success Stories

Social media is being utilized by various organizations and activists for mobilization, information and connecting with like-minded people around the world. 'Amnesty International USA (AIUSA) uses social media for online mobilizing and urgent human rights emergencies. For example, AIUSA used Twitter (and storify) to successfully prompt a statement from the United States Departments on imprisoned activists in Bahrin- and to report back to activist in real time. This one of many examples of the strategic use of social media by human rights groups' (www.newtactics.org) indicates its importance as the forum of communicating human rights issues by established organizations.

'Human Rights Campaign'- an organization working for online and offline mobilization of public and 'to achieve equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender American' (www.hrc.org) has also used social media at global level to gain the public support. The HRC changed its iconic logo on their Facebook page to red to show support the marriage equality debate. 'The red logo immediately went viral as people everywhere shared the photo and changed their Facebook profile photo to the image in support of marriage equality' (www.postano.com). The campaign was heart touching and has successfully secured over 114 million views, 3rd most shared Ad of all time. Campaign was uploaded in 25 languages and seen in 110 countries and 1,800 blog posts were written about the campaign.

India has witnessed the power of social media in Nirbhaya case. Social media has raised awareness, stimulated debate, changed the attitudes of public and a massive movement was generated against the horrific-rape case that has

also changed the directive and action for respect and protection of women in India. Social media and online communication tools were utilized to inform, mobilise and organise people and case became focus on across the media platforms.

Recently a social media campaign has gone viral after two gang rape videos went viral on whatsapp. The videos were later uploaded on You Tube and Facebook by social activist Sunitha Krishanan, asking people to help identify the alleged rapists. Immediately Supreme Court of India taken up the case and asked the CBI to register a case and immediately investigate the video.

Success of such cases and many more other cases tell the strength and effectiveness of social media used as a weapon of protection of human rights and creating awareness on the issues of social interest. Most mainstream human rights organizations, activists, and campaigners use social media as important part of their information and communication activities. Facebook, Twitter and many more social media platforms have been used to share information, advocacy and calls for action. The Arab springs and the Anna Hazare movements are best examples of using social media to spread messages of human rights, and mobilize people for action against political suppression and the corruption. Social media has played a key role in the Egyptian revolution in the year 2011. 'Social media introduced speed and interactivity that were lacking in the traditional mobilization techniques, which generally include the use of leaflets, posters, and faxes. For instance, social media enabled domestic and international Egyptian activists to follow events in Egypt, join social-networking groups, and engage in discussion' (Eltantway & Wiest, 2011).

Citizen journalism is not new phenomenon. In the early 1990, Rodney King case was a well know example of citizen journalism. All citizens are journalists and they can promote human rights though social networking. Sometime we see that how the government has monopoly over media; however, the government cannot have monopoly over all the citizens. Hence, the citizen journalism could be used as an alternative media to promote human rights.

User-generated content shared over social media is vital to the advancement of human rights by increasing awareness, encouraging action and providing evidence of abuses so perpetrators can be held to account. Despite the value of this type of media, existing technologies are restrictive of activists and grassroots organizations, meaning there is room for innovation to better accommodate the needs of these communities.

These platforms are valuable tools to modern protest movements, allowing communication and organization between activists. But content shared on social media related to these movements is equally valuable to the traction of

human rights campaigns. A compelling piece of citizen journalism shared through a peer-to-peer network can act as a rallying cry, galvanizing supporters and influencing bystanders, creating a ripple of influence that causes others to stand against violations and attempt to change the status quo.

The Human Rights Commissions of different countries have also embraced social media to provide instant and accessible support for needy people. Some have given facility to register online complains, get updates on the cases, statistics, and the actions and e-learning portals to be acquainted with procedures, rules, rights and remedies. On the website of National Human Rights Commission one can register complains, search status of complaint updates and activities of the NHRC.

Objectives

The present paper is an attempt to attain the following objectives with the help of analysis of the relevant data-

1. Evaluating the role of social media in protection of the human rights
2. Effectiveness of social media to encourage and motivate people for human rights protection
3. Analysis of behavior of profiles and nature of communication for human rights protection through social media

Methodology

A content analysis research design was selected to complete the study. The main purpose of this study was to conduct an exploratory content analysis of the use of Facebook as a tool of information, sensitization and mobilisation of public for protection of the human rights. The study was conducted by collecting one month's posts from the selected Facebook profiles or pages of the activists or organizations working for human rights protection in India. From the list available on the NHRC website (core group NGOs) page/profile (http://nhrc.nic.in/Documents/NGO_CORE.pdf) and CRY (Child Rights and You) was selected and the contents posted from 1st to 20th February, 2017 was analyzed with the help of subject, proximity, nature- informative or analytical, approach- text, audio-visual, photograph, graphics or mixed, and source of the post. The result was presented by using simple percentage analysis.

Data Analysis

From the wall of the CRY page total 43 posts analysed which were posted during the month of February 2017. Type of updates, subject of the

updates, Nature of updates and source or origin of the updates was selected as the criterion of the analysis. Under the type of the updates nature of the content presentation i.e. only video updates, only text updates, only picture updates, updates using picture-cum-video, and picture-cum-text update categories were used for analysis and interpretation of data. Under the subject category data were arranged into issues related with official negligence/torture, political suppression, women empowerment, girl education/girls rights, personal information, organizational information, child trafficking, supporting women/marginalized /weaker/disabled people, child rights, and comments on the current political activities.

To show the familiarity of the user with social media origin of the content i.e. originated by self, referred material, shared from other online sources, and use of hyperlink is used.

As the data reveals most of human rights activists through their personal profile and pages of organisations prefer to provide newsfeed or status updates in text-cum-pictures mode. This pattern is observed greater in feeds from pages than the feeds by individual profiles. Video feed facilities found less explored by both individual profiles and organizations.

Subject wise variety of newsfeeds and status updates were observed on all walls. On the CRY page most of stories were addressing the issues of girls' education, child rights and organizational activities

Data pointed that Human right activists and organisations use social media to promote their issues, thoughts, and programmes and to connect and sensitize the likeminded people. Most of posts appeared in shape of newsfeed that is indicating the placement of good length posts on the wall. Social media used for mobilising support from the connected people is found as the second preference therefore it can be generalised that social media is positively used by human rights activists to inform the people concerning new happenings, issues of interest, latest developments. Social media is also used immobilising and sensitising people on the human rights issues.

In Facebook communication like a post on Facebook is an easy way to let people know that a person is enjoying the content without leaving a comment. During the month of February the wall of CRY page gets 15606 likes, 1215 shares, and 192 comments were scored. The data indicates that a good number of people are enjoying by giving likes on the posts or updates. On the basis of the data we can say that with regular updates by profiles and pages can secure good support of the engaged users and this rate is high for personal profiles than the pages of organizations or business. These engage users not only support the cause, also the visibility of the post is increased and such bumping posts spread among friends of friends too.

Discussion

Social media platforms have given activists and organizations opportunity to draw attention to the issues concerning to them. It has literally lent voice to the people who otherwise had no means to convey their grievances or put their ideas across. It has exactly provided voice to people who otherwise had no means to convey their criticisms or place their ideas across. Social media provides 24x7 connectedness in an interactive manner where a community and support can be created and sustained. It helps people and organizations to garner the valuable public support around their activities by sensitizing them, mobilizing them and prepare them for action and change.

Katz and Lazarsfeld have established that 'the formation of well-considered political opinions is a two-step process. The first step requires access to information; the second, use of that information in conversation and debate' (Katz, Lazarsfeld; 1970).

Under this framework the findings suggest that social media profiles of the activists and organizations are attempting to sensitize the people to form the positive opinion by informing and motivating them on the critical human rights issues that is widely accessible and more people than ever are able to develop their point of view on such issues.

Social media platforms, with mainstreaming of the social media have become a cultural space for communicators and they use it to convey the meaning, languages, ideas, and expressions, remix activities on human rights issues mentioning from irony to criticism and motivational stories, from cozy places to the frontline. It has been observed by the engagement patterns of the users that the culture of generating and sharing, practices of crowd sourcing, and the forms of collective production are contributing new forms of human rights literacy, new forms of knowledge and ultimately new forms of solidarity, social awareness and reflexivity on human rights issues. This communication corresponds successfully to the rights of members to freely participate in the creation, and sensitization of the community without pressure of gatekeeping of the mainstream media or censorship issues by other agencies.

Social media also constitutes space for community sharing large human rights contents, and, as the analysis shows are often extensively used as platforms for information, education, distributing, and exploring public support. In this way social media also contributes to the formation of human beings as competent members of a community by mobilising and supporting them in gaining critical intellectual capacities to participate in the political and cultural spaces of their online and offline communities for human rights support.

Freedom of expression through online social media platforms, the

formation of a common culture based on humanitarian values, the possibilities of constituting associations across the boundaries, and organizing social mobilization are structural contributions practiced by activists, organisations, and the aware people that will further form a self-aware public support for human rights in the public sphere.

With the samples of the well-recognized profiles and pages this study reveals that the persons and organisations that thrive in the conventional news media also do well in the social media and gain good support online. Online communication and use of social media provides them to frame better communication strategy to reach the global audience. Curbing the reach and connectedness of social media has not been an easy task for government so during situation of confrontation, bans, and censorship on the traditional channels of communication social media can come on the front and people can be organised speedily and without much obstructions and risk.

Conclusion

Activists and organisations as a promising space for enhancing public support across the regions on human rights issues have recognised social media, but they have to consider the inherent problems of the medium also. Information overload, big data and securing visibility by unknown organisations is a big challenge for people who want to use social media platforms for advocacy on human rights issues. Here, no one can deny the power and potential of social media in the coming days as industry predictions indicate the rising and mainstreaming of online communication. Therefore, in term of human rights protection and sensitisation social media can be used effectively to attain the goals of issue literacy.

With a careful approach concerning issues of freedom of expression and speech and respecting privacy of others such platforms can be established as the forum for human rights sensitisation, awareness, and voice of protest. These social media platforms have power to break the rigid structures of undemocratic practices. With liberating capacities of social media and by exploring their possibilities as multipliers, diffusers, and forum of debating human rights issues a better and participatory democratic environment for promotion and protection of human rights can be created.

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Reality Bytes: Anand Patwardhan's Documentaries on Human Rights Issues

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Abstract:

Anand Patwardhan is one of the filmmakers who used documentary films as a powerful medium of political communication. He deals with the pressing issues such as housing problems of the urban poor, negative impact of globalization, violation of human rights, development-induced displacement, gender discrimination, communal violence and so on.

This paper attempts to analyse the documentary films of Anand Patwardhan with a view of ascertaining the role of activism and political communication. The study mainly focuses on the treatment and depiction of human rights issues in his documentary films. A critical review of the documentary films of Anand Patwardhan reveals that he is the great champion of human rights who uses documentary films as a powerful tool of political communication. Whether it is fundamentalism, gender justice, nuclear nationalism, portrayal of women, oppression of Dalits and Adivasis, or development-induced displacement, he makes his strong statements by using mighty camera.

Keywords

Anand Patwardhan, Documentary Films, Human Rights, Nuclear Nationalism, Development – Induced – Displacement, Portrayal of Women

Anand Patwardhan: The Man with a Movie Camera

Anand Patwardhan, by virtue of his documentaries that focus on political and social issues of India, has placed himself on a pedestal for the past four decades in the field of documentary making. Being political, his works have been criticized for the content and style that he adopted while addressing issues of social justice, human rights of slum dwellers, gender equity etc. His uncompromising presentation of matters of Indian politics has challenged the

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years-long establishments of the country. It has invited polemic remarks from various quarters and his legal battle with the state still continues in terms of censoring and screening of his productions (Waldman, www.patwardhan.com). Negation of human rights in any form concerns him the most: “Patwardhan is as unsparing in his criticism of the aggressiveness of the American military and nuclear machine as he is of the nuclear pretensions of India and Pakistan . . . and in his understanding of the sexual politics of resurgent Hindu communalism, Patwardhan remains India’s most astute and daring documentary film maker and one of the country’s most sensitive commentators” (Lal, www.patwardhan.com).

Anand Patwardhan’s always attempted to articulate the voice of the voiceless, worked as an agency to empower the powerless. His documentaries travelled down the path of history to reflect on issues in the present. Eleven documentaries and five short films that he produced over a span of four decades invariably evolve out of his concerns over freedom of expression, communal conflicts, gender politics, treatment of migrant workers, ghettoization in cities, slum life, caste and tribe-oriented marginalization, sustainable development, etc. (Miriam Sharma, 2002). The issues and rights he fought for, he has with him the ultimate legal defense, the Indian Constitution. It will never be an exaggeration, if somebody calls him as a Messiah of human rights. Jagdish Chaitanya, while analyzing *Ram ke Nam* unreels the multitudes of subjects that Patwardhan addresses. According to the scholar, whereas the documentarian presents the atrocities of a municipal administration on people by evacuating them from their roots in one film, in another, he deals with the dissent voices of people of Punjab who are victimized to state-sponsored terror. At the same time his camera rolls over the communal and political conflicts caused by Sikh-sponsored militant groups (Chaitanya, 1993).

In an interview with Bijuraj for the *Mathrubhumi*, a leading weekly in Malayalam, Patwardhan questions the nation-induced fascism: “As long as those who are oppressed use the nationality issue for the temporary purpose of binding themselves into a cohesive resistance force, I am comfortable with the idea of nation. So I support the Black nation, the Dalit nation, the Adivasi nation. But the idea of nation showed not out live the oppression that gave birth to it. The Jews of Europe had reason to fight anti-Semitism and genocide during World War II but can we support the Jewish nation of Israel in its efforts to rob Palestinians of their nation? Muslims have reason to unite under Islam as a way to resist the US in Iraq but can we subscribe to the idea of a pan-Islamic state that uses interpretations of religious law to override basic democratic rights and procedures?” (Bijuraj, 2007). In his words and deeds, it is crystal clear that he will never compromise with the evils emanated from fascism even if they are initiated by the minorities or oppressed in the name of religions, beliefs and political ideologies.

Why Documentaries?

In 1970, Patwardhan made his entry into the world of documentaries while he was a freshman at Brandeis University, Massachusetts. The War in Vietnam had rattled the humanitarian consciousness of students there, and anti-war movements took over the momentum. Placed amid the war at a time when his university acted as the hub for anti-war rallies, students, including him, showcased their protests through various performances. Berkeley was the west coast one of the counterparts. Patwardhan becomes reminiscent of his entry into the world of politics making of political documentaries: “My entry into the world of the documentary began a means of political, social intervention and thirty odd years later this is still a primary motive” (Bijuraj, 2007). Patwardhan’s life philosophy is revealed in his own words: “I’m lucky to have stumbled upon a medium that gives me so much pleasure while sustaining in me the illusion that at least potentially; all this is for the good of the world.”

Patwardhan’s Filmography [Courtesy: www.patwardhan.com]

Anand Patwardhan was born in Bombay in 1950. He graduated from Bombay University with a bachelor's degree in English literature in 1970 and then enrolled at Brandeis University in the USA to pursue his interest in sociology. Later in 1982, he completed his master’s degree from McGill University in Canada. While in the U.S, he became a stalwart of Anti-Vietnam movement. He is still active in various citizens’ right movements and has made the spirit of these movements the subjects of his documentaries for nearly three decades.

Patwardhan instrumentalised films as tools to address the South-Asian nuclear proliferation that unsettled the peaceful co-existence and affected prosperity of the region. The major works that problematize politics and communalism, religious jingoism, the disadvantages of globalization, environmental concerns, and caste oppression are as follows:

1. *Jai Bhim Comrade*

(2012, 182 mins)

Patwardhan’s political consciousness of caste oppression is evident in the film *Jai Bhim Comrade*. Atrocities showered upon the Dalit communities across the country on the grounds of age-old practice of untouchability are subjected to portrayal in the film. The film was made over 14 years after the music protest of Dalits in Maharashtra. Patwardhan had been personally affected by such demonstrations of protests. In an undesired incident, Ambedkar’s statue in a Dalit colony was defiled with footwear in 1997. People in the colony organized a protest against which police opened fire. As many as

ten colony residents lost their lives. Vilas Ghogre, a leftist poet and Dalit activist, who worked with Patwardhan in the documentary *Bombay Our City*, hung himself in protest.

Jai Bhim Comrade is a whiplash fallen on the back of superstitious beliefs and bigotry. It walks the audience down the path of both recent and ancient history and reveals the existence of the rationalist tradition among Dalits for a long time.

2. War & Peace / Jang aur Aman

(2002, 135 mins)

The documentary *War and Peace* presents before us peace activism in the light of danger and threat of nuclear war and global militarism. The film explores the costs of human lives in the name of nationalism both in India and Pakistan in the context of nuclear tests held. The documentary was shot over four years in India, Pakistan, Japan, and the USA after nuclear tests in the Indian subcontinent (Pokhran). “WAR & PEACE / JANG AUR AMAN slips seamlessly from a description of home-made jingoism to focus on how an aggressive United States has become a role model, its doctrine of Might is Right only too well-absorbed by aspiring elites of the developing world” (www.patwardhan.com).

3. Ribbons for Peace

(1998, Music video, 5 mins)

This music video unreels before the viewers the consequences of nuclear tests performed by both India and Pakistan. The music used in the video is a reinterpretation of a song sung by Kishore Kumar. It takes after the composition of “Imagine” created by John Lennon of Beatles. Popular Bollywood stars like Naseerudin Shah, Aamir Khan, Chandrachur, and Kittu Gidwani did their guest appearance in this video. The music video can be taken as a political response to another one released by a political party at the time.

4. Fishing: In the Sea of Greed

(1998, 42 mins)

Fishing: In the Sea of Greed is documentation of frightening abuse of the marine properties by industrial fishing practices of gigantic factory ships. Traditional fishing communities are starving and are in danger of being uprooted by these government-sponsored capital forces as the former handed over territorial waters to transnational corporations to meet debt obligations.

'*Fishing: In the Sea of Greed*' chronicles the local fishing folk's battles with the mighty corporates. It criticizes the "rape and run" attitude of such corporate industries toward fishing and fishing community. Those corporates attempt to establish monopoly in the area which finally will bring impacts on the livelihood of the fishing community in addition to upsetting their environment. The community's struggles are not directed only to safeguard their occupation, but at the same time, they are committed to protect the ecosystem. Towards this goal, they join various national and international organisations of fish workers and harvesters.

5. Occupation: Mill Worker

(1996, 22 mins)

Occupation: Mill Worker documents the story of life and struggles of textile mills employees in Bombay. Textiles mills, once the crux of Bombay's economy, worst hit by neo-liberal policies of our country. Increasing real-estate prices, and foreign direct investment induced mill owners to dispose their mills rather than running them for menial margins. When land mafia ruled the roost, mill 'sickness' became an epidemic: "Occupation: Millworker" records the inspirational action of workers who, after a four-year lockout, forcibly occupied the New Great Eastern Mill" (www.patwardhan.com).

6. A Narmada Diary

(1995, 57 mins)

The documentary depicts the perennial issue of development-induced-displacement. The Sardar Sarover Dam in Gujarath has been criticized as uneconomical and unjust and severe threat to ecology and life of tribes. The benefits of the dam go to rich-elite-urban India at the cost of poor, oppressed and under-privileged. The documentary introduces the Narmada Bachao Andolan, the movement initiated by Medha Patkar to protect Narmada Valley. It has an initiating role in the protests against the construction of dam across the river Narmada: "With non-violent protests and a determination to drown rather than to leave their homes and land, the people of the Narmada valley have become symbols of a global struggle against unjust development" (www.patwardhan.com).

7. Father, Son and Holy War

(1995, 120 mins)

The film tackles the psychological factors that stimulate men to perpetrate violence on "the other". It perceives male insecurity as the root cause

of such violence. It also attempts to reveal the general false impression that “manhood” is constructed through such violence. The two segments of the documentary are titled "Trial by Fire" and "Hero Pharmacy." The first part “Trial by Fire” is allusive to Sita’s ordeal in Ramayana, and the fire has been pictured in it as communal fire that razed the communal harmony of India in recent years. The second part, “Hero Pharmacy” problematizes the concept of masculinity and manhood in relation to perpetrating violence on Muslims. In India, the stories of Muslim invaders having marauded Hindus, destroyed their temples and raped their women, are passed from generation to generation in order to communalise the people. As a result, extreme Hindus today want to revenge on the Muslim community. The men folk identifies “manhood” in avenging for something that happened centuries of years ago. Muslim men also find the same reason of masculinity to respond to the atrocities inflicted by avenging Hindus. They also want to be the “real men.” Finally, these false notions invite communal conflicts and carnage. This reality has been exposed in the documentary.

8. We Are Not Your Monkeys

1996, music video, 5 mins.

The five-minute long music video reveals the onslaughts of caste politics in India. The song was sung by Sambhaji Bhagat. The song retells the Ramayana mythology and unveils the hidden discrimination and subjugation on the basis of dovetailed religious stories and principles.

9. In the Name of God (Ram Ke Naam)

(1991, 75 minutes)

The controversial documentary exposes the religious extremism that destroys India's secular fabric after independence. It portrays how the communal propaganda of Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) culminated in the destruction of the Babari Mosque, which was said to have built by Babar in Ayodhya in 16th century. According to the VHP, Lord Rama was born where the mosque now stands. An exhortation was made to demolish the mosque and build a Ram temple on the site. It inaugurated the communal polarization and conflicts between Hindus and Muslims. The documentary captures the time before the demolition of the mosque where promulgation of communal ideas has been proliferated by Hindu militants who, in the days to come, would involve in the demolition of the mosque. It also documents secular aspects of India—secular Hindus’ efforts to combat this jingoism is visible throughout the work.

10. In Memory of Friends

(1990, 60 mins,)

The film portrays the violence instigated by Sikh fundamentalists in Punjab and its counter terror sponsored by a repressive government. It examines the real causes and trajectory of Chaos created in the late 1970s soon after the demand for Khalistan by Sikh separatists. The nationalistic exploits of Bhagat Singh have been portrayed in the film side by side with presenting the tumultuous political scenario of Punjab. Today, people of India see him as a daring nationalist while Sikh fundamentalists project him as the martyr of their cause.

11. Bombay: Our City

(1985, 75 mins)

This film also tells another story of development-induced- displacement in the name of urbanization and modernization. It narrates the life and struggle of 4 million slum dwellers in Bombay, who are the integral part of the city's growth and development. They are the workforce of Bombay and are denied basic amenities like food, water, shelter, electricity, and sanitation. Apart from the danger of contagious diseases caused by the unhygienic living environment, they are under the constant threat of eviction by city authorities in the name of beautification of Bombay.

12. A Time to Rise

Co-produced with Jain Monro

(1981, 40 mins.)

The film depicts the uprising of trade union and their fight against the oppression. The immigrant laborers from China and East India working in British Columbia resolved to formulate a labour party for themselves. It was inspired by the formation of the Canadian Farm Workers Union on April 6, 1980. It portrays the revolutionary possibilities of a labour party and the strength of workers. The film took four years to for shooting.

13. Prisoners of Conscience

(45 minutes / B & W/ 1978)

Prisoners of Conscience sketches the socio-political and individual state of affairs during the Emergency period of India, i.e June 1975 to March 1977. How media rights crumbled during the time is portrayed in the film. As many

as one lakh people had been detained and many of them were imprisoned. The creative work of art is steeped in the politics of Emergency. Also, it throws light upon a fact that political prisoners had been there during the period and they continue to exist even after Emergency.

14. Waves of Revolution

(30 mins, 16 mm, 1975)

The documentary narrates the uprising of the JP Movement initiated by the students of Bihar in 1974-75. Jayaprakash Narain, a veteran Gandhian Socialist, was one of the leaders of the mass movement. It also is a narrative on Emergency, and was shot during the period in secret by making use of outdated stock and equipment.

Patwardhan Genre

Anand Patwardhan has set new trends in the field of film making and documentary creation. Most of the production works were carried out by himself in the same way some international documentary makers like Dennis O'Rourke and Molly Dineen adopt. They carried out different roles in their production like that of a camera man, or editor. Being a self-taught film maker, Patwardhan had his own styles and ways when it came to camera, sounds, and editing. He produced films on a minimum budget, and the amount he raised from the contributions offered by his well-wishers. He gives an account of his ways of filmmaking in a conversation with the *Sri Lankan Sunday Observer*: "There are no scripts—no arduous briefings. You film people. You ask them what they think and they tell you get on film what is happening—the reality of the moment as it is" (Miriam Sharma, 2002). Patwardhan had no pre-production plan. The content determined on the style and way of shooting.

Patwardhan's creations are marked for their non-linear way of making. He has always given priority to sympathetic figures that feature before his camera. He has let them speak at length. He does not say a cut on them to disrespect them by interrupting their words: "I tend to stay on that person for longer because that person has other dimensions from the immediate dimension of what is being said and that has a visual dimension. It's a way of saying that we don't want to leave you right now but we have to do something else" (Akomfrah, 1997).

In the making of philosophy and theory of cinema, Anand Patwardhan has been immensely influenced of Fernando Solanas, Patricio Guzman etc. Influences of Latin-American films are visible in his films of political protests, especially of the ones revolving around Liberation Movements in the sixties (Akomfrah, 1997). In another conversation, he concedes that He was a massive

fan of Michael Moore's determination to stand out.: “He has managed to push his films and books – and through them, his ideas – right into the mainstream. He had the guts to stand up on Oscar night and denounce the US Invasion of Iraq” (Bijuraj, 2007). Miriam Sharma, (2002) opines that Patwardhan is not pretentious and does not direct his efforts to be objective while depicting the banality of evil.

The Treatment of Human Rights Issues in Patwardhan’s Documentaries

A critical review of the documentary films of Anand Patwardhan reveals that he is the great champion of human rights who uses documentary films as a powerful tool of political communication. The spark inherent in him as an activist helps him a great extent. Whether it is fundamentalism, gender justice, nuclear nationalism, portrayal of women, oppression of Dalits and Adivasis, or development – induced displacement, he makes his strong statements by using mighty camera.

Communalism and Fascism

According to Bijuraj (2007), Anand Patwardhan has never compromised while documenting communalism or corruption. He also adds that the documentaries have acted as warning voices on people. Miriam Sharma opines that Patwardhan was well aware of the role of history of communal politics and any sort of compromise in that regard would make those fundamentalist more into extremism (2002).

In a straightforward style, each movie addresses a pressing problem that millions of individuals in this nation face. The hypocrisy of individuals who claim to speak in the name of a religion or a country is exposed in every documentary “as shields to promote discrimination, separatism and blood shed” (Miriam Sharma, 2002). Patwardhan’s documentaries have daringly depicted fundamentalism of all religions. Whereas it is Sikh extremism that features in *In Memory of Friends*, fundamental Hindus and Muslims have been lashed out in *Father, Son and Holy War*. He has not left out the interrelationship between violence and the faulty interpretation of masculinity. The film *Father, Son and Holy War* presents the male identity crises arising out of this relationship between communalism and masculinity (Bharucha,1995).

Nuclear Nationalism

War and Peace is a fierce polemic against shoddy patriotism and nuclear nationalism. Patwardhan becomes vociferous about the deterioration of values that bound the country into a single feeling. In an interview with BBC, he openly expresses his concerns over the future of the country: “In the last two decades I watched my country sacrifice all the principles that one made me

proud of our independence. Non-violence, secularism and egalitarianism were replaced by venality, religious sectarianism and militarism. Mahatma Gandhi became hopelessly out of place and out of date. The film 'War and Peace' was born out of depression" (www.Patwardhan.com). "Smiling Buddha" was the codename for the first nuclear testing. "On Buddha Purnima in 1998, the day that makes the enlightenment of the Buddha, the Buddha smiled again and again in Pokhran as India conducted three underground nuclear tests there in 1998" (Chowdhury, www. Patwardhan.com).

Patwardhan exposes hypocrisy of some political and national icons that invariably supported nuclear nationalism. He caught the bytes of Pramod Mahajan, the then BJP spokesman. Highlighting the standpoints and statements of Pramod Mahajan as well as nuclear scientist A.P.J Abdul Kalam, Patwardhan criticizes the unholy nuclear alliance of India with the U.S and he retorts to the statement made by the former soon after India's nuclear test that now no Indian has to show his passport in this way: "We have a love hate obsession with America." He continued by saying that Pakistan and India have been compared to two wives vying for America's attention. (Chowdhury, www.patwardhan.com).

Portrayal of Women

A close inspection of Patwardhan's documentaries would reveal that women play a crucial role in them. Further, most of these women are from economically and ethnically weaker sections. Through most of his documentaries, particularly in *Father, son and Holy War*, Patwardhan attempts to expose the gender discrimination.

Patwardhan has been political in the casting of his characters also. The roles of female characters of his works are performed by women from economically and ethnically marginalized sections. It is evident in the casting of Godavari, and another woman in the film *Father, son and Holy War*. The same politics can be witnessed in documentaries like *Ram ke Naam, Bombay: Our City*, and *A Narmada Diary* (Sajna, 2006).

Development-Induced Displacement

Displacement on various grounds, especially due to developments, evicts people out of their original land. By this mode of evacuation, people become bereft of shelter, tradition and traditional occupation. It is another form of forced migration. Of all development-induced displacements, displacement caused by the construction of three Gorges Dam in China is a classic example.

A deeper analysis of Patwardhan's documentaries uncovers that most of the victims of development induced displacement are downtrodden people.

This was supported by the excerpts taken from the documentaries like *Bombay Our City*, and *A Narmada Diary*. A woman forced to migrate to footpath and a disabled man caught interviewed. Both from the documentary *Bombay Our City* substantiate this argument. In the documentary, *A Narmada Diary*, a man interviewed at Kantheshawar resettlement site, another man speaking to Patwardhan nearby dam site and a large group of Adivasis gathered in a house to perform the death rites of an Adivasi youth, are all representing the down trodden and under-privileged. In contrast, the proponents of the dam project who appear in the documentary are rich and elite.

In general, human rights issues like vicimisation of communalism, gender inequality, oppression of Dalits and Adivasis, threats of nuclear nationalism and the problems of development-induced displacement are the central themes of Patwardhan's documentaries. They are interrelated in most of his films. He has long been the voice of voice less and the power of the power less. With his simple camera, he has proved that he is the ardent champion of human rights.

Conclusion

Anand Patwardhan's documentaries and films are marked for and charged with political overtones channelized to bring out in bold relief the underlying social, cultural and political issues. His works are attempts to sensitize the general masses against the unresolved and perennial issues like casteism, communal conflicts and corruption. Patwardhan instrumentalised art to articulate the voice of the voiceless, and mobilise power for the powerless. His documentary films have consistently attempted to expose the different forms of oppression.

Anand Patwardhan is a "self-taught" filmmaker who handles most of the production tasks, including camera, sound, and editing. He typically operates on a tight budget, and most of his income comes from modest contributions from well-wishers. Majority of his films were shot in a non-linear manner. Anand Patwardhan adopts the so-called "Imperfect Cinema"—the political theory of Patricio Guzman, Fernando Solanas, and other Latin Americans—as the foundation for his cinematic philosophy and theory. A critical review of the documentary films of Anand Patwardhan reveals that he is the great champion of human rights who uses documentary films as a powerful tool of political communication. Whether it is fundamentalism, gender justice, nuclear nationalism, portrayal of women, oppression of Dalits and Adivasis, or development-induced displacement, he makes his strong statements by using his mighty camera.

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Community Paradigm in Media Studies: A Response to Hamid Mowlana

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Abstract

The paper in its first part discusses two early initiatives to study media in Muslim contexts: Hamid Mowlana's proposal to apply an Islamic community paradigm as opposed to information society paradigm to study media in Muslim contexts and International Association for Media and Communication Research's (IAMCR) initiative to form a working group on Islam and media to study the universal principles of communication in Islam. These initiatives, the paper argues that, come to a standstill as their projects unfold and the focus then becomes one that highlights either the similarities between Islamic and non-Islamic communication practices or the instrumentalist role of media in Muslim societies. Such an irony is of course inevitable when one does not pay enough attention to the details that structures the modalities of knowledge production and dissemination in a given society that direct the course of information/communication technologies. This avoidance looks to be a systematic one in both the major initiatives to study the intercession of Islam and media from the institutional vantage point of media studies, especially when one realizes that much of the sociology of knowledge in Islam can be understood and actualized in its concrete form as a historical expression of a particular kind of modality, its pedagogic practice and the way it produces and transmits knowledge. The present study then argues that in order to understand the conditions of possibilities that religious media affords in a community, one need to develop a narrative that will account for what can be broadly termed as the religious work of media.

Keywords

Community Paradigm, Media Studies, Religious Works of Media, Sociology of Knowledge

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In their editorial note on Muslim media, a first of its kind, in the special volume of the *Journal of Media, Culture and Society*, Philip Schlesinger and Hamid Mowlana (1993) justify their attempt to bring out such a volume by arguing that the changing patterns of communication behaviour amongst Muslim communities is at the centre of the recent changes in the world order. Following this Mowlana (1993) proposes an Islamic community paradigm, as against an information society paradigm, to make sense of communication practices from an Islamic perspective. He deploys a series of Islamic terms to delineate and make a case for this such as *tawhid*, *ummah*, etc. and argues that four elements are fundamental to understanding the Islamic community paradigm; (1) the world view of *tawhid* [which he translates as the unity of God, human beings and the universe], (2) sociology of knowledge in Islam, (3) integration of personality through Sharia [Islamic jurisprudence] and (4) meaning of society and state in Islam or what he calls *ummah*. He also points to sociology of knowledge in Islam as one of the key components of the Islamic community paradigm that will not only help one to make sense of contemporary communication practices from an Islamic perspective but through which the determining characteristics of Muslim communication practices could be understood. But later in the article he argues that the information revolution that underlies the information society paradigm should not be portrayed as a distinct phenomenon in human history nor should it be treated as a distinct one from the Islamic community paradigm.

While constituting a separate working group for studying Islam and media in 1995, the International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR), of which Hamid Mowlana was a founding member, also expressed similar concerns: “to study the universal principles of communication in Islam and the West.”¹⁰ But while delineating the objective of the working group in detail, they stated: “to look at the communication phenomenon with a view to contribute towards mutual understanding and peace with justice, to engage in research and organizational development efforts geared toward strengthening the global societal structures and to contribute to the advancement of research and evaluation in the media and communication related fields from an Islamic point of view.” And the major issues that the group is concerned with, according to their website, includes “Islam, communication and sustainable development; coverage of the American war against Iraq; Islam,

¹⁰ It is interesting to note that by then IAMCR already had a working group formed to study the interaction between religion and media called ‘religion, communication & culture.’ Does it then suggest that interaction between Islam and media cannot be studied in the general framework of religion and media? Much of what is discussed here is taken from <https://iamcr.org/s-wg/working-group/RCC>, and <https://iamcr.org/s-wg/working-group/islam-and-media> accessed on 21 April 2016.

communication, and Muslim countries; and Islam, communication, and the spread of terrorism”.

It is ironic that the initial attempts of both Mowlana and the IAMCR to argue for a distinctive character of Islamic community paradigm as opposed to information society paradigm and to study the universal principles of communication in Islam and the West respectively comes to a standstill as their projects unfold and the focus then becomes one that highlights either the similarities between Islamic and non-Islamic communication practices or the instrumentalist role of media in Muslim societies. Such an irony is of course inevitable when one does not pay enough attention to the details that structures the modalities of knowledge production and dissemination in a given society that direct the course of information/communication technologies or when one tends to ignore the differences between the modalities of knowledge production and circulation in different societies. This avoidance looks to be a systematic one in both the major initiatives to study the intercession of Islam and media from the institutional vantage point of media studies, especially when one realizes that much of the sociology of knowledge in Islam can be understood and actualized in its concrete form as a historical expression of a particular kind of modality, its pedagogic practice and the way it produces and transmits knowledge. The following incident that happened during the initial phase of my fieldwork in Kozhikode, Northern Kerala, helped me to recognize the centrality of these elements in Islamic knowledge practice.

I met Dr. Sheikh Usama al-Sayyid al-Azhari, one of the 50 most influential Muslim personalities in the world according to The Royal Islamic Strategies Studies Centre, Jordan, and who teaches at the Faculty of Usul al-Din and Da'wa [religious foundation and propagation] in the renowned Al-Azhar University, Cairo, in the office of Sheikh Aboobacker Ahmad. The latter is also known as Kanthapuram A. P. Aboobacker Musaliyar, a learned and highly influential Muslim scholar from Malabar. Sheikh Usama travelled all the way from Cairo to Kozhikode to visit scholars in Malabar, to stay with them and read *hadiths* [prophetic traditions] with them in order to obtain *ijaza*, the consent attesting that he has read the prophetic tradition with a master and received permission from them to read it for himself and to transmit it to others with proper *isnad*.¹¹ Sheikh Usama also specifically wanted to visit Abu Muhammad Al Qadiri al Vailathuri al Malaibari, also known as Vailathur Bava Musaliyar, who has written an extensive commentary on *Jam` al-Jawami` fi Usul al-Fiqh* [a compendium of the principles of law written by Taju Din 'Abdul Wahhab Ibn 'Ali As-Subki (d.1370) in 1359 at Nairab near Damascus] and to take *ijaza* from him to read and transmit *Jam` al-Jawami`* and its

¹¹ *Isnad* is a technical term in Islamic tradition for scholarly genealogy and is considered as a proof attesting to the historical authenticity and chain of transmission of a particular text or tradition in Islam.

commentaries.¹²

What was so surprising about this visit to me was the fact that Taju Din 'Abdul Wahhab Ibn 'Ali As-Subki, the author of *Jam` al-Jawami*,` also belonged to the same place in Alexandria where Sheikh Usama was born and brought up in. But he travelled all the way from Alexandria to Kozhikode via Cairo to visit a Malabari scholar to get his *ijaza* to read a book written by a 14th century scholar from his (Sheikh Usama's) region. What was equally remarkable was the fact that all the *hadiths* he had read with the scholars in Malabar were already available in thousands of books and was easily accessible to any scholar from Al-Azhar for centuries now. When I had the opportunity to talk to Sheikh Usama, I posed this question: why did he travel all the way from Cairo to Kozhikode to read a book or *hadith* with a Malabar scholar when they were readily available in the libraries in Cairo or on hundreds of online platforms? Foregrounding the link with knowledge, the physical presence of a scholar, and imbibing of knowledge from him orally through companionship in Islam, he said: "knowledge is considered to be the lost property of a Muslim. It is passed unto us from the Prophet through his heirs, honest scholars. Knowledge is transmitted to us and among us through a tradition of inheritance. So, knowledge in Islam becomes true and authentic knowledge only when it is received as an inheritance through an unbroken chain starting from the Prophet. Reading a book and gaining knowledge from it independently is not epistemologically valued in Islamic knowledge practices. So it's always appreciated when knowledge is gleaned from scholars who have studied it from another honest scholar and this chain finally goes back to the Prophet."

Sheikh Usama's later book titled *Buldaniyyath* (2013), a compilation of forty *hadiths* from forty different countries and forty different scholars has a *hadith* he heard from Abu Muhammad Al Qadiri in Malabar, who had heard it from his master Sayed Muhammad bin Qahhar, who heard it from his master Shihabudheen Ahmad Shaliyathi, who heard it from his master Muhammad Muhyudheen Hasan with the chain finally reaching up to Anas bin Malik, who heard the Prophet telling Ubbay ibn Ka'ab (d. 649) (considered the greatest reciter of the Qur'an after the Prophet), the following: "Indeed Allah has commanded me to recite the Qur'an to you." Ubbay asked, 'Allah mentioned my name to you?' 'Yes', the Prophet replied. 'And I have been mentioned by the Lord of The Worlds?' Ubbay asked again. 'Yes.' Prophet replied. Hearing upon

¹² *Jam` al-Jawami* is perhaps the most famous of Imam Subki's many works. It remains up to this day the standard work on Shafi'ite law and is used as a textbook for the study of law at the Islamic University of Cairo. Abu Muhammad Al Qadiri al Vailathuri al Malaibari's commentary on this 14th century text (*Al Alwa al Sawathiu fi Tarqeebi Jam' al Jawami*) is widely used in traditional Muslim centres of learning in Malabar.

this Ubbay's eyes was filled with tears" (pp. 182-185). By the time this particular *hadith* reached Abu Muhammad Al Qadiri of Malabar in 1960 and then Sheikh Usama of Alexandria in 2012, it had travelled across continents, oceans, countries, races and centuries and of course several times back and forth from Medina where the Prophet said this to his companion in the 7th century.

On 6 March 632, while delivering his farewell sermon in the Uranah Valley of Mount Arafat, Prophet Muhammad said to his companions who had gathered there in the thousands to offer their final rites of Islamic pilgrimage called Haj, the following:

"O People, lend me your attentive ear, for I know not whether I shall ever be amongst you again after this year. Therefore, listen carefully to what I am saying. All those who are present to listen to me today shall take my words to those who are absent and those to others again. It may be that the last ones understand my words better than those who listen to me directly. Be my witness, O God, that I have conveyed your message to your people."¹³ Upon completing his Final Sermon thus, near the summit of Arafat, the last revelation from God came down: "...Today I have perfected your religion for you, completed My blessings upon you, and chosen as your religion Islam: total devotion to God..." (Quran 5:3).

This farewell sermon, known as *Khutbatu l-Wada*, is considered as the culminating point of Muhammad's prophetic mission. Among the many other things the Prophet reminds his companions of and lay out in the form of a blue print for the generations of Muslims to come include the importance of propagating his messages. Thus the Prophet's advice to those who were present to convey his message to those who were absent also marked a new beginning in Islamic history: rise of institutions of teaching and learning. Since then, Muslim scholars, preachers, rulers and leaders alike have started to build infrastructure and employ the skills required for transmitting the Prophet's message to the Muslim public and beyond.

The Prophet's last sermon, both through its form and content, lays out a model for the transmission of his messages for later generations as well. Since the Qur'an, the Holy book of Islam itself means 'to recite,' and introduces the Prophet as an excellent model for those who put their hope in God (33: 21), Muslims consider each word and deed of the Prophet as exemplary. The request made by the Prophet to his companions at the historic sermon 'to lend their

¹³ This is taken from various *hadiths* narrated in Imam Bukhari's (d. 870) *Swahih al Bukhari*, considered as the most authentic source in Islam after the Qur'an. Particularly the *hadiths* no. 1623- 1626 in the chapter titled "The Sermons during the Mina days."

attentive ears' for the transmission of his messages was taken to be an order related to the senses; particularly listening. Though the importance of the faculty of listening in Islam has already been established through various means and mechanisms much before the Prophet's farewell sermon, particularly through the very title of the Holy text (Qur'an, which means recite) and the form it adopts for its revelation, first to the Prophet and then to his companions,¹⁴ the Prophet once again reiterates its centrality in Islamic pedagogic practices in the farewell sermon. This privileging of the faculty of listening, over other sensorial practices, which according to Islamic pedagogy is key to understanding, believing and embodying a thing into practice has not only fashioned both the form and content of institutions of learning in Islam but has also shaped their future destinies. Thus, listening in Islam was not a technique outside the faith, but is considered as a constituent element of faith and revelation-based social practices.

In the phenomenology of perception the difference between seeing and hearing also marks a fundamental difference in orientation of being in the world (Chidester, 1992). They also present human beings' radically different relationships with the world and outside by embodying different ranges of religious discourses. The two dominant perceptual theories called intromission and extramission, engaging with vision and hearing, delineate this difference in detail; while sight is always associated with space, immediacy and continuity, hearing is explained in terms of time and discontinuity. Thus, it is assumed that in hearing, the presence, connection and the continuous bond between the subject and the object of perception disappears (Eifring, 2013).

But in Islam listening is considered to be a medium through which continuity between the subject and object of perception is announced, anchored, produced and maintained. As clearly illustrated in the farewell sermon as well as in the model the Prophet established for the practical transmission of his messages, Islam brought in listening as a central and defining characteristic in its epistemology by developing a mechanism in which voice and listening is mediated through the presence of human bodies. When the Prophet says to his companions in Arafat to listen to him, to lend their ears, and to take his words to those who are absent and to them to take his words to others again until it reaches the last ones, what is being established and maintained is a continuity of a chain of committed Muslims. This guarantees the faithful recording and transmission of a tradition through human voice and its listening (Ware, 2014).

¹⁴ Commenting on the form it adopted, Qur'an in its verses says the following: "Even if We had sent down to you [Prophet] a book inscribed on parchment, and they had touched it with their own hands, the disbelievers would still say, 'This is nothing but blatant sorcery' (6: 7). I take up this point for further discussion in the third chapter.

The Prophet's selection of human voice for *azan*, the call to congregational prayer, as opposed to for example, a Church bell in Christianity or the sound of the horn in Judaism, also illustrates this point.

Writing in the 11th century, a Muslim scholar from Iran, Dhia' ul-Din Abd al-Malik ibn Yusuf al-Juwayni (d.1085), also known as Imam al-Haramayn, the leading Master of the holy cities of Mecca and Medina, counts the physical presence of the master and his verbal instruction among the central requisites of knowledge in Islam. George Makdisi (1981) in his analysis of the emergence of educational institutions in Islam and the West also demonstrates that the major difference between institutions of learning in the West and that of Islam is the absence of the Master and his loud reading for/to students in the former. Comparing what al Juwaini has said on Islamic education with what Bernard of Chartres (d. 1130), a French scholar and administrator has said about the pre requisite of learning in the West, Makdisi points out that the silent investigation replaced the presence of the articulating Master in the West. Thus, the physical presence of a Master in Islamic knowledge transmission foregrounds its bond with orality and hearing. This proposes that knowledge does not reside in documents, but in "authentic human beings and their personal connection with one another" often articulated through their voice (Graham, 1993: p. 507).¹⁵ It is in this historical background Ziaudhin Sardar (1993), argues that the idea of communication in Islam is intrinsically related to the concept of *ilm* [knowledge], where the distinction between ones' pursuit of knowledge and its distribution and transmission ceases to exist.

How are these theologically inspired and historically developed pedagogic forms and practices associated with it integrated into and impacting the entry/exit of information and communication technology among Muslim communities? Or what ambitions does communication technology embody in Muslim societies? These questions have rarely figured as a topic of discussion in communication studies. As the two key moments in the effort to institutionalize Islam-media studies concretely exemplify why/how and when media/communication is studied vis-à-vis Islam, it also sheds lights onto the larger institutional concerns that shape modes of inquiries to study Islam-media interactions.

For example, a cursory look at the academic scholarship on Islam and media suggests that the questions and concerns of these studies have largely been confined to: (1), whether the new information and communication order bring (Muslim) communities closer together or atomize their already precarious relationships (Mowlana, 1993), (2), how does the introduction of new

¹⁵ See Michael Cook's (1997) study on opposition against writing tradition in early Islam.

communication technology play an important agentive role in shaping religious discourses in Muslim communities (Billig, 1995; Eickelman, 1996), (3), is religious authority waxing or waning, diversifying or centralizing in the information age? (Hjarvard, 2016; Graf & Petersen, 2009) and (4), how religious elites have overcome autonomous media infrastructures, their institutional apparatuses and the independent consumers they have produced by entrenching their religious authority in new ways (Mandaville, 2001).

Speaking specifically in the context of digital media, the new information technology according to these scholars meant not only a new method for transmitting texts, but also a new idiom for selecting and presenting religious texts to cater to new kinds of Muslim readers and viewers and argue that the non-institutionalized nature of dissemination of religious knowledge and the inherent potential of cyber transmission has necessitated a reconsideration and reconfiguration of existing Muslim networks. However, Burnt (2009) contests this argument and asks whether a Muslim's engagement with the new media reflect the continuum of Muslim understandings located in the non-digital world. But for him, Islam's encounter with cyber environments appears new only in terms of how the media is applied and much of the content still has a basis in classical Islamic traditions and hence only helps in reinforcing existing religious authorities. Ziauddin Sardar (1993) also presents a similar view when he notes that information technology has changed the very manifestations of Islam and that the distributive and decentralized networks offer a different potential for Muslim societies and culture. The attempt then, to study Islam-media intersection has largely been limited either to figuring out a new Muslim consumer vis-à-vis religious authority or to tracing out continuity in religious communication vis-à-vis change in media technologies.¹⁶

Thus Islam and media intercession has always been posed, either as a problem to be explained and solved as we have seen in the above mentioned studies or as a mere question of representation.¹⁷ These works while they focus on the impact of media technology in a given community by highlighting its epistemic value do it at the expense of obscuring the questions on the ontological value of communication technology and the sensibilities it embodies in a society. The remarkable absence of discussions on the form and significance of communication/technologies in the scholarship on Muslim media demonstrates this problem aptly where technologies are understood as

¹⁶ The thesis use the word media, technology or media technology in an expansive sense by converging both the meaning and usage of media technology and communication technology. The distinction between them is challenging because in its everyday use, as we use these terms interchangeably.

¹⁷ Edwards Said's *Covering Islam: How the Media and Experts determine how We See the Rest of the World* (2006) is an example.

disembodied entities. The fact is that technologies do not enter a community in vacuum. But a community adopts/adapts information and communication technology as part of the larger infrastructural designing of their community and in relation to their social assemblage in which their religious orientations play a constituent role. As a result, existing impact narratives on media technology are unable to engage with the constituent nature of technologies in Islam and its religious practices. This study then argues that in order to understand the conditions of possibilities that religious media affords in a community, one need to develop a narrative that will account for what can be broadly termed as the religious work of media.

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Privately Employed, Print Oriented, Professionally Educated, Less Experienced, and Badly Paid: A Professional Profile of Kerala Journalists

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Abstract

The present study, a part of author's PhD thesis, tries to understand the professional characteristics of journalists in Kerala. Every aspect of a journalist's professional life including his professional education, experience, and income become very significant in the processing of news as the way news as a social construct is shaped is highly influenced by the characteristics of journalists. The public perception about the world is mediated. And it is the media that tell the audience 'not what to think but what to think about.' Unquestionably, it is the mediators of reality or the news people who tell the audience what to think about. A survey of 541 Kerala journalists revealed that the media profession in this part of India is mostly privately owned, concentrated in three major cities and dominated by print journalism. Indicating the professionalization of the field, most of the journalists are professionally educated but less experienced and badly paid.

Keywords

Kerala Journalists, Indian Journalists, Underpaid Profession, Survey of Journalists, Journalists in 21st C.

Introduction

Why is it necessary to enquire the professional characteristics of the processing hands of the media content? The public perceives the world around

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them as directed by the media which tells them ‘not what to think but what to think about.’ The public agenda is mainly set by the newsworthy information processed by journalists. Again, ‘political economy’ of the media organization and of the journalists play a crucial role in setting up the public agenda as the newsworthiness of these events is shaped in the news desk (Herman & Chomsky, 1989). Here, the question who tells the media what to think about is vital.

Studies about journalists across the world revealed that the way news as a social construct is molded and the newsroom practice as a professional trait is fostered are based on the demographics of the media persons. In this context, it becomes inevitable to check how far these communicators are professionals while processing the news as they are the mirror bearers of the society. Undoubtedly, the media as well as the media persons, which together constitute the fourth estate in a democracy needs thorough examination to unearth the influence of the professional variables of journalists in shaping the media content.

The quality of professional life of media persons is as important as the field as they act as the ‘eyes and ears of the general public’ in a democracy. In this way, every aspect of journalist’s professional life including his motivation, work culture and the very practice as a journalist become significant in the processing of information. The present study tries to examine the professional variables of journalists in Kerala to understand the implications of these characteristics on the quality of journalism as a social service as well as a business. This study is, especially relevant, as there are a few studies done on Kerala journalists in similar fashion.

Media in Kerala

The beginning of media in Kerala can be traced back to Rajyasamacharam in 1847 for print and Travancore Broadcasting in 1943 for broadcast and Deepika online in 1998 for online media. The National Family Health Survey (2015-16) ranked Kerala - a state with highest literacy rate - first in the country in terms of daily media exposure of the people. N Ram rightly observed that “Kerala is the classic Indian case of politicization spreading to large sections of the population and creating a newspaper-reading culture” (Ram, 2011). Professional characteristics of journalists in Kerala is vital, in this respect, as they process the content to keep such a society informed and critically aware. According to the PRDD (2015), there are 75 dailies including tabloids, 65 Television channels, 7 radio stations and 10 news websites in Malayalam to cater to media requirements of 3.69 million audience.

Review of Literature

Researchers of mass media in India focused on effects of mass media and the reception of its content for so long. Studies on media persons and production process heaved less attention and their studies were restricted to famous personalities in the field. On the other hand, journalists and their profession were researched in depth in different parts of the world including many developing nations in Asia. The reviewed studies may give some insights into their professional characteristics of journalists across the world.

Mwesige (2004), Lo, Chan, and Pan (2005), West (2011), Mellado and Humanes (2012), Nygren and Degtereva (2012), Godler and Reich (2012) and Skovsgaard (2014) reported that professional characteristics of the individual journalists may influence their perceptions and may decide the way news were processed. The logics of success and the professional assessments held by journalists were opposing depending on the professional characteristics that determined how journalists read the situations. The way news as a social construct was shaped and the newsroom practice as a professional trait was nurtured were based on the professional characteristics of news processors along with their production environment.

The conflict between professional goals and organizational goals influenced the journalists' professional autonomy negatively as per the report of Skovsgaard (2014). According to Reinardy (2014), TV news workers' job satisfaction was correlated with perceptions of work quality, autonomy, organizational support and workload. All these factors had a significant, positive and moderate correlation with job satisfaction except workload that exerted a negative correlation. High levels of workload and low levels of organizational support led to low levels of job satisfaction. Further, professional characteristics like region and type of media in which media persons work, their experience, salary range, the field of work and the employer pattern have the capacity to affect the journalists' view and the way they assess the profession (Reinardy and Crawford, 2011; Massey and Elmore, 2011; Tsui and Lee, 2012).

Professional characteristics like ownership pattern, working region, type of medium, salary range, professional education, media experience and level of competency have remained as the central variables of journalistic studies as they are indicators of professionalization. Essentially, they are likely to have a far-reaching effect on news content especially on what is selected and how it is reported (Shoemaker & Reese, 1991). The present study sought professional characteristics including nature of employment, working region, type of media, the field of work, professional education, media experience, monthly income, beat specialization, the inspiration for work, competency, and professional organization membership. Professional character of a journalist in Kerala will

definitely reflect how far media in the state is professionalized by the time of the study.

Journalism researchers in India, especially in Kerala, scarcely studied the implications of journalists' professional characteristics on the news decisions they made as such if not as the part of a related study. The professional characteristics of Kerala journalists will not, in fact, contrast to their counterparts in the profession around the world.

Study Objectives

How professional are the journalists in Kerala when compared to journalists from other parts of the world? What all the ways by which the Kerala journalists are similar or different with their colleagues around the world? Studying Kerala journalists' professional characteristics is the lone answer to this question. The objectives of the present study are:

- To identify the nature of employment, working region, type of media, the field of work and professional organization membership of journalists in Kerala.
- To understand the professional education, media experience, monthly income and beat specialization of Kerala journalists.

Study Methodology

The Public Relations Department Directory (PRDD) of the Govt. of Kerala enlisted 3104 media persons including those who work outside Kerala for Kerala based media houses. From this population, a sample of 541 media persons, one-sixth of the population, spread across various media like print, electronic and online platforms were surveyed to realize the objectives. Theoretically, the proportion for sampling for a population of 3500 was 346 (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970). The journalists were well represented in terms of major professional variables like region, medium, professional education, experience and income.

Samples were collected from four stratum – North Kerala, Central Kerala, South Kerala and outside the state but within India where Kerala journalists have a visible presence - using stratified random sampling method to ensure proper representation. Care was taken to ensure the proportionate representation of the type of media – Print, Radio, Television, and Online – from each region. Similarly, within each type of media, adequate representation of various possible variables including medium, professional education, experience and income was ensured. The questionnaire enquired the

respondents about their professional characteristics including region, type of media, salary range, experience, the field of work and ownership pattern.

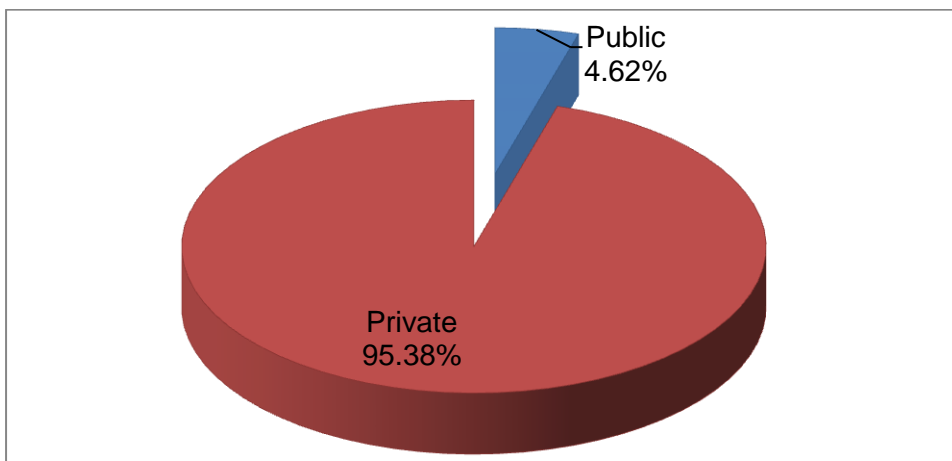
Analysis

Media scholars across the globe eagerly studied the professional characteristics, as those assisted in creating national professional portraits of the journalistic folk. For Weaver, reasons behind this enquiry is important; firstly, as journalists have multiple characteristics, attitudes, and behaviors that depend on the specific setting; secondly, as journalists have similarities that cut across the boundaries of geography, culture, language, society, religion, race, ethnicity; and thirdly, as journalists are generally more demographically representative of their own societies (Weaver, 2005). Professional characteristics taken for the study were employer pattern, working region, type of media, the field of work, professional education, experience, monthly income, beat specialization and professional organization membership.

Employer Pattern

Most of the news media in Kerala as well as in India are under the ownership of private companies or trusts. On the other hand, news broadcast via Radio is monopolized by All India Radio (AIR), the government-owned Radio. And Doordarshan (DD), the government-owned TV, employed a small fraction of journalists in comparison with other news broadcasting news channels. Taken this into account, most of the samples were collected from private owned news media and most of the samples from the public sector were gathered from the AIR and the DD.

Figure 1: Employer Pattern wise Distribution of the Journalists

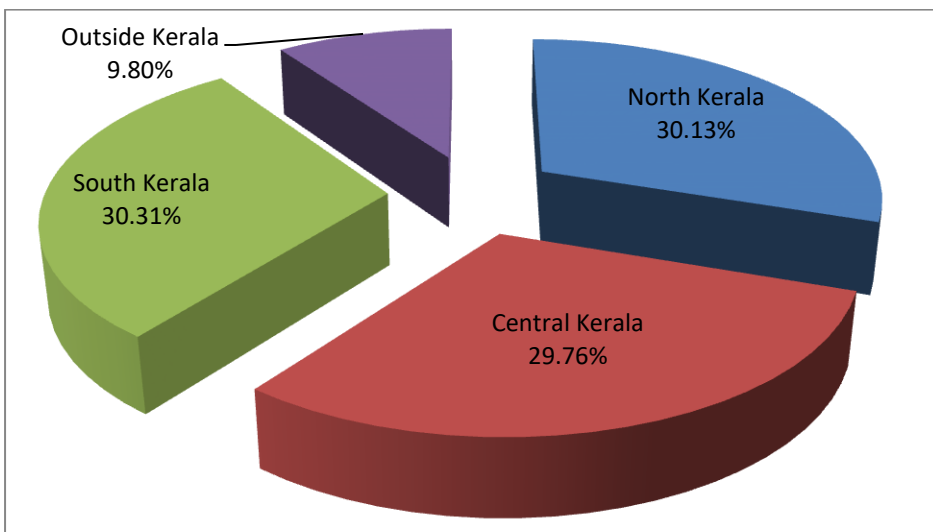


The sample (N=541) collected from Kerala giving proportionate representation to the journalists from public and private owned news media. In this way, most of the media persons in Kerala were from privately owned media (95.38%) and a small number of journalists from public owned media (4.62%). Unsurprisingly, news media in Kerala is in the hands of private owners.

Working Region

Media in Kerala, including print and broadcast, is concentrated mainly in three major cities in the state namely Thiruvananthapuram, the state capital, Ernakulam, the economic capital, and Kozhikode, the central city in Malabar. They also represent southern, central and northern regions of the state respectively. Historically and culturally, the traditions of these three regions are distinct while southern Kerala was under the Travancore Kingdom, the central part was dominated by Cochin Dynasty and Northern Kerala was a part of Madras Presidency under the British. Consequently, they still represent different socio-political and dialectic traditions that may have an influence on the journalistic practices. In addition to this, Kerala journalists have a visible presence outside Kerala, where workplace situation is totally different. Given this, the sample was collected from all the four regions.

Figure 2: Region-wise Distribution of the Journalists



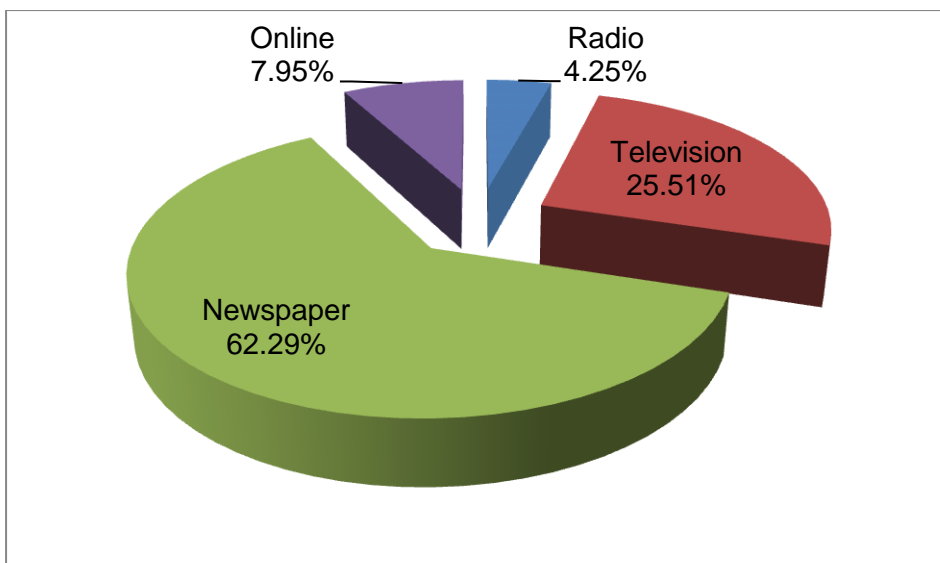
The sample (N=541) collected from three regions in Kerala with almost equal representation – (North = 163, Central = 161, South = 164). In addition to this, considering the presence of Kerala journalists in Indian metros outside the state, data were collected from 53 journalists. Consequently, journalists from South (30.31%), Central (29.76%) and North (30.13%) regions of Kerala along

with a fair number of journalists from outside Kerala (9.8%) were included in the study. From each region, the majority of samples were taken from regional journalistic centers/districts; Kozhikode (41.72%) from North, Ernakulam (52.8%) from Central, and Thiruvananthapuram (50.6%) from South whereas most of the samples from outside Kerala was collected from Delhi (84.9%), the national capital.

Type of Media

Print journalists dominated the media world throughout the history of journalism. But with the advent of online journalism, the trend faced threat and many of the print media houses shrunk their journalistic force to focus their online edition. As a result, the number of print media journalists tends to shrink especially in the developed nations. At the same time, print journalists' dominance in the media field tends to continue in the developing nations like India (Ram, 2011). The present study is conducted among news persons working with Radio, Television, Daily Newspaper and Online news websites and portals.

Figure 3: Media-wise Distribution of the Journalists



In proportionate with journalists' population in media, Print journalists (62.29%) constituted the majority of the sample followed respectively by Television (25.51%), Online (7.95%) and Radio (4.25%).

Region, Media and Sample Distribution

Multistage stratified randomization of data firstly concerned with four regions in and outside the state and then four different media. Researcher managed to collect a somewhat proportionate number of journalists from each media within a region.

Table 1: Region-wise Distribution of Journalists by Media

Media	Region				Total
	South	Central	North	Outside Kerala	
Radio	11 (47.8%)	5 (21.7%)	4 (17.4%)	3 (13%)	23 (100%)
Television	47 (34.1%)	36 (26.1%)	29 (21%)	26 (18.8%)	138 (100%)
Newspaper	92 (27.3%)	105 (31.2%)	118 (35%)	22 (6.5%)	337 (100%)
Online	14 (32.6%)	15 (34.9%)	12 (27.9%)	2 (4.7%)	43 (100%)
Total	164 (30.3%)	161 (29.8%)	163 (30.1%)	53 (9.8%)	541 (100%)

Pearson chi-square = 3.160^a, p-value = .000

Though most journalists in Radio (47.8%), Television (34.1%) and Online (32.6%) were from South and Print journalists (35%) from North, medium wise distribution of journalists within the region is more or less in proportion with their population. These varied in accordance with the region-wise concentration of media in Kerala and the difference is significant (p-value = .000).

Field of Work

Field of work of a journalist may have an influence on his/her professional variables like job satisfaction, freedom etc. For this study, journalists' fields of work were identified as reporting, editing, news management and photo/videography.

Table 2: Field of Work of the Journalists

Field of Work	Frequency	Percent
Reporting	308	56.9
Editing	145	26.8
News Management	29	5.4
Photo/Videography	59	10.9
Total	541	100

The majority of the samples (56.9%) were from the reporting field. One-fourth of the journalists were from editing (26.8%) and photo/videography

journalists constituted the third majority (10.9%) and the least number of media persons were from news management field (5.4%). Reporting continues to be the glamorous and most desired field in the profession as far as its social status and recognition are concerned.

Professional Organization

Professional organizations are the sources of the power of negotiation of employees in the field. The researcher identified four professional unions of working journalists in Kerala. This may be due to the constraints to become a member or lack of interest/trust in such associations.

Table 3: Professional Organizational Membership and the Journalists

Media	Member/Organization				No Membership	Total
	KUWJ	KJU	KNEF	DUJ		
Radio	8 (34.8%)	1 (4.3%)	1 (4.3%)	0	13 (56.5%)	23 (100%)
Television	41 (29.7%)	2 (1.4%)	3 (2.2%)	3 (2.2%)	89 (64.5%)	138 (100%)
Newspaper	175 (51.9%)	11 (3.3%)	7 (2.1%)	0	144 (42.7%)	337 (100%)
Online	13 (30.2%)	1 (2.3%)	0	0	29 (67.4%)	43 (100%)
Total	237 (43.8%)	15 (2.8%)	11 (2%)	3 (0.6%)	275 (50.8%)	541 (100%)

Pearson chi-square = 37.129^a, p-value = .000

Surprisingly, a simple majority of the journalists (50.8%) were not members of any organization of working journalists. Most of the journalists who are part of an employee organization belonged to Kerala Union of Working Journalists (43.8%). Others belonged respectively to Kerala Journalists Union (2.8%), Kerala News Employees Forum (2%), and DUJ (.6%). Journalists in newspapers (57.3%) were more likely to be unionized while their counterparts in online (67.4%), television (64.5%) and radio (56.5%) were less likely to be unionized. And unionization tendency of journalists differed significantly across media (p-value = .000).

Professional Education

The more the journalists are professionally educated the more will be the spread of professionalization in the journalism field. Not majority of journalists across nations reported having a professional education so far despite two or three nations like Chile and Brazil. Majoring in journalism gradually becomes vital to enter the profession in Kerala as the study indicated which was different from other parts of Asian continent as previous studies reported (Weaver & Willnat, 2012).

Table 4: Professional Education of the Journalists

Media	Professional Education				Total
	No Media Education	Certificate/Diploma Course	Degree	PG & Above	
Radio	2 (8.7%)	10 (43.5%)	5 (21.7%)	6 (26.1%)	23 (100%)
Television	32 (23.2%)	60 (43.5%)	13 (9.4%)	33 (23.9%)	138 (100%)
Newspaper	63 (18.7%)	166 (49.3%)	14 (4.2%)	94 (27.9%)	337 (100%)
Online	5 (11.6%)	27 (62.8%)	2 (4.7%)	9 (20.7%)	43 (100%)
Total	102 (18.6%)	263 (48.6%)	34 (6.3%)	142 (26.2%)	541 (100%)

Pearson chi-square = 21.123^a, p-value = .012

The majority of journalists hold a diploma/certificate course (48.6%) followed by those who completed professional PG (26.2%) or degree (6.3%). And a remarkable portion of the journalists was not professionally educated (18.9%). Overall, the vast majority of journalists (81.1%) were professionally educated and others were not (18.9%). When comes to media, Television (23.2%) followed by the newspaper (18.7%) tended to accommodate more journalists with no professional education whereas more or less than nine-tenths of journalists in Radio (91.3%) and online (88.4%) were having a professional education. Of professionally educated journalists, majority in all media (radio=43.5%; television=43.5%; newspaper=49.3%; online=62.8%) tended to have certificate/diploma in journalism. About half of journalists in Radio (47.8%) and nearly one-third of journalists in Television (33.3%) and newspaper (32.1%) and more than one-fourth of online journalists (25.4) secured at least a degree or PG in journalism. The difference in the dissemination of journalists with or without media education across media yielded statistical significance (p-value = .012). Professional training in journalism is a prerequisite for being hired as a journalist as far as media in Kerala is concerned.

Experience

The more one works for an organization the more he/she will adapt to the ideology and policy of the same and will normally prefer not to change the institution. Since the generations of journalists face varying challenges from one another, their priorities may change by time and that will ultimately result in job attitudes they preserve (White, 1997).

Table 5: Experience of the Journalists

Media	Professional Experience					Total
	Up to 5 Years	6-10 Years	11-15 Years	16-20 Years	Above 20 years	
Radio	3 (13%)	4 (17.4%)	4 (17.4%)	2 (8.7%)	10 (43.5%)	23 (100%)
Television	70 (50.7%)	41 (29.7%)	15 (10.9%)	9 (6.5%)	3 (2.2%)	138 (100%)
Newspaper	109 (32.3%)	81 (24%)	65 (19.3%)	41 (12.2%)	41 (12.2%)	337 (100%)
Online	19 (44.2%)	11 (25.6%)	7 (16.3%)	2 (4.7%)	4 (9.3%)	43 (100%)
Total	201 (37.2%)	137(25.3%)	91 (16.8%)	54 (10%)	58 (10.7%)	541 (100%)

Pearson chi-square = 56.778^a, p-value = .000

More than one-third of journalists (37.2%) were having up to five years of experience and one fourth were with 6-10 years of experience (25.3%). Merely, one-tenth of the journalists was on the field for more than two decades (10.7%). Again, one-tenth of the journalists (10%) was experienced 16-20 years whereas a simple minority of journalists (16.8%) was moderately experienced (11-15 years). When comes to media, most of the radio journalists (79.6%) held more than 10 years of experience whereas most of the Television journalists (81.8%) followed by the majority of journalists in Online (72.1%) had up to 10 years of experience. The newspaper had a comparatively balanced proportion of journalists in terms of experience through the experience categories. Majority of journalists in Kerala (63%), in general, and Television (81.8%), Online (72.1%) and Print (56.3%) journalists in particular were having less than a decade of experience when the majority of the radio journalists (69.6%) had more than 10 years of experience. Professional experience of journalists significantly varied across media (p-value = .000).

Income

Income might have strong relation with quality of media content. Researchers found that unethical journalism in one way or other related to poor pay. Journalists with poor pay and high workload and family responsibilities tended to compromise over the objectivity of news. It also adversely affected journalist's commitment and urged them to migrate from one institution to another (Ireeri, 2015). Journalists under study were grouped into five - Up to Rs.10000, Rs.10001-20000, Rs.20001-30000, Rs.30001-40000 and Above Rs. 50000 - on the basis of their monthly income.

Surprisingly, a significant portion of the journalists (15%) was not even paid the monthly salary of more than Rs. 10,000. Though one-seventh of the journalists (14.6%) was moderately paid an amount of Rs. 30001-50000, they are just at the payment level of a Lower Division Clerk in the state. To be specific, most of the journalists in Television (84%), Online (83.7%) and

Newspaper (78.3%) were poorly paid whereas in Radio more than half of the journalists were either moderately or well paid (52.2%). In general, the vast majority of the journalists in Kerala (78.9%) were poorly paid, one-seventh of journalists was (14.6%) moderately paid and just a few journalists (6.5%) were well paid.

Table 6: Salary Range of the Journalists by Media

Media	Salary Range					Total
	Upto Rs.10000	Rs.10001- 20000	Rs.20001- 30000	Rs. 30001- 50000	Above Rs.50000	
Radio	1 (4.3%)	7 (30.4%)	3 (13%)	4 (17.4%)	8 (34.8%)	23 (100%)
Television	25 (18.1%)	54 (39.1%)	37 (26.8%)	18 (13%)	4 (2.9%)	138 (100%)
Newspaper	47 (13.9%)	130 (38.6%)	87 (25.8%)	52 (15.4%)	21 (6.2%)	337 (100%)
Online	8 (18.6%)	16 (37.2%)	12 (27.9%)	5 (11.6%)	2 (4.7%)	43 (100%)
Total	81 (15%)	207 (38.3%)	139 (25.7%)	79 (14.6%)	35 (6.5%)	541 (100%)

Pearson chi-square = 37.500^a, p-value = .000

Again, journalists in Radio (52.2%) received better payment of Rs. 30001 and above followed by journalists in the newspaper (21.6%), online (16.3%) and Television (15.9%). Salary range wise difference of journalists across media found to be highly significant (p-value = .000).

Interestingly, majority of the journalists fall under the low-income category of \$2-\$10 (Rs 122 - 710) per day. Though most of them identify themselves as middle class people like their fellow Indians, 'many of these were people hovering closer to \$2 than \$10 in daily income, and thus still a way from the transition to middle-income status' of \$10-\$20 (Rs 710 - 1420) per day (Kochhar, 2015).

Beat Specialization

Researcher's interest was put on specialized journalists as they were allowed to follow the work they loved the most. They were impressed by the finding that journalists with special beat tended to have more satisfaction than their unspecialized counterparts. The role of beat specialization of journalists in Kerala may have the same effect as it had on journalists across the world. A total number of journalists specialized in a particular beat may show the importance of that beat in this part of the country.

Table 7: Beat Specialization and the Journalists by Media

Media	Special Beat		Total
	Special Beat	General	
Radio	7 (30.4%)	16 (69.6%)	23 (100%)
Television	39 (28.3%)	99 (71.7%)	138 (100%)
Newspaper	100 (29.7%)	237 (70.3%)	337 (100%)
Online	12 (27.9%)	31 (72.1%)	43 (100%)
Total	158 (29.2%)	383 (70.8%)	541 (100%)

Pearson chi-square = .147^a, p-value = .986

More than one-fourth of the journalists were given special beat (29.2%) and others (70.8%) covered news in general. Journalists across media reported not much difference in terms of specialization as more or less than 30 percent of them in every media (radio = 30.4%; television = 28.3%; newspaper = 29.7%; online = 27.9%) were having specialization in one or in another beat. Expectedly, the difference was not statistically significant (p-value = .986).

Further analysis of the data shows that most journalists specialized in politics (N=66) followed by arts (N=35), region (N=34), sports (N=32), court & crime (N=14), science (N=12), and religion (N=7). Some of them covered two or three special beats as they were asked for.

Conclusion and Discussion

Professionally speaking, most of the journalists taken for the study (N=541) worked under a private employer (95.38%), equally distributed across regions (South - 30.31%, Central - 29.76% & North - 30.13%), belonged to print media (62.3%), hailed from reporting field (56.9%), and had no membership in working journalists' unions (50.8%). Exploring the second objective of study, it was shown that more than half of the Kerala journalists were professionally educated (81.1%), had below 10 years of experience (53%), were badly paid (78.9%), and covered news in general (70.8%).

The analysis of professional characteristics of sampled journalists helped the researcher to construct a professional portrait of a typical Kerala journalist. Notably, most of the news media in Kerala as well as in India are under the ownership of private companies or trusts. On the other hand, news broadcast via Radio is monopolized by All India Radio (AIR), the government-owned Radio. And Doordarshan (DD), the government-owned TV, employed a small fraction of journalists in comparison with other news broadcasting news channels. Again, when it comes to the working region, media in Kerala, including print and broadcast, is concentrated mainly in three major cities in the state namely Thiruvananthapuram, the state capital, Ernakulam, the economic capital, and Kozhikode, the central city in Malabar. They also represent

southern, central and northern regions of the state respectively. Considering media wise distribution of journalists, Kerala followed the global trend as print media journalists dominated the profession. It was so throughout the history of journalism. But with the advent of online journalism, the trend faced threat and many of the print media houses shrunk their journalistic force to focus their online edition. However, print journalists' dominance in the media field tends to continue in the developing nations like India (Ram, 2011).

. Media field in Kerala is in the path of rapid professionalization as indicated by the increasing presence of professionally trained journalists. It is also evident in the mounting number of institutions offering various journalism courses in the state. Advanced technological and digital news environment is indeed in need of trained journalists. However, beyond technical soundness, the way trained young journalists contribute to the quality of journalism in Kerala is an area for further exploration. On the other hand, professional experience of journalists in this part of the world is considerably low as majority of them had below 10 years of experience.

No wonder that the number of journalists assigned to special beat indicated that the media in Kerala is more concentrated on politics than any other beat available in the region. Being apolitical is a difficult task in Kerala, a southern state in India known for its political literacy. N Ram (2011) rightly identified Kerala as the 'classic Indian case of politicization' that spread across the population amounting to create a newspaper-reading culture.

Shockingly, the vast majority of the journalists in Kerala were badly paid, and just a few journalists were well paid and a significant portion of the journalists was not even paid the monthly salary of more than Rs. 10,000. The personalized pressure of financial and material influence and organizational pressure of profit orientation resulted in sweethearting. Newsworthy stories that may adversely affect the funding agencies and the specific audience of the media are neglected or edited. On the other hand, stuffs that are not newsworthy may find place or time in media. These are in essence are part of sweethearting, 'the practice of giving customers unauthorized discounts' causing loss of quality in the profession of journalism. Income might have strong relation with quality of media content. Researchers found that unethical journalism in one way or other related to poor pay. Journalists with poor pay and high workload and family responsibilities tended to compromise over the objectivity of news. Ireri (2015) rightly observed that the poor pay adversely affected journalist's commitment and urged them to migrate from one institution to another seeking better payment.

Limitations of the Study

Though the study will provide certain insights into the professional characteristics of media persons in Kerala, there are limitations to it. A multi-approach/method that can also extract personal characteristics and its influence in the profession would be bettered in this kind of explorative study. However, care was taken to control the possible limitations by sorting out the duly filled data and to by delimiting the analysis strictly to the objectives.

Recommendations

Considering the results and so its implications for the study, the researcher puts forth the following recommendations to the media managements/organizations, journalists, government, audience/viewers and to the academia.

- Managements/organizations have the responsibility to ensure that the journalists receive a decent salary to run his/her family smoothly at par with modern living standards following the wage board recommendations. If not, journalists may resort to sweethearting to find their livelihood which may diminish the quality of news itself.
- Government should ensure that the media organizations strictly follow Majithia wage board recommendations and they do not appoint journalists under technically modified designations to escape the wage board recommendations.
- Working journalists' unions must address the representation issue of the field to convert the journalistic field gender, caste and class sensitive. They also should make use of their capacity to bargain with the media organizations for the better work environment and the implementation of wage board recommendations.
- Readers/viewers should attain the media literacy to recognize the fact that professional characteristics of journalists like under payment may affect free and fair news reporting in this part of the world.

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Caste and Race: Mechanisms of Dehumanization

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Abstract

This essay explores the dehumanizing effects of caste and race, as two separate but interlinked social phenomena. The method followed is to analyze the issue of caste and race in diverse social contexts and bring out the similarities in the institutionalization of discrimination in the two practices. I do this by tracing the contours of racism and 'casteism', as historical experiences. While racism, as an experience, cuts across a host of geographical and temporal spectrum, caste is a phenomenon obtainable mainly in the Indian subcontinent and Diasporas. My argument is: despite the limited geographical spread of the latter and the wider theatre occupied by the former, the contours of the two were/are similar. The dehumanizing effects they had on the 'object' populations were equally demonic.

Keywords

Dehumanization, Caste, Race, Discrimination, Aryan1

Caste and Race: Points of Intersection.

According to Cox (Cox, 1948, pp. 428-61) race and caste do not share a common ground: caste, was something exclusive to India with no racial underpinnings; race on the other hand, is a modern phenomenon that was co-terminus with industrial capitalism and the resultant colonial expansion:

Probably a realization of no single fact is of such crucial significance for an understanding of racial antagonism as that the phenomenon had its rise only in modern times. [...] all racial antagonisms can be traced to the policies [of]...white people of Europe and North America. (Cox, 1948,p. 322)

This view is based on the notion of racism as a colonial product that relied on a neat colored-white opposition. Capitalism and economic imperatives, indeed, played a crucial role in modern racial formation. It is also true that racism took its modern form and embodiment during colonial times. But in this essay, I consider racism to be all those essentializing concepts based

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on a set of real or imagined differences that fostered hatred/suspicion in a group towards another. As such, it was neither an exclusively western phenomenon nor a mere offshoot of industrial capitalism. The following lines by the Arab historiographer Ibn Khaldun show, how deeply ingrained was the concept in medieval consciousness:

The inhabitants of the zones that are far from temperate, such as the first, second, sixth and seventh zones, are also farther removed from being temperate in all their conditions. ...Most of them go naked. ...Their qualities of character, moreover, are close to those of dumb animals. It has been well reported that most of the Negroes of the first zone dwell in caves and thickets, eat herbs, live in savage isolation and do not congregate and eat each other (Khladun, 1967, pp. 58-59).

Though Khaldun subscribed to the Islamic belief which sees humanity as a single society born of a single male and female, even he was not immune to race prejudices. A fear of the other, a suspicion concerning the stranger and his/her ways are deeply ingrained in the imagination of all insular and inward looking human societies held together by some form of solidarity. This has probably to do with what Asad (drawing from Barthes) described as the 'uncertainty' concerning the meaning of objects or attitudes (Asad, 2007, 30).' The 'outsider' or the 'stranger' always gives rise to a 'semantic' uncertainty within a group. As Asad says, every society tends to fix these floating signifiers using particular techniques. Since the presence of the other was bound to impinge upon questions concerning 'our' space, identity, beliefs and culture the easiest way of fixing this semantic uncertainty was evoking the primordial trope of the demonic Other. This is probably why antiracist thinkers like Paul Gilroy show an instinctive aversion towards the idea of solidarity that fosters a 'we,' 'they' attitude (Gilroy, 2004, pp. 97-131). In the case of Europeans, this sense of demarcation was accentuated by those visible markers, especially skin color, that provided an instant rationale for binary thinking. The logic of Indian caste system also owes to an 'insider-outsider' logic that has racist underpinnings, as will be evident as the discussion progresses.

Race: The Historical Trajectory

Sardar traces the origin of western racism to its early encounters with the other, stretching back to the real or imagined accounts of Marco Paulo and Sir John Mandeville (Sardar, 2005, pp.25-32). In these accounts the Other is given an infrahuman status that fails to match up with the 'norm,' i.e. the white westerner. While the westerner was represented as civilized, rational, white and human, the other was given the negative attributes of being barbaric, irrational, and beastly. In the early phases of history, encounters between people belonging to different races were limited and, barring the case of a few adventurers and

travelers, spatial mobility was limited for most people. Even nomads ranged about only in a limited geographical space. But even during this phase, the West/Other encounter was characterized by hostility and mistrust. Lindqvist notes quoting Hodgen:

Africans have been called beasts ever since the very first contacts, when Europeans described them as “rude and beast-like,” “like to brute beasts,” and “more brutish than the beasts they hunt.” (Lindqvist, 1997, 8)

During colonialism the negative discourse on the other became thicker, as it was used to legitimize colonial oppression. The ‘Other’ was consequently animalized, feminized and infantilized. It was made out that the ‘protective’ presence of the colonizer was something s/he desperately needed. Kipling captured this sentiment in his exhortation concerning Whiteman’s burden:

Take up the White Man’s burden---
 Send forth the best ye breed---
 Go bind your sons to exile
 To serve your captives need;[---]
 Your new-caught; sullen peoples,
 Half-devil and half-child. (Cox, 1948, p. 345)

The colonial discourse was multi-layered. It was given a scientific hue with the introduction of pseudo-sciences like eugenics and phrenology. The African’s skull was said to resemble the ape’s and s/he was consigned to the lowest rung of social ladder. Camper drew up an elaborate system to measure up human skulls and determine the extent of human kinship with apes:

He [Camper] set as the ideal an angle of one hundred degrees, a facial angle acknowledged not to exist in reality but often used to portray Gods and Goddesses in Greek statuary. Measured with this ideal in mind, apes were said to have a facial angle of forty-two to fifty degrees, African Negroes and Kalmuks [...] a facial angle of seventy degrees and Europeans a more noble angle of eighty degrees. (Schiebinger, 1993, p.149)

Travelers’ tales of Africans freely copulating with apes perfectly fitted in with this narrative. Apes were considered a corrupt and degenerate form of fallen humans because of the ‘fateful bite’ of the apple, and African their closest kinsman. Stephen de Vimse, a naturalist of great stature, argued in late nineteenth century how Golaks could only be a cross between humans and apes since they didn’t have tails (Schiebinger, 1993, p.95). In other words, the question of Golaks belonging to the human species was not even worth considering for Vimse. As for Edward Long ‘an orangutan husband’ could not be ‘any dishonor to a Hottentot female’ (Schiebinger: 1993, p.5).

A few Africans and aboriginals who had visible physical deformities were brought to Europe and exhibited at popular fairs to show how different 'they' were from 'us.' The story of the Hottentot Bartmann is remarkable. She was exhibited widely in England and France as a typical Other, closer to apes than humans. As European fancy took wings, Hottentot women were imagined to have a natural apron, an extension of their labia, a pelvis that resembled the ape's and a sensuality unseen among humans (Schiebinger, 1993 p.171). The African was also branded with pseudo-scientific appellations like *Homo troglodytes*.

The Darwinian theory of biological evolution translated into sociology proved excellent fuel for racists. As Lindqvist describes it in *Exterminate the Brutes*, European raciology in both manifest and latent forms granted little right for the savage other to exist (Lindqvist, 1997, pp.97-120). According to the racist interpretations of evolutionary theory, only the fittest races, by implication the Caucasians, had the right to survival. The usurpation of the space occupied by other races was only corollary to what happened in the larger animal kingdom where the less-developed species made way for more developed and better adapted organisms. This was clearly the message by Scottish anthropologist Robert Knox:

Their [the dark races'] future history must then resemble the past. The Saxon race will never tolerate them- never amalgamate-never be at peace [...] blame them not [...] I pretend not even to censure [...] Now the fate of all these nations must be the same; it results from the nature of their populations, and nothing can arrest it...they will soon form mere natural curiosities: already there is the skin of one stuffed in England; another in Paris [...] In a word, they are fast disappearing from the face of the earth.

(Lindqvist, 1997, p.127)

This perverse evolutionary logic called for an expansion of the European space at the expense of the outsiders less fit to survive. Charles Darwin himself lent support to this when he observed:

At some future period, not very distant as measured in centuries, the civilized races of man will almost certainly exterminate and replace throughout the world the savage races (Lindqvist 107)

The consequence of this view of humanity as divided into infra and supra camps has been catastrophic. Its most powerful expressions were the institutions of colonialism and slavery. The white man's burden of 'civilizing' the barbarian, took the concomitant forms of 'epistemic violence' and physical extermination. The sheer cost in terms of human lives was staggering:

Ten million African Americans perished in middle passage, on reasonable estimates. Death en passant to a life more often than not worse than death. Starved worked, beaten, suffocated, beaten, suffocated diseased to death. Numbers as large again prematurely killed in new world slavery. Systematically, brutally worked, beaten, saddened or maddened into death. Seven million aboriginal inhabitants of Australia wiped out by European colonization and modernization. A lynching every other day in the southern United States throughout the 1890s. Ten million battered into death by Leopald's vicious regime in the Congo between 1885 and 1908, half of the population of the area castrated and delimbed and diseased in a brutality matched only by the six million Jews and nameless others gassed and shot and tortured to death by Aryan superiority in the 1940's for which the Congolese experience served as a precursive laboratory. Each death exceptional in transnational process of violence and violation all too sadly not. One million people murdered in 1994 in Rwanda in the ethnoracial name of not belonging. In one month. More than seventy per cent of the more than two million people rotting in US prisons...people of color (Goldberg, 2009 p. vi).

One of the familiar tropes in the colonial accounts was the image of the cannibal. Africans and Indians were given to extreme forms of cannibalism; according to John S. Mandeville, there were even human farms where cannibals fattened their victims before consuming them (Sardar, 2005, p.27). Thus cannibalized and dehumanized, the barbaric other was portrayed to be eminently 'killable.' His subhuman status was underlined by the fact that he was incapable of logical speech. The African, of course, could not speak European languages: if s/he couldn't speak 'our' language, it simply meant s/he was incapable of speech and logical thinking. The name 'Hottentot' itself used to describe the Khoikhoi people in South Africa is derived from the Dutch expression 'hotteren-totteren' which means 'stammer' or 'stutter' (Heath 2005). In *Tempest*, Prospero, portrayed by Shakespeare to represent the very epitome of European virtues, is positively boastful when he talks of his attempts to civilize Caliban by teaching him language. The only use of the language for Caliban was however he could curse his master in the new language: a little solace when we realize that the prize he had to pray for this was his freedom (Act I Scene II, Lines 355-70).

The wounds of the colonial experience have not healed and will continue festering for a long time. Its legacy extends to the post-colonial landscape with its marked asymmetry between the First and the Third World; in the poverty, starvation, deprivation and disease-infested map that constitute the geopolitics of Asia and Africa; and in a chain of global institutions from the IMF to the World Bank, aimed at perpetuating this unjust asymmetry.

Caste, a Form of Racism?

Caste was largely an Indian phenomenon. According to Thapar, the Aryans who invaded the Indus valley were divided into three classes, namely the aristocracy, the priests and the common people (Thapar 37.) This was merely a form of social organization and there was sufficient room for intra and inter class mobility. The rigidifying of castes occurred after the subjugation of the Indus people, following perceived fears of miscegenation:

The first step in the direction of caste (as distinct from class) was taken when the Aryans treated the Dasas as beyond the social pale, probably owing to a fear of Dasas and the even greater fear that assimilation with them would lead to a loss of Aryan identity. Ostensibly the distinction was largely that of colour, the Dasas being darker and of an alien culture. The Sanskrit word for *varna* actually means colour. The colour element of caste was emphasized throughout this period and was eventually to become deep-rooted in the North Indian Aryan culture. Initially therefore the division was between Aryans and non- Aryans. Aryans were the *dvija* or twice born castes (the first being physical birth and the second the initiation into caste status) consisting of the *Kshatriyas* (warriors and aristocracy), the *Brahmans* (priests) and the *Vaishyas* (Cultivators); the fourth caste, the *shudras* were the Dasas and those of mixed *Aryan-Dasa* origin (Thapar: 37-8).

The reification of caste system owes to the colonization and subjugation of the local inhabitants by Aryan invaders is clear from this. This is also the view of other noted historians like Kosambi, who considers the *Dasa* and the *shudra* castes to be the descendents of the vanquished indigenous peoples (Kosambi, 1964: 50). Cox's view is different. He says there are no visible physical markers that distinguish one caste from another in terms of race (Cox, 1948: 3-108). This seems to be a view from outside where all the Indians fit into a stereotype. However, as Thapar herself says the identifying of Shudras as both the indigenous conquered and those of mixed race at the beginning itself had caused a blurring of racial boundaries. In India, Brahmins, even those belonging to the Dravidian states like Tamil Nadu are considered to have Aryan blood. As Rajanayagam notes, Dravidians in Tamil Nadu view Tamil speaking Brahmin Aiyars as Aryans and refuse to assimilate them in the local culture (Rajanayagam, 1997:134).

However, racial and caste boundaries were not strictly patrolled throughout history. As racial purity is itself a myth, we cannot imagine caste and race to have had an exact fit and the possibilities of many conquered indigenous populations later claiming or being granted the status of higher castes cannot be dismissed (Cox, 1948:8). Since the focus of this essay is the dehumanizing effect of caste and race and not the origin of the two phenomena,

it will be sufficient to summarize thus: caste divisions do not neatly fit into racial patterns; but the likelihood of the Aryan class formation taking a racist hue in their subsequent contact with the subjugated peoples, as pointed to by Thapar and Kosambi, cannot be denied.

The question whether caste was as inhuman as the race is one of degree and not essence. Both were equally inhuman with one or the other taking more monstrous manifestations at specific junctures. While race conflicts led to massive deaths, caste violence was more one-sided (i.e. we don't have many instances of the kind of all-out wars that took place between European conquerors and the Africans, for example) and was used over the ages as a technique of ensuring obedience and compliance rather than physical elimination. But physical torture and elimination were not entirely out of question in the caste equation and was employed when required.

Casteism relied on a hierarchical arrangement of humans into four distinct *varnas* or colors, viz. Brahmins (the priests and scholars), Kshatriyas (the royalty and the military), Vaishyas (the tradesmen) and Shudras (the servants). According to Hindu mythology, Manu created the Brahmins from his mouth, soldiers from his chest, Vaishyas from his thighs and Shudras from his feet (Thapar, 39-40). While the first two classes enjoyed virtual supremacy, the lot of the Vaishyas was not altogether bad. Being tradesman, they enjoyed financial security and wielded considerable power in the society. It was the lowest ranked Shudras, who were worst affected. They had to till the soil, toil for their lords, and enjoyed no right to land. To use Bourdieu's terms, they were completely denied all forms of capital whether symbolic, cultural or economic (Bourdieu, 1984). Their very visibility was defiling for other castes and were excluded from the public sphere: in other words, they were rendered invisible. As Gandhi remarked, it took a more sinister form than apartheid:

The laws of Cochin State are in a way much worse than those of South Africa...for an untouchable in Cochin is deprived of more human rights than the coloured man in South Africa. There is no such thing as unapproachability or invisibility in South Africa. I have no desire to single out Cochin for its disgraceful treatment of untouchables; for it is still unfortunately common to Hindus all over India, more or less (Cox 429).

The history of caste and untouchability is not as much drenched in blood as the history of race; but it was frequently punctuated by instances of violence where the helpless underdogs were molested, raped or killed with impunity by upper classes. Kamala Das, in her poem 'Honour,' refers to high-caste Nairs routinely beating and torturing their dependents belonging to the lower castes. Many a time corpses of women made pregnant by their masters

were found in village wells (Das, 1995: 56-7). Incidents like this were a norm rather than exception in caste violence.

But unlike race conflicts that took place in colonial settings, caste conflict was largely one-sided because caste operated at a different and probably more effective discursive level in which object populations were fully disempowered and incapacitated to protest. In this regard they were more like the slaves in the plantation who found themselves emotionally and physically displaced in alien settings. Just as the colonizers in the Caribbean islands took care to make the plantation labor a hetero-linguistic collection of Africans in order to forestall any organized rebellion, the upper castes split up the lower castes into a whole lot of vertical and horizontal divisions that precluded the possibility of a united revolt.

Here there was no need for mass extermination for *Lebensraum* the way imperialists practiced it in the colonies. The lower-castes offered the upper-castes the labor needed for their comforts. The farmland and the bulk of the produce belonged to higher castes but the labor was provided by lower castes. Though they were untouchables and had to hence stay away from the gaze of the 'touchables' (an expression used by Arundhati Roy to lampoon the touchable-untouchable divide, (Roy, 1997:13)), the fruit and grains they produced were not stigmatized (Nisar and Kandaswamy: 24). The caste system thus offered higher castes everything they wanted: abundant livelihood, ample leisure and an inexhaustible supply of labor; but it took away from lower castes their essential identity as humans. This was the worst form of treatment meted out to a proletariat in Marxist terms.

While the epistemic violence practiced on 'inferior' races took the form of pseudo scientific discourses, in the case of caste it was wrapped in an overarching religious discourse. While 'superior' races monopolized the 'scientific' discourse, the religious discourse was controlled by the scholarly Brahmins. Though Kshatriyas, and Vaishyas too were allowed to learn Sanskrit, the language of Scriptures, Brahmins alone had the privilege of teaching and interpreting them. Lower castes could neither teach nor learn them: in fact the injunction was to cut off his/her tongue if he/she happened to recite Veda (<http://www.raceandhistory.com/historicalviews/varna.htm>).

In places like Kerala, lower castes were made to observe elaborate dress and behavioral codes: their women could not cover their breasts; men could not grow mustache and were banned from venturing out during noontime when their large shadows could defile the Caste Hindus. Women of the lower tribes were supposed to carry a broom with them, so that they could sweep the roads they polluted by their presence. The untouchables were similarly barred from using roads meant for bullock carts. The rigorous observance of these rules

made life hell for the untouchables. It was in this context that Swami Vivekananda remarked Kerala to be a 'lunatic asylum' (Nisar and Kandaswamy, 2007:18).

Conflict versus Consensus?

According to Cox, race relationships were marked with conflict unlike caste relations that were based on consensus (Cox, 1948: 435-36). This is true only to an extent. Caste, embedded as it was in a religious narrative, succeeded to a great extent in forestalling rebellion. In sociological terms, it was an ossified structure that left little room for agency of those consigned to the lower strata. Empowerment in all forms was denied for them: with no cultural, symbolic or economic capital they had no means to express protest: in fact, the majority of them believed it to be their fate, as ordained by God, and willfully resigned to their lot. However, it will be wrong to assume that caste was always based on consensus, as Cox implies. In spite of all the repressive machinery employed by the Brahminic class, there were instances of vehement opposition and rebellion by the downtrodden classes.

One of the earliest protest movements was led by Ayyankali in Kerala (Nisar &Kandaswami, 2007). Ayyankali belonged to the untouchable class of Pulayars, who were not allowed to ride bullock carts or use highways. During the latter half of the nineteenth century, Ayyankali organized the movement called *Sadhu Jana Paripalana Sangham* (Society for the Maintenance of the Destitute). The organization's aims went beyond mere maintenance; it was a proactive organization that defied the prescriptions of caste hierarchy. Ayyankali and his men rode bullock carts on highways proscribed for untouchables and fought the upper caste men when they tried to prevent them. He organized untouchable women and exhorted them to wear blouses which was forbidden. Similarly he urged them to give up wearing iron ear rings that marked them off as 'untouchable.'

These symbolic steps were revolutionary in the nineteenth century context and sparked off many riots; during riots caste-Hindus chopped off the ears of some untouchable women for refusing to wear the iron ornaments and taking to clothes covering their breasts. Ayyankali's activism saw him win many concessions from the Government including educational rights for untouchables. But when untouchable children started going to school, (some of them, aged sixteen and seventeen, were no longer children when they joined school) the caste Hindus kicked up a storm and boycotted the classes. Ayyankali, however, did not succumb to the pressures and went on pressurizing for greater rights for the untouchables (Nisar & Kandaswamy 88-89).

The struggle led by Dr. Ambedkar in the twentieth century was on a much larger scale and had a pan-Indian perspective. Being a western educated Indian, belonging to the untouchable class of Mahars, Ambedkar organized Dalits from different parts of the country and made a unified case for affirmative action (Moon, 2001:107-17). As the architect of the Indian constitution, he made provisions for reservations for Dalits in government jobs and legislative assemblies. These were contentious moves that led to protests from the upper castes and, in many instances, led to caste and religious riots.

Caste & Race: A Narrative of Similarities.

In this section, I shall make a brief overview of four first-person narratives to illustrate the similarities between the experiences of race and caste. The books I examine are the autobiographies of Frederick Douglass (1892), and Malcolm X (Haley, 1964) from the race angle and that of Omprakash Valmiki (2003) and Vasant Moon (2001) from the caste angle. The dominant tropes of these autobiographies are illustrative of the similarities between race and caste as institutions of dehumanization.

Both race and caste were institutionalized using mechanisms of exclusion, exploitation, systematic disempowerment, material deprivation and in some cases brute aggression. Frederick Douglass and Malcolm X represent two distinct phases of the black struggle in America. Frederick Douglass was born a slave; he didn't know who his father was and met his mother only on a couple of occasions (Douglass, 1962:28-9). He was brought up by his grandmother from whom he was separated in tragic circumstances. One of the most telling instances in his biography is the way his master reacted when his mistress tried to teach him letters. His master was angry and warned his wife that teaching the Negro letters will be the first step toward making him 'unfit to be a slave' (Douglass79).

In the other two narratives (this aspect is not so evident in Moon) too, we notice how the dominant race/caste tried to prevent the downtrodden from getting the benefit of education/literacy. This had to do with a basic ontological uncertainty. The dominant powers knew the Other was capable of being like her/himself provided s/he was given access to resources. Hence, these zealous attempts to deny him/her the basic resource: knowledge. Douglass in his narrative says how slaves had no idea about Calendar month or year; didn't know their birthdays or who their fathers were. All their masters wanted them know was their mothers, and hence they too, were slaves (Douglass, 1948: 27-9). This shows how race was used as an instrument of exploitation, (by using sexually exploiting African women; using them as machines to produce more children and thus more labor and not allowing them to take care of their babies or be with them), disempowerment and exclusion (by not allowing the blacks to

learn or have the benefit of education). Douglass's account of early life is littered with instances of brutal physical torture and deprivation that slaves had to put up with. It is a tale of hunger, starvation and inhumanity.

Malcolm X belonged to a later phase when Blacks were no longer slaves. But they were only legally free; it was the time when the terror of the Ku Klux Klan was at its peak. Malcolm's father Earl Little was killed by white terrorists; on more than one occasion his house was torched by Klan and the police offered his family little protection. The insurance firm claimed his father's death to be a suicide and refused to pay the family its dues. He and his brothers had to starve for days and survived on unwholesome food. At school, his white teachers were not sympathetic and said it was better for him to be a carpenter than trying to be a lawyer. The Welfare agents of the state took him off from his mother whom they declared insane, and sent him to a white foster family; his mother was sent to a lunatic asylum. As he remarks, his family was completely destroyed by the state (Hailey 1-46).

It is the same motifs of exclusion, exploitation, deprivation and disempowerment that dominate the writings of Valmiki and Moon. Valmiki's autobiography is titled *Joothan*, a word that means 'leftover.' Being born into an untouchable community, his family had to feed on the leftovers of the upper castes; most of the time they went starving. When Valmiki went to school, it was the same experience that Douglass and Malcolm X had to face, probably more bitter. His teachers didn't understand why an untouchable was attending classes; they often asked him to sweep classrooms and the compound; forced him to all kinds of physical labor. Still, he was brutally punished when he failed produce the correct answers. His upper-caste class-mates bullied and ridiculed him. The upper classes feared education would make untouchables rebellious. Though he was ranked first in the class, he was not allowed to take part in the extra-curricular activities. Like his two black counterparts, his life is a story of success against formidable odds (Valmik, 2003:1-50).

The autobiography of Moon is less 'tragic' compared with the other three. He lived in comparatively better circumstances and his Gandhian teachers were sympathetic to him. But his Mahar caste too had to put up with material and emotional deprivation and social boycott. Carrying and disposing off carriages was the task traditionally ascribed to the Mahars. Once when the community refused to discharge this caste-duty, they were boycotted and threatened. He and his siblings led a miserable life of deprivation and had put up themselves in the cramped room of a generous neighbor. He mentions how he went to school in coarse clothes with an empty stomach (Moon, 2002:1-39).

Poverty and starvation are overriding motifs of these autobiographies. Poverty and hunger totally deprive one of his/her sense of personal dignity and

self-respect. It was hunger that was used by both caste and race hierarchy to maintain their regime; Once the 'underdog' was kept in a state of perpetual poverty and hunger, his/her disempowerment and social exclusion could be achieved with the use of minimal force. MJ Akbar observes:

When a generation or two dies of the ultimate denial, delirious for a handful of rice, while a chorus of spiders fattens indifferently in the background, physical and mental slavery becomes an easy option to the dying (Akbar, 1988, p. 87)

Conclusion.

The above analysis shows how race and caste are similar in most respects. Viewed in this light Cox's argument that they are two entirely separate phenomena with incommensurable structures does not seem tenable (Cox, 1948, pp. 428-53). Similarly, his theorizing of caste as one based on consensus is flawed. The history of caste is actually marked by several instances of struggle. This narrative of race and caste as instruments of brutal deprivation and inhuman exclusion extends to the present world. This is a point well-illustrated by Goldberg (2009) and Akbar (1988). In short, the Black and the Untouchable are kinsmen separated by oceans but united by a shared fate.

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Popular Cinema and the (Re)construction of the Left Popular in Kerala

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Abstract

Looking at the re-efflorescence of what may be called red films—films that thematize and celebrate the spirit of communism— and the visible presence of Left-leaning film makers in the Malayalam film industry, in this paper I argue how popular cinema has emerged as a key site in the reconstruction of a Malayali national-popular. Despite the apparent distrust the Left in Kerala shows towards popular cinema, the domain of the popular has played a significant role in the construction of a national-popular centred on the linguistic identity in Kerala. While Marxism shares a historical affinity with popular forms such as romance, opera, melodrama, etc., the Left in Kerala shows a renewed interest in the field of culture as a result of the rise of Hindu nationalism in the country which conflates culture with religion. Apart from the “cultural interventions” of the right-wing, the Left also faces serious challenges from the part of various social movements centred on the question of caste, gender and religious identities. The rise of social movements in the 1990s “brought to the fore the questions of caste and gender that were submerged under the earlier socio-cultural consensus generated by the hegemonic Malayali national popular shaped by the communists” (Devika 2013). In such a context, I argue, the domain of popular registers questions related to gender, caste, etc. which the political Left has often failed to adequately theorize. I argue that the red films and the left-leaning filmmakers undertake the construction of a new “Left popular” in the state which contributes to the imagining of a new “people”. Given the distinct nature of the relationship between cinema and Left politics in the state, this paper explores the transactions between the popular domain and popular politics in the state in the contemporary times.

Keywords

Marxism, National-popular, Left Popular, Kerala, Popular Cinema, Linguistic Identity

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Introduction:

Taking two distinct, but related recent developments in the field of politics and culture in Kerala as the starting point, in this paper I offer a brief account of the renewed interest from the part of the Left in Kerala in the field of culture and argue that the domain of the popular, particularly popular cinema, has emerged as a key site of the reconstruction of the Left national-popular in Kerala. The two developments that I take as the starting point in this paper are the challenges that the parliamentary Left in Kerala faces with the rise of BJP as a non-negligible presence in the state and the re-emergence of what may be called red films in Malayalam.

In May 2016, the Left Democratic Front, led by the Communist Party of India (Marxist) assumed power in Kerala after a gap of five years, following which intense tension has developed between the Left (CPI(M) in particular) and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). This tension may be seen as a manifestation of the conflicts between the pan-Indian nationalism espoused by “national” parties like the BJP and the Indian National Congress, and the Left in Kerala which arguably developed a different conception of belongingness that goes beyond the binaries of “national” versus “anti-national” and “national” versus “regional”. In 2017, the year that marks the 60th anniversary of the first democratically elected Communist Government in the world, one witnessed a sudden re-efflorescence of what may be called the “red films” in Kerala—films that thematize and celebrate the spirit of Communism, with considerable success at the box office.

The Left project in Kerala, through a politics primarily centred on the class question, was successful in constructing a national-popular will in the mid-twentieth century. The national-popular will, which may be called the Malayali national-popular, centred around the question of a Malayali linguistic identity, has helped the Left to construct and maintain hegemony in the region. Popular cinema, especially the political melodramas of Left-wing filmmakers such as Thoppil Bhasi, P. Bhasakaran, etc. played a significant role in the crystallization of the nascent linguistic national identity in the 1950s and 1960s. However, by the late 1980s, there has been a strong criticism from various corners on the celebrated Kerala Model of Development, which is considered as the cornerstone of the developmental modernity that the Left is credited with in studies on Kerala. The national-popular collective will that the Left project in Kerala constructed was one that had the potential to transcend traditional identities. The national-popular conception of language communities ensured the potential participation of the people in the political process whereas politics at the national level was characterized by a split between the elite and subaltern domains of politics, owing to the structural bilingualism of the Indian nation-state. The land reform, considered as one of the major achievements of the Left

in Kerala which disrupted social relations to an extent, was part of the programme of economic reform which Gramsci sees as a prerequisite for cultural reform. The land reform measures were intended to improve the conditions of the agricultural labourers and the lower level peasantry. The limits of the land reform in Kerala have, however, come to the discussion in the recent past with the rise of new social movements in Kerala. The limits of land reform²¹ in Kerala have been pointed out by many recent studies.²² It may, however, be pointed out that inadequate theorization of newer developments related to the environment²³, service sector and the democratic assertions of community- or gender-based political groups has been one of the major shortcomings of the Left in the contemporary period. While one may see some developments on this front, especially at the policy level, it is important to ask the question whether the policy is translated into actual political practices. What is of interest to us here is to explore how the domain of the popular registers the democratic aspirations of various social groups that have been outside of the electoral Left's agenda. In this paper, we will look at how the domain of the popular, especially cinema, responds to the changes in the structure of feeling. Following J. Devika's argument that the changes that the Malayali public sphere, especially the literary public sphere, the site of cultural production that sustained the Malayali national popular, underwent in the 1980s and 1990s made contemporary Dalit assertions possible (Devika 2013), one may argue that it is the changes in the domain of the popular, especially cinema, that facilitate addressing the questions that are outside the logic of the electoral democracy of the orthodox Left. Keeping these in mind, my attempt is to track the Communist desire and the Communist commitment that shape the explorations of some of these new developments from filmmakers with apparent Left leanings. I also explore how Marxism or a Left common sense still continues to provide the horizon for at least a section of the people of Kerala. This will be done through offering an account of the "conditions of reception" that the Left has facilitated in Kerala.

²¹ J. Devika (2013), for instance, points out how land figures as a prominent issue in contemporary Dalit assertions. She also points out that it is a crisis in the Malayali national-popular, shaped by the Communists in Kerala that "brought to the fore the questions of caste and gender that were submerged under the earlier socio-cultural consensus generated by the hegemonic Malayali national popular shaped by the communists" (Devika 2013:1).

²² In a recent article C.R. Yadu points out that despite the land reforms, "Dalits and Adivasis stand excluded from the wider benefits of land reform" (Yadu 2015:33).

²³ Even though "sustainable development" was one of the major slogans of the Left front in the 2016 Assembly elections in Kerala, the new government invited criticism from environmentalists for ignoring environmental concerns while undertaking development projects. The government's decision to go ahead with the Athirappilly hydroelectric project, for instance, invited criticism from environmentalists.

Parliamentary Left and Questions of Culture in Contemporary Kerala

While culture has been an important aspect of the Left mobilization in Kerala, arguments have been made about how culture was a mere appendage to party politics in the Left project. Such an understanding of Left's engagement with culture fails to take into account the autonomous nature of cultural politics where culture itself is a site of resistance. In contemporary times when there is perceived erosion in the Left national-popular, there has been a renewed interest in the field of culture from the part of the parliamentary Left in Kerala. The Kerala Left's renewed interest in the field of culture may be explained by the emergence of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) as a non-negligible presence in Kerala's political scene. As K.N. Panikkar points out, it is through active cultural interventions that the Hindu nationalism represented by the BJP is making advances across India. Panikkar points out that the rise of Hindutva "owes much to the slow transformation in social consciousness as a result of sustained interventions in the cultural and religious life of the people. The decline of the Congress (I) and the inability of the Left to emerge as an alternative provided the space for Hindutva to imbue such interventions with a political content (Panikkar 2004).

It is evident that BJP in Kerala is attempting an active intervention in the cultural life of the people. It is interesting to observe the recent debates around the Onam festival in Kerala. Amit Shah, the national president of BJP tweeted on the occasion of Onam in 2016, wishing the people of "Vamana Jayanthi"²⁴, thus projecting Onam as an occasion of the birth of Vamana and not the homecoming of Mahabali, who was believed to have ruled Kerala before Vamana sent him to the nether world. What is interesting to note is that Onam has played a significant role in the imagination of an egalitarian society in Kerala. Countering the Parasurama myth of Kerala's origin, the Left project turned to a more egalitarian myth of King Mahabali during whose reign Kerala was believed to be prosperous and egalitarian. In his book *Onnekaal Kudi Malayalikal* (One and a half Crore Malayalees), written in 1946 which put forward the idea of a linguistic state for Malayalees, E.M.S. Namboodiripad wrote: "a new Kerala, in which equality and freedom reign, in which poverty and unemployment will be unknown, will begin to emerge...*Mavelinadu* (the land of Mahabali), which exists only in our imagination, will become a reality in the twentieth century" (qtd in Devika 2010). Thus the BJP's attempt at conflating the cultural with the religious goes in tandem with its cultural nationalism. It is in this context that conflicts between two types of nationalisms—the hyper nationalism or cultural nationalism of BJP and the

²⁴ <https://thewire.in/65809/anger-kerala-amit-shah-turns-onam-brahminical-vamana-jayanti/>

nationalism of the Left—becomes more intense. The Left's recent attempts to engage with culture should be seen in this context.

In an article on the 4th International Congress on Kerala Studies organized by the AKG Centre for Research and Studies on behalf of CPI (M), in the run up to the assembly elections in 2016, Thomas Isaac writes:

One of the significant changes that the fourth edition of Kerala Padana Congress envisages in the development of Kerala is the importance that is given to the field of culture. This will give a new dimension to Left's developmental agenda. Our perspective is that there should be at least a three-fold increase in the project outlay for culture.... At present, not even half a per cent of the total budget amount is devoted to the sphere of culture. This is a fundamental flaw....We need a Kerala where the common man can access and enjoy good literature, drawings, cinema, drama, etc. (Isaac 2016).

In his speech at the presentation of the first budget of the Left government that came to power in 2016, Thomas Isaac, invoking Sree Narayana Guru, a prominent social reform figure, talks about the need to revive public institutions like libraries in the state.²⁵ One may also notice that there are recommendations in the budget to establish Kerala Renaissance Cultural Complexes which will consist of "Opera House, Cinema Theatre, Music Hall, Art Gallery, Book shops, Seminar halls for debates, Workshops for sculptors and artisans, Drama rehearsal facility and short term residential facilities for artists and writers". These cultural complexes are named after social reform and renaissance figures like Sree Narayana Guru, Ayyankali, P. Krishna Pillai, Sahodaran Ayyappan, V.T. Bhattathirippadu, etc. It may be noted that the state has played an important role in the Left's project of attempting the establishment of radical democracy in the state. The attempt by the Left government to revive the public spheres and to reclaim the legacy of renaissance and social reform may be seen as part of its attempt to offer a different vision of social relations at a time when Hindu nationalism is on the rise. The Left government's intervention in the field of film exhibition with the decision to set up 100 government-owned theatres in Kerala, apart from creating a permanent film festival complex for the International Film Festival of Kerala (IFFK), may be seen as another attempt by the Left to intervene in the domain of the popular with more vigour. This new interest in the domain of the popular is evident in

²⁵ In his budget speech, Thomas Isaac points out: "There should be literary organisations and reading rooms in each locality' – so said Sree Narayana Guru in 1910. We have advanced far ahead in this regard. Now these secular spaces are getting contracted. These are to be rejuvenated. The grant for libraries is enhanced by 50 % to Rs.33 crore".

the Kerala Chief Minister's speech at the presentation of the Kerala State Film Awards for the year 2015, held in Palakkad in October 2016. In his speech, the chief minister pointed out the need to re-link popular arts like cinema with people. He pointed out how the Kerala Chalachithra Academy conducted a touring film festival in the Adivasi villages of Attappady in Palakkad in the run up to the award presentation ceremony. It was also pointed out that for the first time, the presentation of Kerala State Film Awards was held outside the state capital, that too with popular participation. In fact, the "popular" nature of the presentation of film awards received criticism from certain corners for replicating the models of award presentation ceremonies hosted by television channels. My point here is that the Left in Kerala is showing a renewed interest in culture, especially popular culture. The perceived resurgence of a Left popular, in the form of red films and films that are informed by an analytical commitment to Marxism maybe seen in this context.

It may be argued that one of the most important contributions of the Left in Kerala has been the construction of a Left public sphere. The Left public sphere emerged as a result of the hegemony that the Left had in all spheres of life in the mid-twentieth century. B. Rajeevan, a prominent social commentator, talks about the need to reconstruct a Left public sphere which should be a "common" sphere (Rajeevan 2015). The library movement, film society movements, etc. have participated in this construction of a Left public sphere. This public sphere has, in turn, facilitated the conditions for what Sudipta Kaviraj would call the "dominance of left sensibility in reception"²⁶ of literary and cultural productions. As a result of the social reform movements and democratization of society, sites like tea shops emerge as modern, secular and egalitarian spaces. C.S. Venkiteswaran (2013) has pointed out the importance given to tea shops in early Malayalam films. I will come back to a discussion of how public spaces like libraries, reading room, and even tea shops play an important role in the structuring of the everyday life of a Malayali when I attempt a reading of the film *CIA-Comrade in America* as a film that explores the worlds of the Malayali.

In the first part of this paper, I have hinted at the emergence of a new set of "red films": *Oru Mexican Aparatha* directed by Tom Emmatty; *Sakhavu*, directed by Sidharth Shiva; and *CIA-Comrade in America*, directed by Amal Neerad. A detailed analysis of these three films is beyond the scope of this paper. However, it is important to ask what explains the sudden interest in Communism that filmmakers are showing. It may be noted that in all these three films, it is the young actors of Malayalam cinema who play the role of the hero. It may be argued that *Oru Mexican Aparatha* raised the expectation of people

²⁶ Talk delivered at the English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad.

through the song “*Emanmare Emanmare*”²⁷ which talks about the right of the individual to live the way they like. The song asserts that “we will grow our beard, moustache, and hair as much as we want”. This attains significance in the context of protests like “Kiss of Love” where personal autonomy of the individual is stressed. Protests like Kiss of Love also bring the question of love as public affection rather than relegating it to the private sphere. It may be argued that the film is trying to integrate its narrative of campus politics with the anger among the youth against the increasing repression from the part of the state. The film *Sakhavu* may be seen as yet another “good Communist” versus “bad Communist film”. We will discuss the film *CIA-Comrade in America* in more detail now as the film is directed by someone who was affiliated with the Communist movement and it helps us elaborate the idea of the horizon of universality that we have touched upon.

In this section, my attempt is to read the film *CIA-Comrade in America* as a film that captures the structure of feelings that the Communist desire produces in the life-worlds of the Malayali. It is through the structures and institutions that Left mobilizations have constructed and nurtured, that the Left continues to play a significant role in the everyday life of the people of Kerala. In his 2013 film *Iyobinte Pusthakam* (The Book of Job), Amal Neerad attempts to trace the history of the Communist movement in Munnar till 1957, with the Communist Party coming to power in Kerala. The film’s narrative stretches from the Munnar of 1900 when white men migrated to the area to set up tea plantations. The film’s recollection, through the memory of a veteran Communist leader (played by T.G. Ravi), starts in 1976 when a national Emergency was in effect. The veteran Communist leader’s recollection ends as police arrive to arrest him. The film talks about how the brown sahib replaces the white sahib after the transfer of power from the British. The film tries to bring the experiences of the subaltern, by integrating him in the struggle against the domination of what can be called the post-colonial national elite. It may be noted that it is Alosy, a Communist, who integrates the subaltern figure (played by Vinayakan) to the struggle. The film allegorizes the transfer of power from the white sahibs to the brown sahibs and the inequalities that were perpetuated. The film ends with the narrative voice of the veteran Communist leader, who says, “tolerant people like Alosy, who have travelled and seen the world will change this land. Life will be much more youthful and lovely then”. *CIA* may be seen as a continuation of *Iyobinte Pusthakam*, in its exploration of the Communist desire.

Talking about the motive behind making a film like *CIA*, Amal Neerad states that “jibes in our films about the collapse of the USSR and socialist Poland used to hit home and it did hurt. *CIA* is my way of paying homage to

²⁷ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7KvyJ7cJgNU>

many youngsters who still think red is the colour of idealism” (Nagarajan 2017). The film *CIA-Comrade in America* tells the story of Aji Mathew, a young Communist, who, I argue, may not be seen as tied to any particular political formation even though there are suggestions within the film that he was a local level leader of the student wing of CPI (M). What is important for our argument, however, is that for Aji Mathew, it is not the party as much as the Communist ideal and institutions like libraries that act as a driving force. It is primarily in Aji Mathew’s journey to the U.S., in search of his girlfriend who is getting married to someone else at the insistence of her parents, that we can see how Marxism plays a significant role in structuring his everyday life. The journey is undertaken through Nicaragua, Honduras and Mexico, as getting a visa to the U.S. was not going to be easy. The film explores the meaninglessness of borders as well as the refugee crisis through the various people who the hero befriends on their collective journey to reach the U.S. Among the group is a Tamilian from Sri Lanka, a Pakistani, a young Malayali woman, etc. Though Aji Mathew finally reaches the U.S. he learns that his girlfriend never believed that he would go to the U.S. for her. The film ends with Aji Mathew asking his friends back home, who are Communist activists, to keep a desk and bench ready for him at the local tea shop.

My intention here is to treat Aji Mathew as a common Malayali youth with a Communist leaning and to explore how Communism provides a horizon of universality for him. This will be done through looking at few particular instances from the film. In his discussion of the film *Arabikatha* (Arabian Tale, dir. Lal Jose, 2007), Ratheesh Radhakrishnan points out how “The Communist Party in Kerala has played a significant role in structuring the everyday life of the Malayalee even though it was not in power for long stretches of time” (Radhakrishnan 2016:699). Radhakrishnan, drawing on the previous writings of Dilip Menon and Robin Jeffrey, points out how institutions like tea shops and reading rooms, as modern public spheres, have played a significant role in this structuring of the everyday life of a Malayali. I argue that for the young Communist Aji Mathew, the E.M.S. Memorial Library and the Azad tea shop are two important locations from where he can access the world. We see him going to the library one night, getting drunk, as he is sad about his girlfriend leaving to the U.S. without informing him. At the library, he engages in an imaginary conversation with Marx, Che Guevara, Lenin and Stalin (who is, interestingly, walking away from the library quarreling with the other three). When Aji Mathew informs the local leader of the Communist party that he is leaving for the U.S., he writes a letter in Malayalam on the letter head of the party, saying that “This comrade is our comrade. Please do the needful”. In fact, it is this letter that serves as a letter of introduction for him on reaching Nicaragua. There are many instances in the film where the language provided by Marxism providing him a universal intelligibility. the horizon of universality

provided by the Left has been constitutive of the subjectivity of a “young Communist” like Aji Mathew in the film.

I argue that the domain of popular allows Left-leaning artists an avenue for addressing questions of exclusions that the political Left has failed to address so far. The emergence of films like *Kammattippadam* by Rajeev Ravi, a left-leaning film maker should be understood in this context. *Kammattippadam* tells the story of those who are pushed to the margins when Kochi emerged as a major industrial city. the film, informed by Communism as an analytical commitment, explores questions of caste and land redistribution, issues that the parliamentary Left has often been accused of ignoring. This attains even more importance in the context of the rise of Dalit popular and Muslim popular in Kerala.

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