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Editorial

Complexities of human mind is something that is yet to be resolved by the most advanced science of the world. Human mind is an entangled web of thoughts and with the passage of every minute it becomes more and more difficult to untangle this web as the strands of new thoughts keep on forming. As known to many writing is a way of expressing these unspoken thoughts.

Research and Development remains as the strength of any society and culture. Ancient time onwards human being has been applying the knowledge gained through experience and experiment for the advancement of society and surrounding conditions. Every phenomenon in the universe has a reason behind it and the aim of research is to understand and evaluate what is happening. The purpose of the original research is to produce new knowledge rather than to present the existing knowledge in a new form.

During this pandemic year Baselius Researcher, a biannual publication of interdisciplinary research, provides a platform for academicians and research students to express their views and ideas to the society which contribute towards creating a better world.

Regards,

Editors

Dr. Jyothimol P (Vice Principal)

Dr. Jalaja J. Malayan

5-12-2020

From the Principal's Desk

Human mind is characterised by the quest for knowledge. This yearning is the mould for human development. Through search and research, he attempts to answer questions that perplex him. Research activity provides him with a lot of questions and answers which again open up new vistas of knowledge.

The dynamics of higher education rests mainly on research. Original thoughts and enquiry are the prerequisites of research. Technology should not carry us unethically to plagiarism and plunder.

Baselius College is releasing 1st issue of the 21st volume of its research journal *Baselius Researcher* in December 2020.. The lock down period following the Covid-19 pandemic has allowed us to keep in touch with our creative side.

I sincerely hope that *Baselius Researcher* would provide an ethical platform for development of the spirit of enquiry and the emergence of unique thoughts in the field of Humanities, Commerce and Science.

All the best wishes to *Baselius Researcher* and all those who have worked behind it.

5-12-2020

Dr. Biju Thomas
Principal
Baselius College, Kottayam

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Monstrous Feminine and Female Abject: A Reflection on Caste, Class and Gender Transgressions in Select Malayalam Horror Films

Dr. Kavitha Gopalakrishnan

ABSTRACT

Horror is a genre designed solely to upset viewers and it undermines commonly accepted notion of reality. The appeal and depiction of female monsters in horror films is interesting and this paper aims to examine the depiction of the monstrous feminine in two horror films, *Akashaganga* and *Yakshium Njanum* by investigating how horror films confront transgression through the construction of woman as a monstrous figure in the story. The theory of abjection proposed by Julia Kristeva and of the monstrous feminine by Barbara Creed are used in the analysis.

INTRODUCTION

Most Malayalam horror films construct woman as the monstrous feminine. Such a portrayal raises concerns over its reversal of the stereotypes associated with women. The horror emerges from the fact that the woman has broken with her assigned feminine role such as that of a mother, a benevolent being, a care giver and so on. Barbara Creed focusing on film's portrayal of "woman as a monster" by adapting Kristeva's abjection says:

Kristeva's theory of abjection provides us with an important theoretical framework for analysing, in the horror film, the representation of the monstrous feminine, in relation to woman's reproductive and mothering function. However, abjection by its very nature is ambiguous; it both repels and attracts. (Creed, 14)

Often, a female monster initially appears as a beautiful and seductive woman, but then she changes into a monstrous, blood thirsty being wreaking havoc. This evokes a sense of horror as “it disturbs identity, system and order” (Kristeva 138) and thereby becomes an abject. In order to evoke fear and loathe, ghosts are simulated and abjectified. This abject is what Bakhtin terms as ‘grotesque’ in which a bodily part comes to be too expressive. Eyes which bulge, teeth and nails which extend are grotesque, because the grotesque is looking for that which protrudes from the body, all that seek to go out beyond the body’s confines. Hence the monstrous women in horror movies are grotesque as the female bodies are portrayed to transcend our preconceived notions of the female body. In Malayalam horror movies, female ghosts appear as most grotesque with pointed fangs and uncouth, deformed and dirty body. And, hence, these women are pictured as physically abjectified. Kristeva states that “It is thus not lack of cleanliness or health that causes abjection but what disturbs identity, system, order, what does not respect borders, positions, rules” (232).

The abject collapses the borders between natural and supernatural, human and non-human, normal and abnormal, the clean well-formed and proper and dirty or deformed body. Through this paper, an attempt has been made to reflect on this abject—monstrous women—in the select Malayalam horror films. It uncovers the hidden discourse and politics of representation as to how visualizing monstrous feminine as abject paves way for the patriarchal society to subdue the female resisting to the ideological apparatuses of patriarchal power. The monstrous representation of females emphasizes the female alienation from a patriarchal society. The punishing of the female body is meant to indicate the gruesome realities of female victimization under patriarchal power structures. In most of the Malayalam horror movies this type of oppression can be seen very clearly. In the case of the films *Akashaganga* and *Yakshium Njanum*, the oppression of the female by the male dominant class is portrayed very realistically. The paper thus attempts to showcase how the gender/class abject is used as a tool to reinforce patriarchal norms.

In a class/caste ridden society, women, especially from the marginalised communities are used as an object by the dominant class for the satisfaction of their lust. Stories of such women being cast away or brutally killed by the elite class too is not uncommon. This scenario of humiliation and not giving any right or sanctity to women bodies is invoked in the Malayalam horror movies chosen for this study. In normal situation, thumbed down under the dominant power, women cannot and will not resist or revolt against the oppression. But when the women in question obtain supernormal powers, they can frighten the dominant group. In such a situation the killed women haunts the people who were responsible in killing her. But this lasts only for a while as through exorcism the dominant class vanquishes the ghost from the earth forever. Once again, the woman is shown to suppressed by the male dominant class.

The class system too runs deep in the society and it may also be highlighted that women, delineated as ghost in films, come from subaltern or culturally low family who molest the elite, but they are thwarted by the elite towards the end. These lower-class women had to face dual oppression in the class/ caste ridden patriarchal society. The lower class maid and the men in an elite family fall in love with each other. But in almost all case such relationships cannot be accepted by the elite family. And they try to separate them as an upper-class man’s relation with a lower-class maid is not acceptable by their traditional repute and it shall cause harm to the name of their elite family. They forcefully separate them by killing the lower-class maid brutally knowledgeable of the fact that nobody will question the elite family fearing their standing in society. They justify this brutal killing as an attempt to save the name of their family, a form of honour killing. The men and women in the lower class are

considered as the property of the upper class and any resistance from their end is cruelly oppressed by the elite class.

In most of the Malayalam horror movies oppression of similar kind can be seen. In the case of the films *Akashaganga* and *Yakshium Njanum*, the oppression of the female by the male dominant class is portrayed very realistically. In the film *Akashaganga*, 1999, a poor working-class girl named Ganga falls in love with the Devan, a member of the elite family called Mannikasheri and she gets pregnant from him. When the elite family members come to know about this, they assault her and arrange for the funeral of the unconscious girl thinking her to be dead. But the girl regains conscious and asks for water, but the members of the elite family angrily finish the funeral by setting up the fire, burning the poor girl alive. After some years, the ghost of the poor girl becomes a fearful thing to the elite family. And they suffer a lot because of the ghost of the poor girl. But she is finally suppressed by the elite family through exorcism and vanished from the earth forever.

Things are is not very different in the case of the second film *Yakshium Njanum*, 2010. This movie runs around the social circumstance in our society. But in this movie we can see the humiliation of women in the two temporal stages of the society. That means a society in two time spans, the old and the new. In the old on we can see the dominant group kills the lover of the girl from a lower class for their purpose of gaining wealth and power. When the poor girl came to know about this she tries to resist against this cruelty. They suppress this by killing her brutally. After sometime she becomes a ghost and comes after many years. The society had changed outwardly by then, urbanity had set in but the people in it are the same, their mindset too. The class difference and the humiliation towards the women are the same in the new society too. Men in the upper class still exploited the poor girls for the satisfaction of their lust. Here too the poor girl is killed brutally and her ghost is suppressed by the elite group by exorcism.

So in both movies we can see the oppression of the female in the lower class by the men in the upper class by their power and strength. In an old or new society lower class women are always doubly humiliated and oppressed by the dominant class— due to her gender and due to her societal class. When this is portrayed in horror movies, the rationale is that once a society projects its fears onto the female form, it can try to cordon off those fears by controlling women—pushing them to conform to comfortably nostalgic norms and forcing them to comply with the cultural imagination.

One thing pivotal in these horror movies taken for study is the hidden and repressed fear that is experienced by the dominant class. It is the haunting guilt consciousness in the collective unconscious of the male psyche that is materialized in the form of ghosts. The ghost or the abjectified women in these movies might have been victimized by the male power, and this stirs her soul to reincarnate as a monstrous female only to be tamed and finally locked or nailed in a lonely castle or a tree, evoking nightmares in the minds of the oppressors. The revolting female body reckoned as ‘defiled’, is purified. And the patriarchal society regard it to be their duty to purify and normalize the female abject as they resist and redefine the constraints of both their gender and their class. Barbara Creed in her book *The Monstrous Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis* links the monstrous feminine in patriarchal society, (the Sirens, Medusa, witches and movie monsters), to sexual difference and castration. She says, the term monstrous feminine emphasises the importance of gender in the construction of her monstrosity. The monstrous feminine speaks more about male fears than female desire/subjectivity. The woman is feared as castrator.

Following this line of interpretation, the monstrous represents the female not to show the female as monstrous, but to emphasize the female alienation from a patriarchal society. Here we can analyse how the female ghost in Malayalam films, “though they collapse the system and order as an abject, are finally cajoled to fall in line with the patriarchal ideology” (Niyas):

Through the phenomena of exorcism which is symbolic of immascultation or internalization of male power and ideology to disempower the revolting female body or entity, and nailing into the tree, a powerful signifier in ghost films implying the penetration of the phallus into the female body, and thus the perturbed male power is reinforced, and it is intertwined with a story that gradually becomes a myth. Thus, the patriarchal success is drummed, and the dominant ideology is safe once again. (Niyas no pagination).

Analyzing the film *Akashaganga*, the dominant class, represented by the Manakasheri family is always in fear of the ghost of Ganga, a maid who had to be burnt to death, because she was in love with a member of the family. Since then, the ghost of Ganga started avenging, and she has become a frightful image to each member of this family, a representative of the elite group. The transformation from the eternal feminine to the female abject is occurred. Here, woman, represented as the female abject, is a perennial fear to the community. In *Akashaganga* the male community cannot engage in sexual pleasure and have to live as celibates if they had to avert the threat from this strengthened female abject—the ghost. But the dominant ideology, as usual, capable of burying all the fears emanating from the subaltern does so through exorcism, and by nailing the ghost into the tree. Hence, the abjectified female body, the cause of fear to the male psyche, is nullified by the nail—symbolising the phallic power. Thus, women become an abjectified object to be subdued by the male power. And the pattern of the horror film is also the final confinement of the monstrous woman and the subsequent freedom from the fear by the dominant ideology. In *Akashaganga* and *Yakshiyum Njanum*, there is a fear of subdued female that has been traditionally inscribed into the collective unconscious of the patriarchal set up. In the film *Akashaganga*, the body of Ganga and Maya are burnt, though Maya is salvaged when the dominant ideology feels that she is unfettered of the influence of the ghost of Ganga.

But in the film *Yakshiyum Njanum*, Athira comes to take revenge against the dominant class who killed her and her lover past. At last, to fulfil her wish she seeks the help of Syam, a male character. But at the end of the film, she was wiped off from the earth by the elite class through exorcism.

It is also noted that women, delineated as ghost in films, come from subaltern or culturally low family who molest the elite, but they are thwarted by the elite towards the end. As a retort, ghosts evoke extraordinary fear, and break the dominance of the male body language, and employs violence at the non-performative and passive male body (passive before ghost). Thus, horror films also become a performative space for female domination over the traditionally mythified male boy, where monstrous women sucking the blood of the dominant body.

Thus, woman, constructed as abject, is made a synonym of fear and disorder that is to be eliminated from the system. Stereotypical presentation of women as abject is yet another way in which the patriarchal society affirms its agenda. There are archetypal women in horror films — two kinds especially: the vulnerable damsel, often murdered by a killer or there are the dangerous, often hyper-sexualized monsters that seek out and take advantage of or kill others, usually men. These characters are not fair or complex representations of

women. Rather, they limit female characters to their most static stereotypes and define them either by the trauma of violence or pretty damning cultural stereotypes. When we are engrossed in these films, it is hard to recognize these characterizations as possibly problematic. They are problematic because complex, real-women characters are still so sparse when it comes to mainstream cinema. Often women are represented as vulnerable, naive and powerless (with a few exceptions) or as hypersexual damsels in distress.

This raises several fundamental questions regarding reality, social structure and ideology is being reflected and reproduced in film. The woman is constructed as the abject, is made a synonym of fear and disorder that is to be eliminated from the system. The possessed woman is now an object of fear, and looking through camera's point of view, the onlooker also fears and starts loathing the aggressive and gruesome woman on the screen, and they identify with the dominant ideology that the film represents, for only it could ruin the 'Other'. Hence, the success of the dominant ideology becomes the solace of the audience from the shattering fear.

CONCLUSION

Thus, we may emphatically say that horror film both interests us and disturbs us by confronting us with the disgusting and the fascinating simultaneously. The way in which these films constructed monstrosity indicates female transgression of patriarchal boundaries, specifically on the issue of gender and class. The transgression emphasizes that boundaries are not absolute but fluid and it is probably the fear of the ghosts within us that makes us shudder.

Notes:

Aakasha Ganga is a 1999 Malayalam-language horror-thriller film directed by Vinayan, starring Divya Unni and Mukesh and produced by Aakash Films. It was dubbed in Tamil as *Avala Aaviya* and in Hindi as *Maaya Ka Saaya*.

Yakshiyum Njaanum is a 2010 Malayalam-language horror film written and directed by Vinayan. The film is produced under the banner of RG Productions India Pvt. Ltd by multinational industrialist Rubon Gomez. It stars Goutham P. Krishna, Meghna Raj, Thilakan and Spadikam George.

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Perception of Policyholders towards Responsiveness of Bancassurance Channel

Joppachan Tom

ABSTRACT

Banking In traditional sense had been merely accepting deposits and lending money. Times have changed and traditions have evolved. It took over from being a mere deposit institution to a multifunction consortium extending its area of operation to wealth management, insurance and so on. Banking and insurance work hand in hand to give rise to an innovation in finance sector popularised in the name bancassurance, where bank sells insurance products and insurance firms uses banks resources to effect sales. This paper intends to runover the concept of bancassurance, awareness level, challenges faced by the policyholders towards bancassurance channel.

KEYWORDS: Bancassurance, Influencing factors, Awareness level, Insurance product, Policyholders, Consumer perception

INTRODUCTION

The business of banking around the globe is changing due to integration of global financial markets, development of new technologies of banking operations and diversification in non-banking activities. Banking has nowadays shifted from immobile institutions to inhome activity. It takes a much lesser effort and involves a lesser significant risk factor than before. The perception of individual customers towards the services offered by each of the competing banks and the satisfaction it offers determines the customer base of modern-day banks. In order to survive among the fittest, banks might have to think beyond the boundaries of conventional banking alone. Diversifying existing portfolios by adding up features outside to that of a bank and letting in customers by such added features is one way of surviving competition. Insurance business is one such activity that can benefit with an association with banking industry. Such a mutual association of banking and insurance can be together

called BANCASSURANCE. It simply indicates bringing banking and insurance under one roof. Inculcating awareness among banking customers with respect to insurance products and sharing the customer base is the prime idea behind such an innovation. Bancassurance is beneficial to banks, insurance companies and customers. Banks get an income in the form of commission while distributing insurance policies. Insurance companies view bancassurance as a new channel for distributing their policies and customers are getting both banking and insurance services under one roof. Thus, banks view bancassurance as a new strategy for earning income and insurance companies, a new channel for insurance distribution. This study is an attempt to understand the perception of policyholders towards responsiveness of bancassurance channel.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Today's banking business is not the one we have seen in the past. It has become much more diversified. With the shift in the customer preferences from deposits to investments, intense competition etc., the banks saw their profit margin falling. Thus, it has become imperative for the banks to retain the customer by providing more value-added services under one roof as well as to find alternative ways to generate income. As bancassurance provides the best possible solution to all these, most of the banks nowadays have started selling insurance products to its clients. Hence there is a need for the study to know whether banks have been benefited out of bancassurance and to suggest the areas where they can make use of various services.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Bancassurance as a channel of selling insurance has fast gained momentum in the Indian insurance scene. The customer, who is at the receiving end of the services jointly provided by the banks and insurance companies is influenced by a number of factors while making the purchase and looks out for different parameters to judge his satisfaction levels. The present study analyses the factors affecting the buying behaviour and satisfaction level from bancassurance. After agents, banks are the preferred medium of buying insurance because of banks commitment, cost effectiveness, return on investment. Also, given the benefits of updated policy information and ease in premium payments and claims receiving, a majority of the customers are willing to purchase their future insurance policies through the bancassurance mode. Hence, conveying that future of bancassurance can be bright in India too if the tying up companies can channelize their efforts effectively to tap the customer's needs.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- i. To evaluate awareness level and identify the challenges with regards to bancassurance products.
- ii. To study the factors affecting buying behaviour of customers in purchasing the insurance policies through the bank.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The research methodology gives an idea about the type of research design, the sampling techniques, the process of data collection and the instrument used for data analysis. In order to achieve the objectives of the study and to analyze the data collected, an appropriate methodology has been developed. A research methodology is a master plan for the conduct of formal investigation. Research methodology is the pathway or an approach to get the needed information by locating the data from different sources which are primary and secondary.

a. SAMPLING PLAN

100 respondents will be chosen for the purpose of study using convenience sampling technique. The data will be collected through structured questionnaire. Convenience Sampling involves selecting the sample and element using some convenient method without going through the prescribed sampling method.

b. DATA COLLECTION

The study is partially analytical and descriptive in nature. This study will be based on both primary and secondary data. The primary data will be collected through structured questionnaire specially designed for this survey. And secondary data will be gathered from the relevant journals, web sites and other sources.

TOOLS FOR ANALYSIS & TABULATION

The various statistical tools used for analysis in this study include Percentage Analysis, Henry Garrett's Ranking Technique and Weighted Average.

DISCUSSION OF ANALYSIS

1. From the table it depicts that most of the respondents are highly aware about bancassurance products features such as premium level, age limit, flexibility. While respondents have partial awareness on medical examination and level of protection, but respondents are unaware about the service charged by these channels.
2. From the study, it is evident most of the respondents got knowledge about bancassurance from published materials, followed bank officials, references by friends and relatives, mail or phone and gathered information regarding bancassurance by way of other sources.
3. Majority of the respondent preferred private sector banks due to quality service offers
4. Respondent show only moderate preference to purchase insurance through bancassurance channel. While few of the respondent show high preferences towards the channel.
5. Among respondents, 30% of the respondents opted for convenience, 24% opted for trust and 46% opted for return on investment as the important criteria which affect the purchase decision of respondents while buying an insurance policy from bank. None of the respondents have not selected location and others category. Therefore, we can conclude that majority of the respondents selected return on investment as the most important criteria affecting purchase decision while buying an insurance policy from bank.
6. With help of Henry Garretts ranking technique, it is clear that, premium payment (69.75) was the most difficult service which they faced while buying an insurance policy through bank. Followed by service provided (60.5) and maturity disbursements (59.65), recontinuance of lapsed policy (59.1). Attending of complaints (57.3) was the least difficulty faced by respondents while buying through bancassurance channel.
7. Using weighted average it is evident that Bank reputation is the key factor which influences them to purchase insurance policy through banks. Followed by reputation of bank, quality of services, features of policies, affordable rate, others such as low service charges, interpersonal relationship etc.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The banking sector should improve upon the level of awareness regarding bancassurance among their customers.
- Banks must take huge efforts to create awareness about bancassurance among the illiterate people as most of them are unaware of the features of bancassurance products and its benefits.
- Banks must provide more services to the customers.
- Policy holders have been motivated to take up bancassurance from private sector banks because of the trust and cordial relationship they have with them. Hence, the public sector banks need to take some measures to improve their service quality.
- Policy holders have not taken up bancassurance from the same bank in which they hold account, so it is the prime duty of the insurance companies and the other banks to attract the customers by introducing new schemes that cater to the needs of the present era.

CONCLUSION

In this competitive world Bancassurance is playing a very important role. Banks provide various kinds of services to their customers. Banks and insurance both are using different types of strategies for the development of bancassurance. Overall, it can be concluded that the customers are aware of bancassurance as a medium of insurance distribution and are also willing to adapt it as their future mode of buying life and general insurance. The main motive behind bancassurance among respondents is the customer accessibility. Respondents are more in favour of purchasing directly through bancassurance and the intention of buying policy from banks in future is higher. The reasons for this shift have been noted as because of existing relation with the bank, timely information of policy details and payments due, staff behaviour etc. The first and foremost reason of the people for preferring bancassurance is their existing relation with the bank followed by the features of policies, affordable rates, quality of services, reputation of the bank etc. Banks and insurance companies need to work together as partners-in-progress for the cause of customers. This will overcome the inhibiting factors and persuade customers to accept banks as a single-window solution for all their financial and investment needs. Public sector bank should focus more on their customer service to attract the policy holders. The concept of Bancassurance is still in its emerging state. If nurtured properly, banks can go a long way in contributing to the insurance growth in the country.

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APPENDIX

1. Awareness on features of bancassurance

Table 1.1

Features	Level of protection		Medical examination		Premium level		Age limits		Flexibility		Service charges	
	F	S	F	S	F	S	F	S	F	S	F	S
Fully aware	18	54	30	90	54	162	62	186	58	174	20	60
Partly aware	53	106	52	104	38	76	30	60	34	68	30	30
Unaware	29	29	18	18	8	8	8	8	8	8	50	50
Total	100	189	100	212	100	246	100	254	100	250	100	140

Weighted score	1.89	2.12	2.46	2.54	2.50	1.40
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Primary Source:

Range	
Highly Aware	2.34-3.00
Aware	1.67-2.33
Not aware	1.00-1.66

2. Source of knowledge about bancassurance among respondents

Table 1.2

Sources	No. of responses	Percentage
Publishes materials	53	53%
Bank officials	25	25%
References by relatives and friends	14	14%
By mail or phone	6	6%
Others	2	2%
Total	100	100%

Primary Source:

3. References for the bank sectors among respondents

Table 1.3

Sectors	No. of responses	Percentage
Private sector bank	68	68%
Public sector bank	32	32%
Total	100	100%

Primary Source:

4. Level of preference to buy insurance policies from bank

Table 1.4

Level of preference	No. of responses	Percentage
High	14	14%
Moderate	80	80%
Low	6	6%
Total	100	100%

Primary Source:

5. Importance of different criteria that affects the purchase decision of respondents while buying an insurance policy from bank

Table 1.5

Criteria	No. of responses	Percentage
Convenience	30	30%
Location	0	0%
Trust	24	24%
Return on investment	46	46%
Others	0	0%
Total	100	100%

Primary Source:

6. Extent of difficulty among respondents in getting different services while buying an insurance policy through bank

Table 1.6

Sl.no	Services	Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank 3	Rank 4	Rank 5	Total
1	Premium Payment	73	16	10	1	0	100
2	Recontinuation of lapsed policy	22	40	34	4	0	100
3	Service provided	34	30	26	10	0	100
4	Attending of complaints	22	30	36	12	0	100
5	Maturity disbursements	32	26	34	7	1	100

7. Most difficulty faced by the respondents in getting different services while buying an insurance policy through bank

Table 1.7

Services	Garrets score	Average score	Rank
Premium payment	75	69.75	1
Service provided	50	60.5	2
Maturity disbursements	25	59.65	3
Recontinuation of lapsed policy	60	59.1	4
Attending of complaints	40	57.3	5

8. Most important factor which influences respondents to take insurance policy through bank

Table 1.8

Score	Rank 1		Rank 2		Rank 3		Rank 4		Rank 5		Rank 6		Weighted Score	Overall Rank
	6	5	4	3	2	1								
Factors	F	S	F	S	F	S	F	S	F	S	F	S		
Existing relation	28	168	35	175	13	52	14	42	8	16	2	2	455	2
Reputation of bank	45	270	21	105	15	60	12	36	4	8	3	3	482	1
Quality of services	11	66	28	140	19	76	22	66	8	16	12	12	376	3
Affordable rates	2	12	8	40	11	44	20	60	33	66	26	26	248	5
Features of policies	14	84	8	40	33	132	27	81	15	30	3	3	370	4
others	0	0	0	0	9	36	5	15	32	64	54	54	169	6

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Problematizing Familial Spaces in Kumbalangi Nights

Jithin John

ABSTRACT

This article titled “Problematizing Familial Spaces in *Kumbalangi Nights*” tries to interrogate the fallacious family pictures discussed in the film text. The film depicts two contrasting families belonging to two completely different categories. While one is shown as following the norms of the grand narratives of the family, the other is shown as the one which interrogates this. The argument of the paper is that such fluid depiction of the family structure is fallacious. Rather than interrogating Jean Francois Lyotard’s Grand Narratives, the two families follow the same power pattern and reassert the power structure of families.

INTRODUCTION

Film Studies is a happening branch of academics which is debated and discussed currently. The politics and polemics of film texts interrupt and redesign the trends and vibes of popular mass cultures. It makes, deconstructs and restate statements related to intellect, attire, tendencies, trends and academia. The paper studies the implicit, subtle but powerful interrogation of the narratives on family and spaces made by the much-discussed recent film text, *Kumbalangi Nights*.

The theoretical framework used is that of Grand narratives put forth by the Jean Franco’s Lyotard in the *Postmodern Condition: Report on Knowledge* (1979). Knowledge is narrated, explained and even legitimized through narratives. Tracing back to history, the power and social relations where legitimized using narrative power through deliberately created myth and stories in tribal groups gradually turned as the laws and truth of the specific community. The metanarratives give explanations to various events in the history and deduce a universal language of universal legitimation. It was observed even in the tribal groups that the execution of power was normalized and idealized by narratives.

Lyotard also formulates the concept of “emancipation narrative”, which tells that a narration do not end in itself but talks about the connection between the events and the design of the social conditions in society. It makes deliberate attempt to create a sense of

history in the collective consciousness of the mass. In *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, Lyotard traces out the postmodern elements in the contemporary world. Metanarratives also design a set of criteria to be judged and identified as ethics. This in turn determines the ethical, the truth and the legitimate for the society. It gives a detailed description of how the world works on history and how humans are placed in the world defined of history and legitimacy. From the postmodern perspective, knowledge is no longer the subject, but in the service of the subject". Knowledge plays a pivotal role in making humans understand their placing from various perspectives, thereby paves path for a better way of living and emancipate from the operations of the plays. Therefore, culture can be seen as an entity developed and evolved out of the narratives and grand narratives and aim at the ultimate knowledge which leads to "universal enlightenment and freedom".

Lyotard defines postmodernism "as incredulity towards metanarratives". The concept of "post" can be explained only with reference to the past. The moment next to "just now" and for the same reasons it doesn't obey any universal rules. So by rejecting the grand narratives, this brings local narratives, mini customs etc. to the frame.

Architecture, construction and the way the houses are maintained itself shows the politics of the two families. Shammi's house interior is arranged and the spaces inside the house are well defined as sitting room, dining room and kitchen. Contrary to the clarity in the spaces of Shammi's house, Saji's space of the house is rather vague and fluid. The definiteness of the space is blurred. But with the coming of women to the male only space comes the power play in the family. So the bringing of women to the familial space brings the space conform itself to the norms of a family, which brought "peace" to the space as Saji tells later to Shammi. So Saji's family is a foil of Shammi's family; one being ideal and the other being 'strange'.

The locale of Saji's family on an island-village can be seen as a family which stays original and uncorrupted by the family and power language. The fluid space around the house metaphorically keep the locale original. The two women cross the metaphorical fluid body and reaches the family with politics of the structure, which brings the notion of privacy and definiteness to Saji's family. He stares at the sky desperately expecting/ dreaming a family; an ideal one which is indeed power related. The two images of Franky on his net swing; one looking at the indefinite sky disappointedly and desperately indicates the dilapidated family structure and his hopelessness in having being in the norm of a family. Later the happy Franky sits on the net watching Sati rowing to their home with her baby, reminding Mother Mary. The change in his position in his 'exclusive' net swing, explicates the shift in Franky's attitude from extreme disappointment to hope and happiness. Franky, in the movie is the spokesperson for the audience who believe in the general social notion of a family, who take a balanced attached and detached position from the family. The attributing of the Mother Mary image to Sathi tries to make the statement that anarchy is diabolic and family has to be structured and made 'divine'.

The film presents the structure of family as an inevitable and mandatory thing to fulfill love. Villainy is imposed on Shammi who is depicted as of victim of power and masculinity relations. Shammi who struggles to keep his position (which is demanded by his gender) is told the audience as a character who is inflicted with abnormalcy. Saji's trajectory of actions and motive is paternally same as that of Shammi but performed in a varied and subtle way.

Franky's transformation describes his family as a "hell" even at beginning of the film. His exposure to the city life is to educate and make the audience realise the well structured fixity of the life in the urban. His reluctance to take his friends to his home shows the

imposed default inferiority in his familial space. This, from the first scene itself creates a sense of wanting at home.

Saji throughout is unhappy with Bobby not because of big issues but simply because he is frustrated about the lack of power which he has to exercise as the eldest male in the family. He, being aware about his probable position as the eldest male thrives for it every second and that is what which makes him call “brother”. Rather than affection, he tries to claim his stature making use of the chance. Saji gains the proposed identity only when Bobby ask him to take incharge of his elder brotherhood.

An affair with Baby is the turning point of Bobby’s mundane life. The jobless (even the idea of being employed irritates Bobby.) Bobby feels that getting employed is a necessity as part of marrying Baby. Bobby’s and Baby’s abstract concept of love is understood to be fulfilled only if they establish their family. So the amorous move of the character turns more specific when the question of marriage comes to the scene. Saji says that none of Jose’s sons are bad. The whole issue could be easily solved if the walls are plastered and a main door is fixed. The physical disorder indicates the disorder in the relations though they acknowledge the fact that the random “connections” between the brothers are really strong.

Bobby realising that he couldn’t hold himself in the job confesses to Baby that he is not a good match to her. The failure in conforming to a recognised job in a building (firm) makes Bobby a misfit to move to a familial space. But Baby pricks the notion by asking him to explore the possibility of fishing. Shammi’s juxtaposition with Bobby, who always carry himself so presentable makes an equation between the presentability and honour, and the importance of carrying one well in claiming the honour of a family.

Bony, the third brother, is a dumb one and Bony’s silence can be metaphorically read as the reluctance to be claimed to the family. Bony’s silence is because of his personal constraints he face in the family. He has to be violently reactive to make himself visible. So, though, on a superficial level, it seems that the characters live an undefined space, all the characters’ motive show their eager urge to belong themselves to a familial structure.

CONCLUSION

The house itself explicates the contrasting philosophies of the two families. Sajis’ house does not have a proper door, restricting no entry to the house. The furniture is limited and does not occupy specific spaces in the hall which seems to serve both as living and dining room. Shammi’s house explicitly is narrated in the power language where the arrangement is ‘intact’ and even the placing of the late father’s framed photo beside the dining room is to make sure about the same.

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മലയാളസാഹിത്യവിമർശനം; പ്രാരംഭഘട്ടം

പ്രൊഫ. ജോജി മാടപ്പാട്ട്

മലയാളത്തിൽ വിമർശനം ഒരു സ്വതന്ത്രശാഖയായി മാറിയത് പാശ്ചാത്യസാഹിത്യവുമായുള്ള സമ്പർക്കം വഴിയാണ്. എന്തായിട്ടുണ്ട് ഒരു കൃതി, അതിന്റെ ബലദൗർബല്യങ്ങൾ എന്തൊക്കെ എന്നു വിലയിരുത്തുന്ന വിമർശനസമ്പ്രദായത്തിന് ഇവിടെ തുടക്കമിട്ടത് ആംഗല ബന്ധമാണ്. അതിനുമുമ്പ് സംസ്കൃതത്തിലെ വ്യാഖ്യാനരീതി മലയാളത്തിലേക്കു സംക്രമിച്ചിരുന്നെങ്കിലും ശക്തമായ ചലനമൊന്നും അതിവിടെ സൃഷ്ടിച്ചില്ല. എന്നാൽ സംസ്കൃതത്തിലെ കാവ്യശാസ്ത്രത്തിന്റെ സ്വാധീനം ഇവിടെ സജീവമായിരുന്നു. പാശ്ചാത്യവിമർശനത്തിന്റെ കടന്നുവരവോടെ ഒരു മേളനത്തിനു വഴിയൊരുങ്ങി. പാശ്ചാത്യസാഹിത്യത്തിലെ വിമർശന രീതിയും സംസ്കൃതത്തിലെ വിമർശനചിന്തയും സമന്വയിച്ചതിന്റെ ഫലമാണ് യഥാർത്ഥത്തിൽ മലയാളവിമർശനം. പാശ്ചാത്യസ്വാധീനഫലമായി ഇവിടെ ഉരുത്തിരിഞ്ഞ നൂതനഗദ്യവും യുക്തിബോധവും വിമർശനവികാസത്തെ സഹായിച്ചു. ഭാരതത്തിന്റെ തനതു പാരമ്പര്യം ഇറക്കുമതി ചെയ്യപ്പെട്ട ഇംഗ്ലീഷ് പാരമ്പര്യവുമായി കൂടിക്കലർന്ന് സങ്കരസൃഷ്ടിയായിട്ടായിരുന്നല്ലോ ആധുനിക ഭാരതീയ സാഹിത്യത്തിന്റെ പിറവിതന്നെ ഭാരതീയ സാഹിത്യത്തിലെ പരിവർത്തനങ്ങളും പാശ്ചാത്യ ഭാരതീയ സംസ്കാരങ്ങൾ തമ്മിൽ സമ്പർക്കവും സംഘർഷവും സംഘട്ടനവും നടന്നതിന്റെ ഫലമായിരുന്നു.

മലയാളവിമർശനത്തിന്റെ ആരംഭത്തെപ്പറ്റി ചിന്തിക്കുന്നവർ കേരളവർമ്മയിൽ തുടങ്ങാറുണ്ട്. എന്നാൽ മലയാള വിമർശനത്തിനു ബലിഷ്ഠമായ അടിത്തറയാകാൻതക്ക വിമർശനദർശനം അദ്ദേഹത്തിൽ രൂപപ്പെട്ടുവെന്നു പറയാൻ വയ്യ. കേരളവർമ്മ പ്രബന്ധങ്ങളിൽ ഒരു അവതാരികാകാരന്റെ സ്വരമാണ് പൊതുവെ മുഴങ്ങുന്നത്. കൃതിയുടെ അന്തർഘടനയിലേക്ക് ആണ്ടിറങ്ങി സാഹിത്യസൗന്ദര്യം ആവിഷ്കരിക്കാനോ സാധികബാധകയുക്തികളോടെ ഗുണദോഷ വിവേചനം നിർവ്വഹിക്കാനോ കേരളവർമ്മ തുനിഞ്ഞില്ല. അമിതപ്രശംസയും ഉദാരപ്രോത്സാഹനവും മൂലം വിമർശകന്റേതെന്നു പറയാനാവാത്ത ഒരു സമീപനമാണ് പൊതുവെ കാണുന്നത്. പന്തളം കേരളവർമ്മയുടെ രുഗ്മാംഗദചരിതത്തെപ്പറ്റിയും അപ്പുനെടുങ്ങാടിയുടെ കുന്ദലതയെപ്പറ്റിയും മറ്റും കേരളവർമ്മ എഴുതിയ അഭിപ്രായങ്ങൾ ഇതിനു തെളിവാണ്.

മലയാളത്തിൽ പുസ്തകങ്ങൾ കാര്യമായി ഇല്ലാതിരുന്ന കാലമായിരുന്നതിനാൽ പ്രഥമമാങ്കുരങ്ങളെ പ്രോത്സാഹിപ്പിക്കാനാണ് കേരളവർമ്മ ഖണ്ഡന വിമർശനത്തിൽ നിന്നും അകന്നുനിന്നത് എന്നൊരു വാദമുണ്ട്. പക്ഷേ, ആംഗലമാതൃകയിലുള്ള മണ്ഡന വിമർശനത്തിന് ധാരാളം സാധ്യതകൾ ഇവിടെയുണ്ടായിരുന്നു. ആ മേഖലയിലും എടുത്തുപറയത്തക്കതൊന്നും കേരളവർമ്മ ചെയ്തില്ല. കൃതികളെപ്പറ്റിയുള്ള വ്യാക്ഷേപകങ്ങളും തലോടലുകളും മണ്ഡനമാകുന്നില്ല. കേരളവർമ്മയുടെ രചനകൾ അങ്ങനെയുള്ളവയാണ്. കൃതിയുടെ ആന്തരികതലത്തിലേക്കിറങ്ങിയുള്ള ആസ്വാദനമോ സാഹിത്യസിദ്ധാന്തങ്ങളുടെ വെളിച്ചത്തിലുള്ള മൂല്യനിർണ്ണയനമോ അവയിലില്ല. കേരളവർമ്മ അടിസ്ഥാനപരമായി ഒരു ഭാഷാപരിപോഷകനും സാഹിത്യ പ്രോത്സാഹകനുമായിരുന്നു, സാഹിത്യവിമർശകനായിരുന്നില്ല. വിമർശകന് സാഹിത്യ പ്രോത്സാഹകനാകാവുന്നതാണ്. പക്ഷേ, പ്രോത്സാഹകനായതുകൊണ്ട് വിമർശകനാകണമെന്നില്ല. പ്രോത്സാഹകനാകാനുള്ള വെമ്പൽ കേരളവർമ്മയിലെ വിമർശകനെ ദുർബ്ബലനാക്കുകയും ചെയ്തു.

മലയാള ഭാഷയുടെയും സാഹിത്യത്തിന്റെയും അഭ്യുത്ഥാനത്തിന് കേരളവർണ്ണ ചെയ്ത യത്നങ്ങൾ വിലപ്പെട്ടവതന്നെ. ഒരു നവയുഗം സ്വപ്നം കണ്ട സാഹിത്യപുരുഷനായിരുന്നു അദ്ദേഹം. മലയാള ഭാഷയെയും സാഹിത്യത്തെയും വർത്തമാനകാല ജഡതയിൽനിന്ന് ഉദ്ധരിക്കുവാൻ ആസൂത്രിത പദ്ധതികൾ അദ്ദേഹം നടപ്പിലാക്കി. പുതിയ തലമുറയെ പുതിയ വിദ്യയുമായി ബന്ധിപ്പിക്കുന്നതിനു പര്യാപ്തമായ പാഠാവലീ നിർമ്മാണത്തിനു നേതൃത്വമേകി. പാശ്ചാത്യമാതൃകയിലുള്ള പാഠ്യപദ്ധതിക്കനുയോജ്യമായിരുന്നു പാഠാവലീ നിർമ്മാണം. അകേരളീയവും അഭാരതീയവുമായ സാഹിത്യവുമായി മലയാളിയെ ബന്ധിപ്പിക്കുന്നതിന് വിവർത്തനത്തിൽ വ്യാപൃതനായി. മണിപ്രവാള ശാകുന്തളവും അക്ബറും ഇതിനു തെളിവാണ്. ലോകമഹാത്മാരെ കേരളീയർക്കു സുപരിചിതരാക്കുന്നതിന് മഹച്ചരിതസംഗ്രഹം രചിക്കുന്നതിൽ പങ്കാളിയായി. പാശ്ചാത്യരീതിയിലാണ് ഈ കൃതി രചിച്ചത്. ചന്ദ്രോത്സവം, ഭാരതചമ്പു തുടങ്ങിയ പ്രാചീന കാവ്യങ്ങൾ കണ്ടെടുത്തു. സന്ദേശകാവ്യം തുടങ്ങിയ ശാഖകളിൽ സ്വതന്ത്രരചന നടത്തി. ആട്ടക്കഥകൾ നിർമ്മിച്ച് ആ ശാഖയിൽ എണ്ണം വർദ്ധിപ്പിച്ചു. കവികളെയും സാഹിത്യകാരന്മാരെയും പ്രോത്സാഹിപ്പിക്കുകയും കൈയെഴുത്തുപ്രതികൾ തിരുത്തിക്കൊടുക്കുകയും ചെയ്തു. പക്ഷേ ഇവയുടെയൊക്കെ പേരിൽ കേരളവർമ്മയെ വിമർശകന്റെ കുപ്പായമണിയിക്കുന്നത് അനുചിതമാണ്. വിമർശനത്തെ ഒരു സ്വതന്ത്രസാഹിത്യരൂപമായി കണ്ടു കൈകാര്യം ചെയ്യാൻ അദ്ദേഹത്തിനായില്ല. കേരളവർമ്മയുടെ സ്വക്ഷേത്രം വിമർശനമായിരുന്നില്ല.

കേരളവർമ്മയുടെ സാഹിത്യപോഷണനയത്തിന്റെ പാർശ്വദൂരന്തമെന്നപോലെ ഇവിടെ കുന്നുകൂടിയ നിലവാരംകുറഞ്ഞ കൃതികൾക്കെതിരെ വായനക്കാർക്കു മുന്നറിയിപ്പു നല്കുക സ്വഭാവമായിക്കണ്ടു രംഗത്തുവന്ന നിരൂപകനായിരുന്നു സി.പി. അച്യുതമേനോൻ. വാക്കുകളുടെ കാനനങ്ങൾ സാഹിത്യത്തിന് ആപത്താണെന്ന് ഒന്നാമതു വിളിച്ചുപറഞ്ഞത് സി.പി.യായിരുന്നു. ശബ്ദത്തെക്കാൾ അർത്ഥത്തിൽ ശ്രദ്ധ ഊന്നുവാൻ അദ്ദേഹം സാഹിത്യകാരന്മാരെ ഉപദേശിച്ചു. പഴകിയ കാവ്യസരണികളെ ഉപേക്ഷിക്കുവാൻ ആഹ്വാനംചെയ്യുകയും കവികളുടെ ശബ്ദാധിപത്യം ഭ്രമത്തിനെതിരെ മുന്നറിയിപ്പു നല്കുകയും ചെയ്തു. രൂപത്തിൽ നിന്നും ഭാവത്തിലേക്ക് സാഹിത്യകാരന്റെ ശ്രദ്ധ

സി.പി. ക്ഷണിച്ചു. സംസ്കൃതക്കാരോ മുൻകാല ഭാഷാ കവികളോ പറഞ്ഞതുതന്നെ ആവർത്തിച്ച് കൃതകൃത്യന്മാരാവുകയല്ല, ഒരു പൊളിച്ചെഴുത്തിനു തയ്യാറാവുകയാണു വേണ്ടതെന്നും ഉദ്ബോധിപ്പിച്ചു.

സി.പി.യുടെ സാഹിത്യജീവിതം പത്രപ്രവർത്തനവുമായി ഇഴചേർന്നു കിടക്കുന്നു. 1890-ൽ ആരംഭിച്ച വിദ്യാവിനോദിനിയായിരുന്നു സി.പി.യുടെ സാഹിത്യജീവിതത്തിന്റെ ചുഴിക്കുറ്റി. സംസ്കൃതത്തിലും ഇംഗ്ലീഷിലും അവഗാഹം നേടിയിരുന്ന സി.പി.യുടെ സാഹിത്യദർശനത്തിന് പാശ്ചാത്യപൗരസ്ത്യ സാഹിത്യമീമാംസകൾ ഒരുപോലെ പശ്ചാത്തലമായിരുന്നു. മലയാളത്തിൽ രസനിരൂപണപദ്ധതിക്കു തുടക്കം കുറിക്കാൻ അദ്ദേഹത്തിനു കഴിഞ്ഞു. രസപക്ഷപാതം നിമിത്തം നിയോ-ക്ലാസ്സിക്കൽ ധ്വംസിക്കു മ്പോൾ നിരൂപണപരാമർശങ്ങളുടെ അനുപാതംപോലും അദ്ദേഹം ഗണ്യമാക്കിയില്ല. തരം കിട്ടുമ്പോഴെല്ലാം അലങ്കാരത്തെ താഴ്ത്തിക്കെട്ടുകയും രസത്തെ ഉയർത്തി നിർത്തുകയും ചെയ്യുമായിരുന്നു അദ്ദേഹം.

തിരുവിതാംകൂറിനെ അപേക്ഷിച്ച് ലളിതമായ ഭാഷ ഉപയോഗിച്ചുപോന്ന വടക്കൻ കേരളത്തിലായിരുന്നു സി.പി.യുടെ ജനനം. ബ്രിട്ടീഷുകാരുടെ സജീവസാന്നിധ്യമായിരുന്നു വടക്കൻ കേരളത്തിലെ ഭാഷാസജീവതയുടെ കാരണങ്ങളിലൊന്ന്. മിഷനറിമാരുടെ പ്രയത്നങ്ങൾ നമ്മുടെ ഭാഷയെ പ്രകാശമാനമാക്കിയെന്നത് അംഗീകൃതമാണ്. പത്രപ്രവർത്തനവുമായി ബന്ധപ്പെട്ടതും കേരളവർമ്മയിൽനിന്നും വ്യത്യസ്തമായ വഴിയെ മുന്നേറാൻ സി.പി.ക്കു സഹായകമായി. പ്രചാരണലക്ഷ്യം തീർച്ചയായും ഏതു പത്രമാസികയ്ക്കും ഉണ്ടാകും. സാഹിത്യം കൈകാര്യം ചെയ്തപ്പോഴും ബഹുജനത്തിന് അഭിഗമ്യമായ ശൈലി സ്വീകരിക്കാൻ പ്രചാരണലക്ഷ്യം പ്രേരണയായി. സംസ്കൃതബഹുലമോ സന്ധി സമാസാദികൾ ഇടതിങ്ങിയതോ ആയ ശൈലി പത്രമാസികകൾക്കു പറ്റിയതല്ല. വിഷയം മുർച്ചയോടെ അവതരിപ്പിക്കാനുള്ള വ്യഗ്രതയും പത്രമാസികകൾക്കുണ്ട്. കൂടാതെ, സമകാലകൃതികളോടു പ്രതികരിക്കേണ്ട അന്തരീക്ഷമാണ് ആനുകാലികങ്ങളിലുള്ളത്. അന്നന്നിറങ്ങുന്ന ഗ്രന്ഥങ്ങളെ അപ്പപ്പോൾ നിരൂപണം ചെയ്യാൻ സി.പി.ക്കു നിമിത്തമായത് ഈ പശ്ചാത്തലമാണ്.

സൈദ്ധാന്തികവിമർശനത്തിനും സി.പി. വിദ്യാവിനോദിനി ഉപയോഗപ്പെടുത്തി. ഭാരതീയ സാഹിത്യതത്വങ്ങൾ വിവരിക്കുന്ന പല ലേഖനങ്ങളും വിദ്യാവിനോദിനിയിൽ പ്രസിദ്ധപ്പെടുത്തി. ക്ഷുദ്രകൃതികളോട് ചോരയുടെയും ഇരുമ്പിന്റെയും നയമാണ് സി.പി. പുലർത്തിയത്. പേശീ ബലമുള്ള വാക്കുകൾ ഉപയോഗിച്ച് മുഖം മുറിച്ചു പറയാൻ അദ്ദേഹത്തെപ്പോലെ ചങ്കുറ്റം കാണിച്ചവർ ചുരുങ്ങും. കുറിക്കുകൊള്ളുന്ന നർമ്മവും കൂട്ടിനുണ്ടായിരുന്നു. അച്യുതമേനോന്റെ പരുഷവിമർശനംമൂലം ചിലർ നാടുവിട്ടുപോയതായും ചിലർക്കു ജോലി നഷ്ടപ്പെട്ടതായുമൊക്കെ കഥകളുണ്ട്. ദോഷങ്ങളെ പരസ്യമായി പ്രഖ്യാപിക്കുന്നതിലും നിശിതമായി വിമർശിക്കുന്നതിലും അച്യുതമേനോന് ഒട്ടും ദയ ഇല്ലായിരുന്നു. രതിസുന്ദരി എന്ന നോവലിനെപ്പറ്റിയുള്ള സി.പി.യുടെ നിരൂപണം വായിച്ചിട്ട് “എന്തൊരു ഭയങ്കരമായ കൊല്ലാക്കൊല” എന്നാണ് ഉള്ളൂർ പ്രതികരിച്ചത്. ഇപ്പറഞ്ഞതിൽനിന്ന് അച്യുതമേനോൻ ദോഷൈകദ്യുക്കാണെന്നു ധരിക്കരുത്. അംഗീകാരം അർഹിക്കുന്ന കൃതികൾക്ക് അതു നൽകാൻ സി.പി. സന്നദ്ധനായിരുന്നു. അദ്ദേഹത്തിന്റെ പ്രശംസയ്ക്കു പാത്രമായ കൃതികൾ പലതുണ്ട്. മാർത്താണ്ഡവർമ്മ, ശാരദ തുടങ്ങിയവയെപ്പറ്റിയുള്ള നിരൂപണങ്ങൾ ഉദാഹരണം.

ശബ്ദഭ്രമത്തിനും അലങ്കാരജാഡ്യത്തിനുമെതിരെ പല്ലും നഖവും ഉപയോഗിച്ചു പോരാടിയ സി.പി. പക്ഷേ, മയൂരസന്ദേശത്തെ നിരൂപിച്ചപ്പോൾ വ്യക്തിപക്ഷപാതം കാണിച്ചില്ലേ എന്നു സംശയിക്കണം. മനസ്സിരുത്തിനോക്കിയാൽ വക്താവിനും ശ്രോതാവിനും സന്ദർഭത്തിനും ഒന്നുപോലെ സദൃശമായിട്ടല്ലാതെ ഒരുപദം പോലും മയൂരസന്ദേശത്തിലില്ല എന്ന സി.പി.യുടെ നിലപാട് നമ്മെ അമ്പരപ്പിക്കുന്നു. കൈരളീഭക്തി എന്നതിലേറെ എല്ലാ അർത്ഥത്തിലും അന്നു സമ്രാട്ടായി വാണരുളിപ്പോന്ന കേരളവർമ്മയ്ക്കു സ്തുതി അർപ്പിക്കുന്ന ഒന്നായിപ്പോയി മയൂരസന്ദേശനിരൂപണം.

സാഹിത്യമാസികയിലൂടെ നിരൂപണത്തിൽ മുദ്ര പതിപ്പിച്ച സി.പി. അടിസ്ഥാനപരമായി ഒരു പുസ്തകാഭിപ്രായക്കാരനായിരുന്നു. ചിലപ്പോഴൊക്കെ ഭാവത്തെ സ്പർശിക്കുന്നിടംവരെ എത്തുന്നുണ്ടെങ്കിലും കൃതിയുടെ ആന്തരികതലത്തിലേക്കിറങ്ങി സമഗ്രമായ സാഹിത്യസൗന്ദര്യം കാട്ടിത്തരുന്ന വിമർശനകല സി.പി.യിൽ കാണുന്നില്ല. പത്രത്താളുകൾക്കായി നിരൂപണം എഴുതിയതിനാലാവാം സമഗ്രസൗന്ദര്യത്തിലേക്ക് പ്രകാശം പരത്താനുള്ള യത്നം ഇല്ലാതെ പോയത്. സാഹിത്യത്തിന്റെ പൊതുതത്ത്വങ്ങളിലേക്കോ സാഹിത്യവിമർശനത്തിന്റെ സാങ്കേതിക വശങ്ങളിലേക്കോ കടന്ന് അവയുടെ അടിസ്ഥാനത്തിൽ വിശാലമായൊരു ക്യാൻവാസിൽ സാഹിത്യകൃതികളെ വിലയിരുത്താനുള്ള യത്നം സി.പി.യിൽ നിന്നുണ്ടായില്ല. സന്തുലിതമായ മൂല്യനിർദ്ധാരണമോ സാധകബാധകയുക്തികളോടെയുള്ള അനുഭൂതി നിവേദനമോ ആ രചന കളിലില്ല. വിമർശനകലയുടെ ആന്തരഗൗരവമോ ലാവണ്യമോ സമഗ്രതയോ സി.പി.യുടെ രചന കൾക്കില്ലെന്നു ചുരുക്കം.

വൈകാരികതയുടെ അതിപ്രസരം സി.പി.യുടെ ഖണ്ഡന നിരൂപണങ്ങളിൽ പൊതുവേയുണ്ട്. മധുമാധവം, രതിസുന്ദരി ഇവയെപ്പറ്റിയുള്ള നിരൂപണങ്ങൾ ഉദാഹരണം. പക്ഷമതിയായ ഒരു നിരൂപകനു ചേർന്നതല്ല ഇതിലെ പല പ്രയോഗങ്ങളും ശൈലികളും. സാഹിത്യമാസികകളിലും പത്രങ്ങളിലും പ്രത്യക്ഷപ്പെടുന്ന ഗ്രന്ഥാവലോകനങ്ങളെ നിരൂപണമായി ഗണിക്കുന്ന പൊതുരീതിയാണ് സാഹിത്യത്തിലുള്ളത്. ആ നിലയ്ക്ക് അച്യുതമേനോനെയും ഒരു നിരൂപകനായി ഗണിക്കുന്നതിൽ അപാകതയില്ല. അതിനപ്പുറമുള്ള ഉയരം സി.പി.ക്ക് ഇല്ലതാനും. ചീത്തകൃതികളെ നിരുത്സാഹപ്പെടുത്തുക എന്നത് വിമർശക ധർമ്മമായി അംഗീകരിപ്പിച്ചത് സി.പി. അച്യുത മേനോന്റെ നേട്ടമാണ്.

മലയാള വിമർശനത്തിലെ പ്രാരംഭഘട്ടത്തിന്റെ വക്താക്കളായ കേരളവർമ്മയ്ക്കും സി.പി. അച്യുതമേനോനും എന്തെല്ലാം പരിമിതികളുണ്ടായിരുന്നെങ്കിലും ഗൗരവപൂർണ്ണമായ സാഹിത്യ വിമർശനം പിൻക്കാലത്തു രൂപപ്പെടുന്നതിന് പ്രചോദനമേകാൻ അവർക്ക് കഴിഞ്ഞു. മലയാള സാഹിത്യത്തിന്റെ സർവതോമുഖമായ വികാസം ലക്ഷ്യമാക്കി പ്രവർത്തിച്ച കേരളവർമ്മയുടെ സ്വക്ഷേത്രം വിമർശനമായിരുന്നില്ല. സി.പി. അച്യുതമേനോനാകട്ടെ ഒരു സമഗ്രവിമർശകനായി വികസിക്കാനായില്ല. രണ്ടുപേരിലും വിമർശനം സൃഷ്ടി എന്നു വിശേഷിപ്പിക്കാവുന്ന അവസ്ഥ യിലെത്തിയില്ല. മലയാളവിമർശനം ബാലാരിഷ്ടതകളെ അതിവർത്തിക്കാതിരുന്ന ഒരു കാലമായി പ്രാരംഭഘട്ടത്തെ കണക്കാക്കാം.

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Janus Nanoparticles- A Review

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ABSTRACT

Janus nanoparticles amphiphilic colloidal – particles with two regions of different surface chemical composition. Due to their anisotropic architecture, these objects have been used successfully for catalytic or sensing applications, for drug delivery or regenerative medicine. The interesting features of Janus colloidal particles are attributed to their tunable and controllable asymmetric structure, which allows controlling their physicochemical properties, down to the nanoscale. Janus particles represent the first example in which the two hemispheres exhibit distinctly different chemical and physical properties, which is analogous to the dual-faced Roman god, Janus. This article introduces types, synthetic strategies and applications of Janus nanoparticles.

Key words: Janus nano particles, Inorganic hybrid particles, nonepitaxial deposition, drug delivery systems, colloidosomes, biocompatibility

INTRODUCTION

Janus nanoparticles can have very different chemical nature and their size can vary from few nanometers up to tens of microns, but they all share a common characteristic. The concept of Janus nanoparticles first raised by P. G. de Gennes in his Nobel prize address in 1991. ¹ Janus particles describe particles with two sides of opposite polarity or it refers to the integration of two or more chemically discrepant composites into one structure system. The amphiphilic Janus particles were speculated to form a monolayer in the air-water interface like surfactant molecules, and this particulate film would allow small molecules to transport. ^{2,3} Since the first synthesis of Janus particles in 1988, a large variety of synthetic methods have been developed to contribute to the thriving growth of Janus particle research. Independent of the various materials and techniques a variety of strategies are employed for the synthesis of Janus nanoparticles. ⁴ Janus particles can be made of polymers, lipids, dendrimers or inorganic materials, so Janus particles can be polymer- polymer, dendrimer-

dendrimer, polymer- lipid, inorganic- inorganic, polymer- inorganic hybrid particles. Among these inorganic- inorganic, organic- inorganic, polymer- polymer are important. Inorganic-inorganic Janus particles are in the shape of two different conjoined inorganic materials or a single inorganic particle with two faces that each side may have different chemical composition and properties.

DISCUSSION

The first category is fabricated by the nucleation and growth of a single particle onto the surface of precursor particles. Another fabrication method is based on toposelective surface modification strategies, partial covering of the inorganic particle surface and functionalization of the opposite surface by other inorganic particle. The preparation of inorganic Janus material is based on different mechanisms, such as heterogeneous or homogeneous nucleation, conjoining at liquid- liquid interfaces, nonepitaxial deposition followed by crystallization. ⁵Polymer- polymer Janus particle are composed of two polymeric segments of which each polymeric segments can be functionalized with special ligands or targeting agents separately. Since polymers are the backbone of pharmaceutical drug delivery systems, this group of Janus material can play the most important role in generation of drug carriers. ^{6,7}Polymeric Janus objects are featured in controllable asymmetric structures and physicochemical performances, such that each side may be responsive to different stimuli, such as solvent, pH, temperature, or other stimuli. Organic-inorganic hybrid materials have been taken into consideration in the drug delivery field, owing to the addition of special properties such as optical and magnetic properties that are existed in some inorganic material to other required properties such as biocompatibility, amphiphilicity and stimuli sensitivity of polymer material. The structural asymmetry of Janus particles that contain compartments with different chemical, optical, electrical, or magnetic properties enables to perform many functions such as dual-targeting, molecular sensing, and in vivo imaging, which are incompatible when they are combined on the same surface, in a single structural unit. Although individual components coexist together in Janus particles, however the intrinsic optical, magnetic, and electronic properties of each component are not often altered, interfered with, or lost, thereby exhibiting improved physical/chemical properties and great potential in numerous applications. This exceptionality makes Janus particles a unique category of materials in contrast to other particles. A number of synthetic strategies have been developed to synthesize Janus nanoparticles JNPs synthetic techniques can be broken down into three broad categories: masking, phase separation, self assembly.

Masking, Phase separation, Self assembly

Masking is the simplest JNP synthetic strategy to envision and provides significant flexibility in terms of the types of materials that can be used, but can be difficult to realize due to specific system requirements to be effective. Masking is a process that includes to steps, in first step one side of a spherical particle is masked by a protective layer and in a second step chemical or physical modification is performed on the unmasked part followed by the removal of the masking layer. In this way the original homogenous particle is now a JP particle because it has different surface properties, even though its bulk composition remains the same. Bimetallic Co/Ni, Ag/Au, Ni/Au Janus particles could be made using the same method, first the particles were coated with one metal using e-beam evaporation, then the silica beads were inverted and coated with another metal. The preparation of JPs from 2D layers is highly effective but not scalable to produce large amounts. Buy gram-scale amounts of JPs could be obtained by first taking fused homogenous silica particles (800 nm and 1.5µm in diameter) and use them to emulsify molten wax at high temperature. Then the obtained

emulsion was cooled to room temperature to obtain solid wax colloidosomes that have homogenous particles trapped/embedded on their surface, the wax could be chemically reacted with APS on the water exposed part, then after dissolving the wax colloidosome they could be hydrophobised on the other side with n-octadecyl trichlorosilane (OTS). Another way to produce JNPs is through the phase separation of two or more chemically dissimilar components. The phase separation method are composed of either emulsion technique, consisting of seeded emulsion polymerization (SEP), solvent evaporation in emulsion droplets or device techniques consisting of fluidic nanoprecipitation system (FNPS), or electrohydrodynamic (EHD). Janus nanoparticles are synthesized by these methods through phase separation strategy. The phase separation of two immiscible polymers or lipids is the basis of phase separation techniques using single oil in water and double emulsion. The resultant particle shape is influenced by interfacial tensions between two polymers and interfacial tensions between each of the polymers and aqueous phase containing surfactants. The final approach to produce polymeric JNPs is through self-assembly of dissimilar components in an ordered way. In contrast, JPs can give rise to a larger variety of self-assembled superstructures, such as trimmers, spherical micelles, capsules and crystals, which can be of great importance for obtaining novel reconfigurable materials and assemblies at non-equilibrium also referred to as “active matter” that can perform different functions. The ability of JPs to self-assembly into complex and regular structures that show unusual and reconfigurable properties is a remarkable property and is one of the main driving motivations for further research in this area.

APPLICATION

Janus nanoparticles have wide range of applications in the field such as, surfactants, sensors, drug delivery, display, coating, self propellant carriers etc. JNPs improve emulsion polymerization when they were used as surfactants because they adsorb strongly at the liquid-liquid interface. JNPs interfacial catalysis activity has been investigated for redox, decomposition, enzymatic and other reactions. Several computational studies suggest that JNPs can be employed to precisely tune the shape of these interfaces. As such, this area promises to continue to grow in interesting directions as new self-assembled structures can be realized.

JNPs are particularly well studied to biomedical applications because of their multi functionality and biocompatibility. Targeted drug delivery has also been demonstrated with one face containing moieties that bind to particular groups and other that holds the drug.^{8,9} JNPs with magnetic or metallic materials in their cores aid in tracking the drug delivery process through techniques like MRI or computed tomography (CT). JNPs have been widely investigated for cancer therapeutic applications including chemotherapy, magnetolytic therapy, phototherapy and the combination of multiple treatments. Compared with conventional core-shell or alloy nanoparticles, JNPs have some distinct advantages including heterogenous structures, little interference among the elements, distinct surfaces for different functionalizations and modifications JNPs have been used for treating cancers, not just through drug delivery, but also through photothermal therapy where gold JNPs irradiated with near-infrared light can locally heat, killing nearby cancer cells. For an example, the experiment done by Zhang *et al*, in which JNP consists of a swellable polymer domain that can be loaded with drugs and that is grafted with a tumor-specific target, the other face consists of a spherical gold nanoparticle with gold branches that are grafted with poly (ethylene oxide) (PEO) to impart biocompatibility.^{10,11,12} This combination allowed them to target a tumor, deliver the drug directly, and further kill the cancer cells through photothermal effects, which significantly increased treatment effectiveness in their mouse model. The biomedical

applications of JNPs found to be limitless Also in 2010, Janus nanoparticles synthesized from hydrophobic magnetic nanoparticles on one side and poly(styrene-block-allyl alcohol) on the other side were used for imaging and magnetolytic therapy. ¹³Magnetic Janus nanoparticles could serve as the basis for potential applications in medicine and electronics. It turns out the Janus is not only reserved for synthetic particles but also naturally occurring proteins, such as the hydrophobins produced by fungi, HFBII from *Trichoderma Reesei* that is nearly globular with a 3 nm diameter and 7.2 kDa . Interestingly, it has been shown that HFBII is an excellent foam stabiliser and is responsible for beer gushing.

CONCLUSION

Janus particle motors are capable of converting chemical and electrical energy into mechanical energy using a versatile variety of scenario by the scientific and technological opportunities offered by going beyond equilibrium excites many researchers currently. These active particles constitute model systems in which to study out-of-equilibrium materials including active matter. Janus nanoparticles are useful to wide variety of applications, using wax based emulsion seems to be an applicable method for preparing fully polymeric or organic- inorganic Janus nanoparticles. Large range of possibilities and interesting capabilities of Janus nanoparticles are described so far and the main challenges to be face yet, advances mainly in the preparation and modification of Janus particles with additional capabilities and in their practical applications in real-world systems are expected to drive researchers working in this exciting field. JNPs have some distinct superiorities over core-shell nanoparticles for cancer theranostics, such as anisotropic architecture for independent drug release, minimum signal interruptions among imaging materials, active drug delivery as nanomotors. Nevertheless, the mass production, precise control of size and morphology, biosafety and sophisticated synergy of multiple therapeutic modalities could be the future research focuses for broader applications and clinical translation.

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Vegetarian State and Political Body: A Study of Han King's *The Vegetarian and Human Acts*

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ABSTRACT

South Korea is visible to us through various interfaces. One, with constant comparisons and conflict-ridden relationships with its namesake North Korea, an epitome of dictatorial communist regime and seen as a regressive and oppressive place not easily accessible to people. We also see South Korea as a technologically advanced country which houses big tech giants like Samsung and LG. For example, the nation came into news recently as having the fastest domestic internet in the world. The technology also comes with its challenges, there are institutes in South Korea which serve as deaddiction centres for children and teenagers and even adults who are addicted to technological devices and has no social life. The competition-driven environment also pushes students and young men and women into suicides. On a more positive side, we have the savoury and meat-rich Korean cuisine made famous through Korean dramas which gain popularity even among Indian youth, more so in the North Eastern states where large scale piracy of these DVDs happen and Bollywood entertainment is less popular.

INTRODUCTION

The technological supremacy of the Korean nation and its capitalist economy sits on a marshy land of historical turmoil. The first half of the twentieth century in Korean history is marked by two grave and painful experiences: the Japanese occupation between 1910 and 1945 and the Korean War of 1950–53. These events dominate the collective national psyche for generations. The legacy of the colonial period is complex and fraught with emotion. The Japanese colonialists' push toward modernization brings tremendous technological, and

consequently social, advances, such as the building of infrastructure and the development of modern school systems. The Japanese also carried out the first modern archaeological excavations of ancient Korean sites (royal tombs, temples, ceramic kilns) and preservation of their artifacts. On the flip side is the question of the colonialists' intentions and their methods in these cultural endeavors, and more seriously, war crimes of torture, rape, and killing. In the postcolonial period, Korea struggles with the issue of how to reconcile the positive developments of the colonial era and the unforgettable brutality, humiliation, and loss.

The Vegetarian's painful conflicts begin when Yeong-hye unexpectedly breaks cultural mores and declares herself a vegetarian, leading to her husband's consternation, confusion, and anger over his wife's seemingly small subversion. She lectures no one, proselytizes not in the least: she wants to stop eating meat after a vicious dream repels her from partaking it. Her husband cannot let pass this small desire of his wife's. After "embarrassing" him at an important work-related dinner, he wonders, "What shadowy recesses lurked in her mind, what secrets I'd never suspected? In that moment, she was utterly unknowable." The section ends with a haunting family scene that escalates into an act of abuse that permeates into the following two sections.

Section 2, "Mongolian Mark," gives voice to Yeong-hye's brother-in-law. A video artist who has not produced any work due to his obsession with the idea of his sister-in-law's birthmark, he creates a work that destroys the rest of his life so he can find out what tableau his and Yeong-hye's body would create: "Would they seem like one body, a hybrid of plant, animal, and human?" When he is caught by his wife in the act, he sees how his desire subsumes both of the sisters.

The third and last section "Flaming Trees" brings the sisters together to come to terms with their violent upbringings. Yeong-hye now refuses to eat and is hospitalized on the edge of death. Diagnosed with anorexia nervosa, she remains misunderstood: catatonic for hours and then animal-like in her resistance to a feeding tube. Her sister sits by her bed, trying one last time to coax her sister to eat by bringing childhood favorites to her younger sister's lips. In-hye, also separated from her husband, works to understand her sister's motives and desires, though they remain inscrutable.

The individual remains incomprehensible in this stunning novel. Kang's structure of three stand-alone novellas strung together to tell one larger story illustrates the loneliness of the individual who is forced to connect with others.

The book *Human Acts* begins with a dream-like prologue of sorts. In it Dong-ho, a ghost boy, searches for his friend, and his initial fear about the coming rain soon acquires shocking relevance. The downpour will only add to the stench of those decomposing bodies not yet placed in coffins. Many have been identified by relatives; others remain unclaimed: "[T]hese are all fully covered. Their faces are revealed only occasionally, when someone comes looking for a young girl or a baby. The sight of them is too cruel to be inflicted otherwise."

In one of several chilling sequences, a mound of bodies is set alight by soldiers, who stand about waiting until the dead have been further diminished. The ghost boy's courage is born of defiance: he disobeyed his elder brother and refused to go home. His quest results in his death. Han uses the second person voice to achieve a dream-like urgency, and the effect summons echoes of Antigone's search for her brother's corpse and also Orfeo in the underworld.

CONCLUSION

The body here becomes the site on which history imprints its memories and wounds and in the novels each character seems to be an allegory of the wounds and abscesses of Korean history. The main character who chooses to be Vegetarian and causing much angst in her family is unreconcilable with the technological supremacy and capitalistic progress of the society of which the Korean food is a prime example. Her turning to a body merely, becomes what Agamban calls bare life. Distinguished from its Greek origins Agamben formulates Her vegetarianism in fact leads her body to be in a vegetative state, which is when a body becomes unresponsive or brain dead. But here the state is not of brain death, but one of social death, one that does not respond to the mores and morals of society, one that rejects the norms of the society with the essentialist body proper, which is the last site of human resistance. The elisions of Korean history is not recompensed with the supreme capitalist progress it has gained now. The memories of colonization and war, cultural subjugation, torture, rape and killing is imprinted on the cultural psyche and its somatic manifestations as typified through the characters and events in Han Kang's novels is emblematic of the elisions in the study of history of the modern world.

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Synthesis of Graphene Oxide - A Review

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ABSTRACT

Graphene oxide (GO) is a modern material with unique physical and electrical properties that could reshape our future. Monomolecular sheets of graphite oxide is a compound of carbon, oxygen and hydrogen in variable ratios. It can be prepared by treating with strong oxidants. Graphene oxide is prepared by oxidising the purified natural flake graphite by modified Hummers method. The synthesized particle is then characterized by XRD, FTIR, Raman spectrometer analysis. The result demonstrate that the natural flake graphite when oxidised by strong oxidants introduced oxygen atoms in the graphite layers and formed bonds like C=O, C-H, COOH and C-O-C with the carbon atoms in the graphite layers.

Key words: Graphene derivatives, hydrophilic carbon material, dispersible, Hammer's method, conductive

INTRODUCTION

Graphene, a “wonder material” is the world’s- thinnest, strongest and stiffest material as well as being an excellent conductor of heat and electricity. Graphene is a material made of carbon atoms that are bonded together in a repeating pattern of hexagons. Its flat honey comb pattern gives it many extra ordinary characterizes such as being the strongest material in the world as well as one of the lightest, most conductive and transparent. As grapheme is expensive and relatively hard to produce, great efforts are made to find effective yet inexpensive ways to make grapheme derivatives or related materials. GO is one of those material made by powerful oxidation of graphite which obtained from slate pencil (soapstone) is cheap and abundant. It is considered easy to process since it is dispersible in water and it can be used to make grapheme. It is commonly sold in powder form, dispersed or as a coating on substrates. Its molecular formula is $C_{140}H_{42}O_{20}$

GO can be produced by simple normal method, Hummer's method and modified Hummers method. Different synthesis methods give rise to different types of graphene oxide. Many

teams are looking into ways of using GO as a shortcut to mass production of graphene. So far, the materials produced by these methods have shown to have more defects than those produced directly from graphite. Hummer's method remains a key point of interest because it is an easy method of producing large quantities of GO. Other groups have been focused on modified Hummers method to make it more efficient and environmentally friendly. XRD, FTIR are some common techniques to characterize GO sample. GO can be used as an electrical insulator. It is being pursued in many research labs.

CONCLUSION

Synthesis of GO by modified Hummers method has significant advantages over other methods. The protocol for running the reaction does not involve a large exotherm and produces no toxic gas. Moreover, the improved method yields high fraction of well oxidised hydrophilic carbon material. The obtained material is then characterized by spectrometer analysis which provide more opportunities for potential applications in many areas and also provide a reference to further study the nature of graphene and GO.

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A Survey on the Consumer Attitude towards Single use Plastic Ban in Kerala-2020

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ABSTRACT

The survey was done to estimate the consumer attitude to the SINGLE USE PLASTIC BAN IN KERALA-2020 in the two places- Kottayam Municipality, Thanneermukkom Grama Panchayat. The sample population were the residents and shopkeepers in these areas. A close-ended questionnaire was used to collect data from 75 respondents each in the urban and rural areas. The survey was done in an interview method. The result indicated that the larger proportion (urban-100%, rural-100%) of the respondents used plastic bags regardless of their age, occupation, economic and educational status than any other products before the ban. Low price(urban-42%, rural-47%), availability (urban-44%,rural-43%) were the main reasons for the increasing trend of plastic before the ban. There is a decreasing trend in the usage of single-use plastic bags in these areas post the ban. The majority of the respondents were aware about the ban and started using alternatives for plastics. The dumping and disposal were the major problems for them. Among the practices used for the disposal, open dumping (urban- 48%, rural-52%) was the widely used practice. They have considerable knowledge about many of the environmental hazards caused by these plastics and information on human health effects is growing, but many concerns and uncertainties remain. There are solutions, but these can only be achieved through combined actions of the people and the concerned authorities such as organising awareness classes, providing regular plastic collection service and providing alternatives for plastic products. This survey helped us in identifying whether there was a change in perception of the people after the plastic ban.

Keywords- Single use plastic ban, plastic pollution, plastic alternatives

INTRODUCTION

The present time can be referred to as the Plastic age on account of the wide range uses of plastic products. Plastic bags were introduced in the 1970's and gained an increasing popularity amongst consumers and retailers. India is one of the fastest growing economies in the world, the production and consumption of plastic is growing rapidly. Plastics are accused of polluting natural resources and contributing to our environmental problem and thereby affecting eco-balance. Plastic products are now an indispensable part of human life. Hence it is very necessary that integrated measures are adopted to reduce the environmental hazards of plastics. The plastic products have replaced all other products, which were used in households, hospitals, agriculture, industry, defense, transport, etc. It is estimated that around 500 billion to 1 trillion plastic bags are used every year worldwide. Plastics industry served the needs of the common man at lowest cost with innumerable products to meet needs of daily life and convenience . The vast majority of these plastics are discarded after a single use. The molecules of plastics are principally made of carbon, nitrogen and oxygen. These are derived from petroleum, coal, salt, air and water. The properties of plastics depend to a large extent on the size and shape of the molecules of which they are composed. Plastic bags can persist in the environment for 1000 years without degrading and hence pose a disposal challenge without being decomposed by sunlight or microorganisms. A wide spectrum of plastic products produced by the industry has touched the life of every person in some way.

Plastics used for packaging and one time use plastics such as cups and plates, the so-called paper cups and plates have a thin coating of plastic and create waste management problems since the discarded materials are not disposed properly. Dumping of waste in open areas and streets without segregating it will reduce its quality and turn into hazardous plastic waste. The major share of plastic waste comes from households and shops. Non-destructible waste debris is common in every town. Accumulation of plastic bag wastes causes environmental pollution that can be manifested in a number of ways. One of the problems is deterioration of the natural beauty of an environment. Another common problem associated with these wastes is the death of animals. This necessitates proactive measures in order to safeguard animal species against extinction. Blockage of sewage systems is becoming a common problem in cities and instruments such as levies and taxes to restrict the use and production of plastic bags. There have been pressures and counter pressures on the government and local bodies to set targets for appropriate measures for solid waste management. Though they are not as effective, voluntary initiatives have also been attempted in some countries to reduce plastic bag use and plastic bag problems in the environment. As the nation industrializes and its economy develops with prosperity, the people demand and look for a better quality of life. People become more cautious about the air, the water and the land and they desire for better standards of health, hygiene and safety. Haritha Keralam Mission is one among the impactful programmers under the Government of Kerala. It encompasses three other Missions, Hygienic waste management for effective waste disposal, Jala Samirdhi for water conservation, Sujalam Suphalam for agricultural development, implemented through Local Self-Government bodies in a people-centric mode under the Water Resources, Local – Self Government and the Agricultural Departments respectively. Activities to ensure hygienic, cleaner and healthier surroundings, better sanitation, waste disposal at the source of generation, promotion of organic farming, prevention of dumping garbage in the water bodies zero pesticide cultivation, pure and pollution free water bodies, are all on the move for the cause of greener and cleaner Kerala under the stewardship of Hygienic Waste Management and Agricultural Development Karmasenas.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Description of the study areas, the study was conducted in two areas-

A.) Kottayam Municipality

Kottayam is a Municipality city in district of Kottayam, Kerala. Kottayam is located in the basin of the Meenachil river at an average elevation of 3 meters (9.8ft) above sea level. It is located 150 kilometers (93 mi) north of state capital Thiruvananthapuram. The Kottayam city is divided into 38 wards. Thirunakkara, Thazhathangadi, Karapuzha, Kanjikuzhy, Pullerikunnu, Kodimatha, Erayilkadavu, Parapadam and Nagambadam were the places for survey.

B.) Thanneermukkam Panchayat

Thanneermukkam is on the banks of the lake Vembanad. It is divided into 23 wards. The survey was done among the people in households and the shops in Thanneermukkam panchayat. Thanneermukkam, Veliyampra, Kannankara, Kattachira and Manaveli are the places selected for the survey.

A total of 150 people were surveyed. It includes the people from households and the shopkeepers of respective places. A close ended questionnaire was prepared and an interrogative survey was done to know the consumer attitude towards the ban. The main objectives of the survey are the following:

- To know the commonly used plastic item and the current trend of plastic use.
- To know whether the people are aware about single use plastic ban.
- To know the awareness of alternatives to plastic.
- To identify the disposal method used
- To know the awareness about the hazards caused by plastic.
- To know the initiatives taken by the authorities

Personal interactions were also made with some people. The data collected from questionnaire and personal investigation were subjected to statistical analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

- **TO KNOW THE COMMONLY USED PLASTIC ITEMS AND THE CURRENT TREND OF PLASTIC USE**

Of the 150 respondents, the largest proportion of them used plastic bags in high frequency as compared to other plastic products. This was followed by the usage of plastic bottles, plastic buckets, barrels and baskets and plastic shoes. These pre-ban results revealed that the majority of the respondents in each category used plastic bags in their daily life. The results indicated that usage of plastic bags was high among residents of Kottayam municipality(urban) and Thanneermukkam panchayat (rural).

Fig.1 & Fig. 2 The measured percentage changes in Bag-Use Profiles observed in both urban and rural areas.



Fig.3 Factors attributed for widespread utilization of plastic bags before single use plastic ban in Kerala

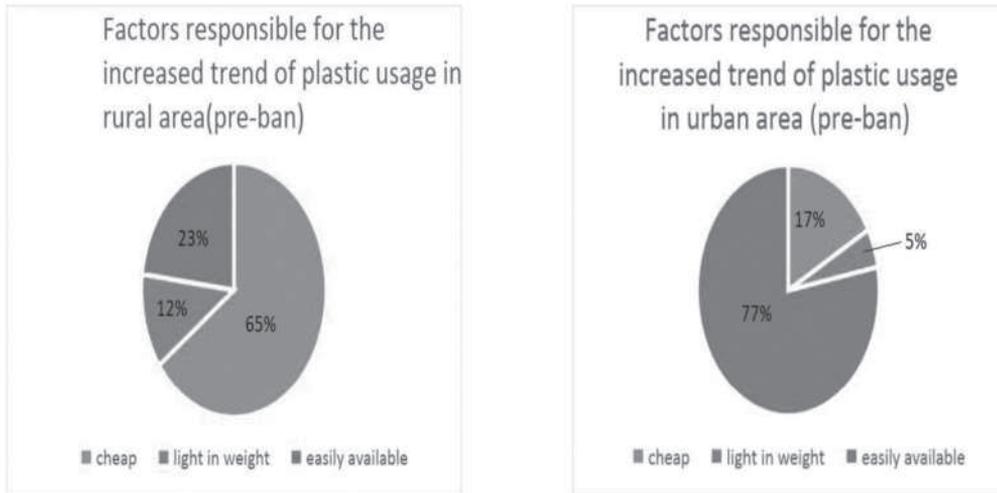


Fig.4-Trend of plastic bag usage in both urban and rural area after the single use plastic ban.

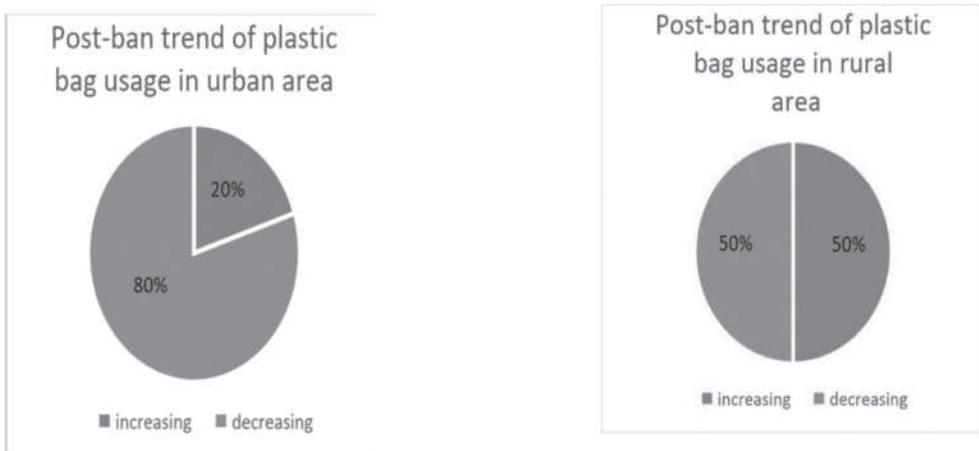


Fig.5 Factors responsible for the decreasing trend of plastic bag usage in both urban and rural area after the plastic ban in Kerala.

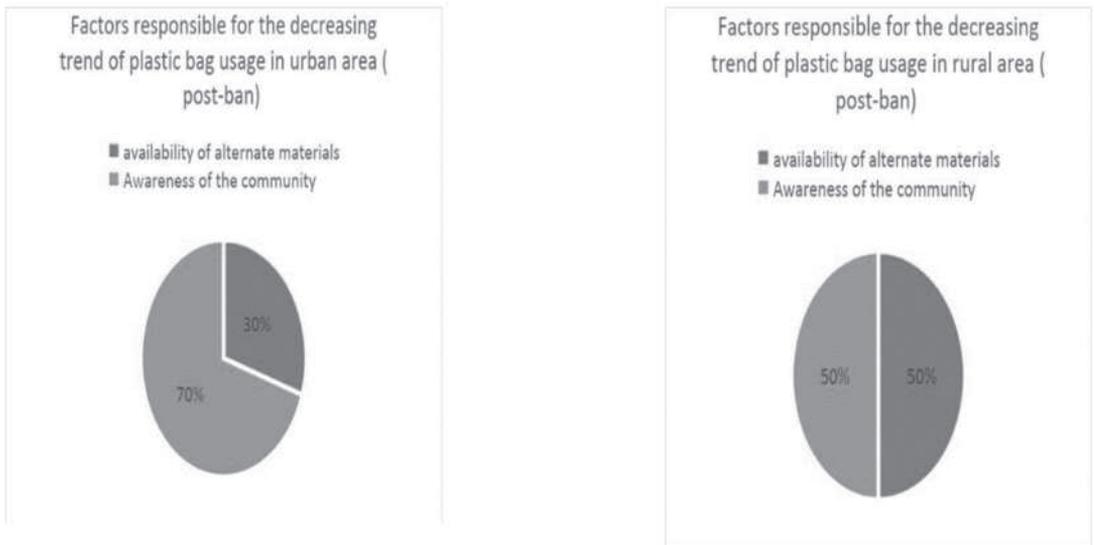


Fig.6 Media exposure of the community to get information about plastic ban in Kerala.

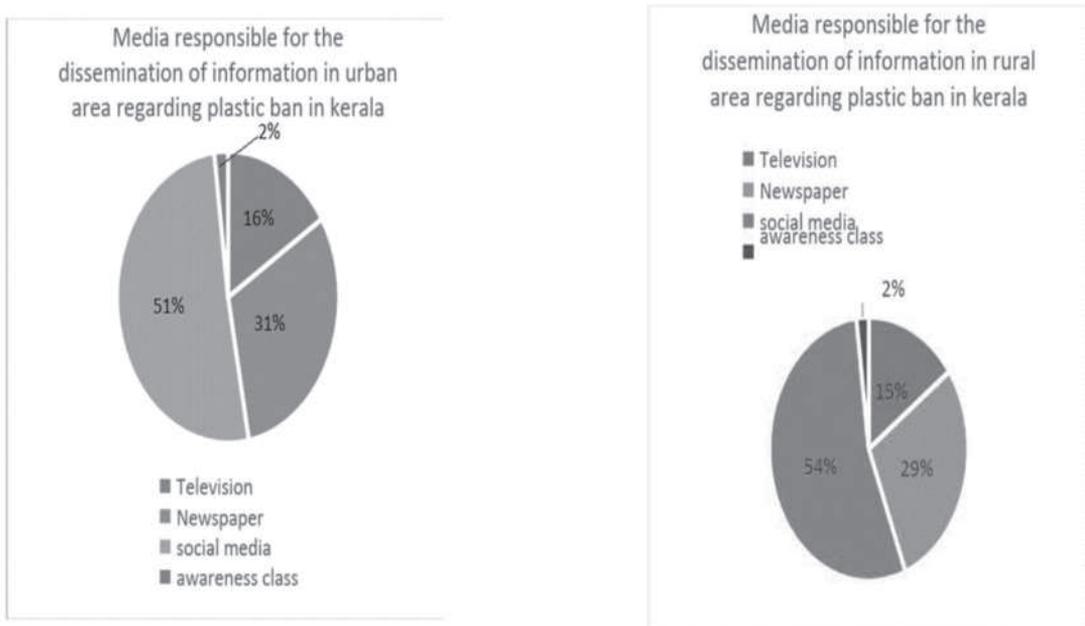
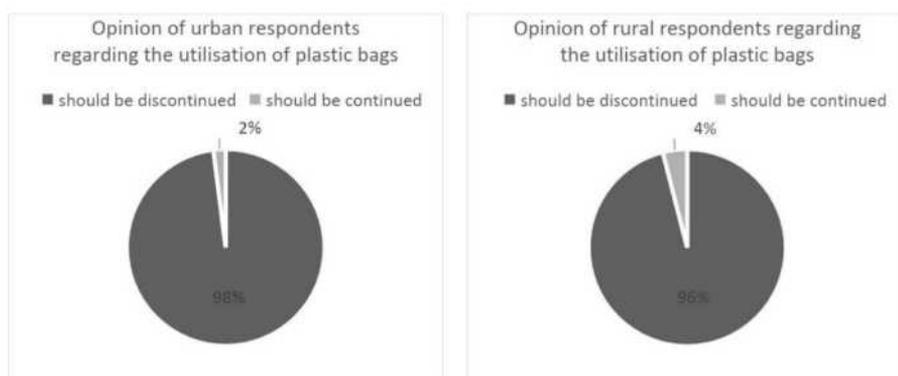


Fig.7 Preference of the study population for and against utilization of plastic bags

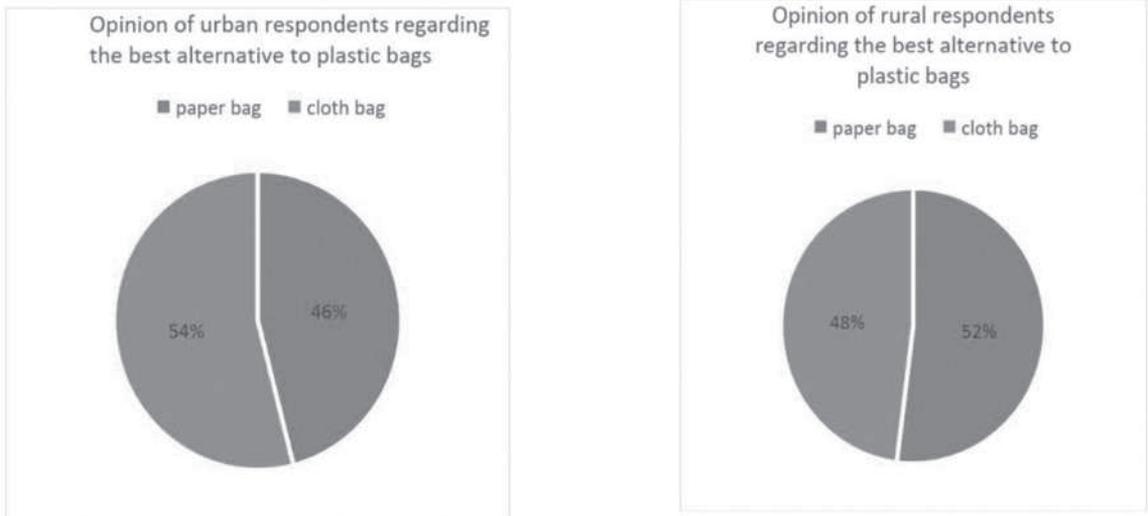


• TO KNOW THE AWARENESS ABOUT THE ALTERNATIVES TO PLASTIC

In our plastic-filled world, avoiding plastic can be pretty challenging. But finding alternatives to common items like plastic bottles, plastic bags and plastic packaging is becoming increasingly easier—and not a moment too soon for our plastic-choked planet.

There are many environmentally friendly alternatives to plastic bags, such as, jute bags, paper bags, bio-degradable bags, and reusable bags. Commonly, jute bags are recommended as an environment friendly alternative to plastic bags because the bags are made from biodegradable material which comes from a plant fibre called jute, mostly consisting of cellulose. This is eco-friendly and has no harmful effects on the environment and agriculture. Paper bags are also recommended as an environment friendly alternative to plastic bags. It has been suggested that the natural fibres of paper and its recyclability creates a positive image of the paper bags . Biodegradable plastic bags are another alternative to the non-biodegradable plastic bags; however, they are not free from environmental harm as they contain toxic materials. Therefore, the alternatives to plastic bags should be carefully assessed before adoption so that they are soil and environment friendly .The best alternatives to plastic shopping bags are fully biodegradable bags which are non-toxic for soil. Moreover, they might be manure for the soil after decomposition. Impulsive usage of plastic bags is very harmful and this habit should be changed. Moreover, impulsive purchases are characteristic to the non-supermarket retail sector, where reusable bags are less common and reduction campaigns have had limited success. With no reusable bag readily obtainable at hand, and no environment friendly alternatives being made available, consumers are thus overwhelmed with the experienced convenience and would thus gladly accept or even request for the plastic bags. Thus, impulsive purchases have a significant role in the reduction or increase of the plastic bags consumption and littering, and alternatives provided by retailers can conclusively form a critical factor to the success of reduction in the plastic bag usage. It is recognized that alternatives to the plastic bags provide an opportunity for retailers to consider the most appropriate bags for grocery usages. Furthermore, it is crucial that the bag proclaimed as an alternative to the plastic bags should be convenient for practical purpose of normal usage and also environmentally friendly. We need to use alternatives of plastic bags but we must bear in mind that alternative plastic gags should be less or no harmful for our environment, especially agriculture

Fig.8 Opinion of respondents regarding the best alternatives to plastic bag



● TO IDENTIFY THE DISPOSAL METHOD USED

It is obvious that at the end of their short service life, plastic bags become waste. Therefore, the respondents were also asked about the ways on how they used to dispose of plastic bag wastes. Most of these respondents used open dumping. Our field observations showed that plastic bag wastes constituted a larger share of plastic wastes in several residential areas in the city and its outskirts. The results (and observations) are consistent with other reports stating that in several cities of the country and also in cities of other parts of the world, especially in developing countries people prefer open dumping as a preferred means of disposal of plastic bag wastes, usually after a single use. As indicated in before, burning is also the commonly used method of disposal of plastic bag wastes in the study area. Of the female respondents, those respondents who burn plastic bag wastes were slightly larger as compared to those females who throw the wastes to the environment. The possible reason could be that many women use the plastic bag wastes for carrying fire in kitchens. It is a fact that burning can help to get rid of plastic bag wastes or to reduce the volumes of these wastes in the environment.

Fig.9 Practices of plastic bag waste disposal (in both urban and rural area)

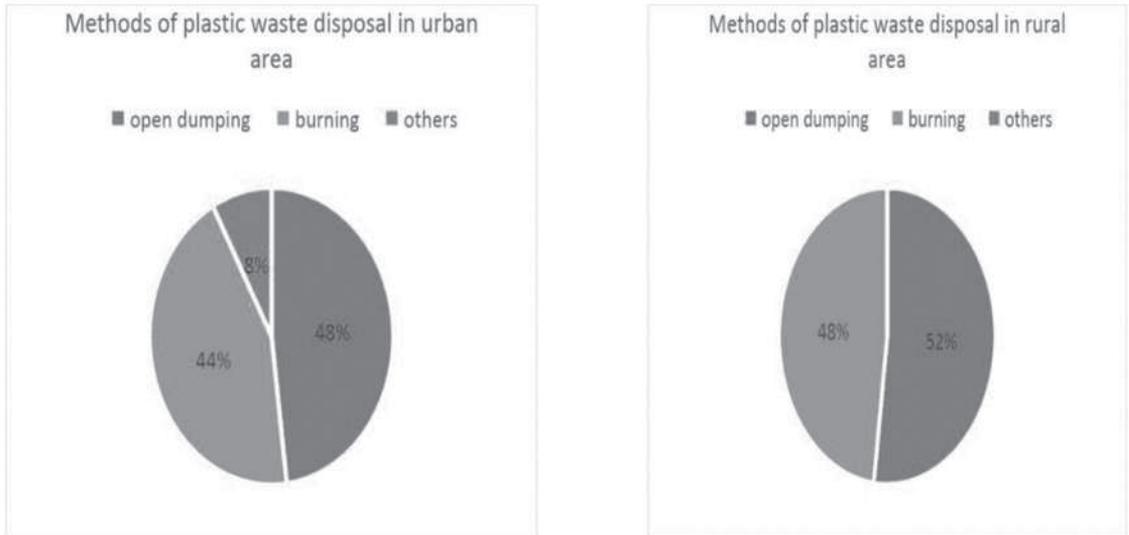


Fig.10 Collection service used by the respondents of urban and rural area

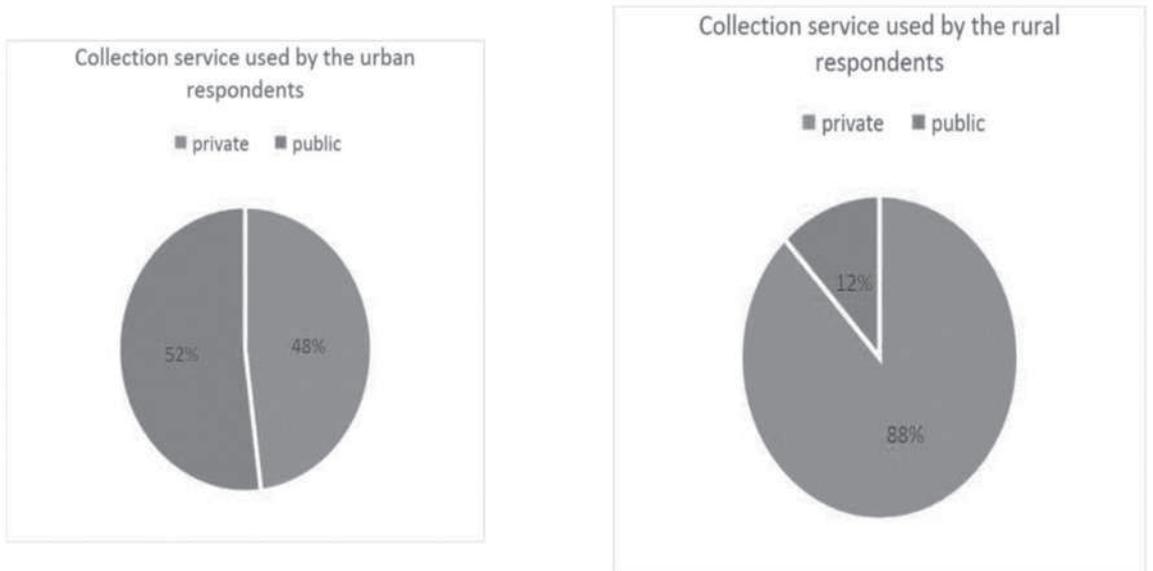
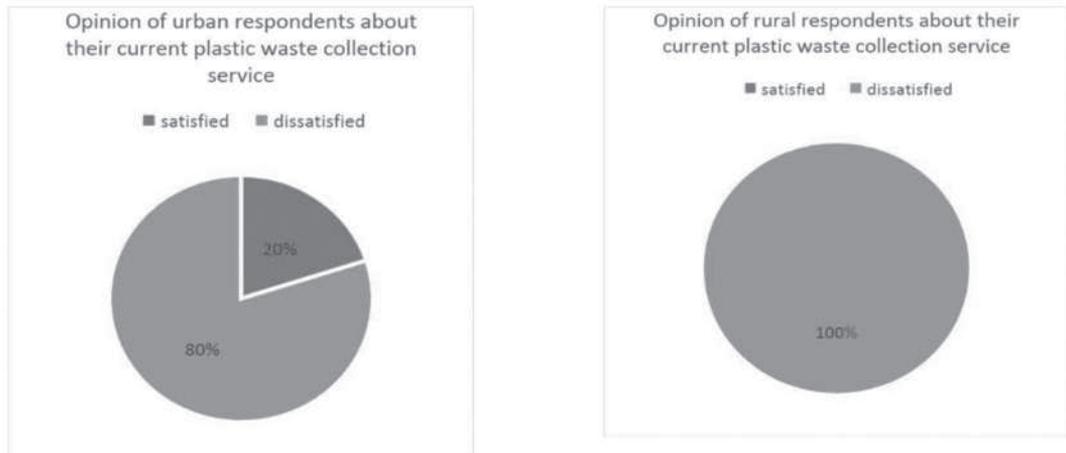


Fig.11 Opinion of respondents about their current plastic waste collection service



• TO KNOW THE AWARENESS ABOUT THE HAZARDS CAUSED BY THE PLASTIC

Plastic affects human health

Toxic chemicals leach out of plastic and are found in the blood and tissue of nearly all of us. Exposure to them is linked to cancers, birth defects, impaired immunity, endocrine disruption and other ailments.

Plastic never goes away

Plastic is a material made to last forever, yet 33 percent of all plastic – water bottles, bags and straws – are used just once and thrown away. Plastic cannot biodegrade; it breaks down into smaller and smaller pieces.

Plastic spoils our groundwater

There are thousands of landfills in the United States. Buried beneath each one of them, toxic chemicals from plastics drain out and seep into groundwater, flowing downstream into lakes and rivers.

Plastic attracts other pollutants

Chemicals in plastic which give them their rigidity or flexibility (flame retardants, bisphenols, phthalates and other harmful chemicals) are oily poisons that repel water and stick to petroleum-based objects like plastic debris. So, the toxic chemicals that leach out of plastics can accumulate on other plastics. This is a serious concern with increasing amounts of plastic debris accumulating in the world's oceans.

Plastic threatens wildlife

Wildlife becomes entangled in plastic, they eat it or mistake it for food and feed it to their young, and it is found littered in even extremely remote areas of the Earth. In our oceans alone, plastic debris outweighs zooplankton by a ratio of 36-to-1. Plastic piles up in the

environment. Indians discard more than 30 million tons of plastic a year. Only 8 percent gets recycled. The rest ends up in landfills is buried or becomes litter.

Plastic poisons our food chain.

Even plankton, the tiniest creatures in our oceans, are eating micro plastics and absorbing their hazardous chemicals. The tiny, broken-down pieces of plastic are displacing the algae needed to sustain larger sea life who feed on them.

Plastic costs billions to abate.

Everything suffers: tourism, recreation, business, the health of humans, animals, fish and birds—because of plastic pollution. The financial damage continuously being inflicted is inestimable.

Environmental hazards

Results of our survey indicated that these members of the society seem to have low concern about the environment. Therefore, efforts are Needed to sensitize every member of the community about the many-fold problems caused as a result of Plastic bag wastes indiscriminately introduced into the environment. Similar to other areas there are several problems associated with plastic bag wastes. Animal death, blockage of sewage systems (38%urban and 12%rural), deterioration of natural beauty of environment (littering) (28%urban and 48%rural) and human health problems (34%urban and 40%rural) were some of the problems stressed by the respondents. The data also indicated that all the factors are equally important problems.

Fig.12 Problems associated with plastic bag wastes (in urban and rural area)

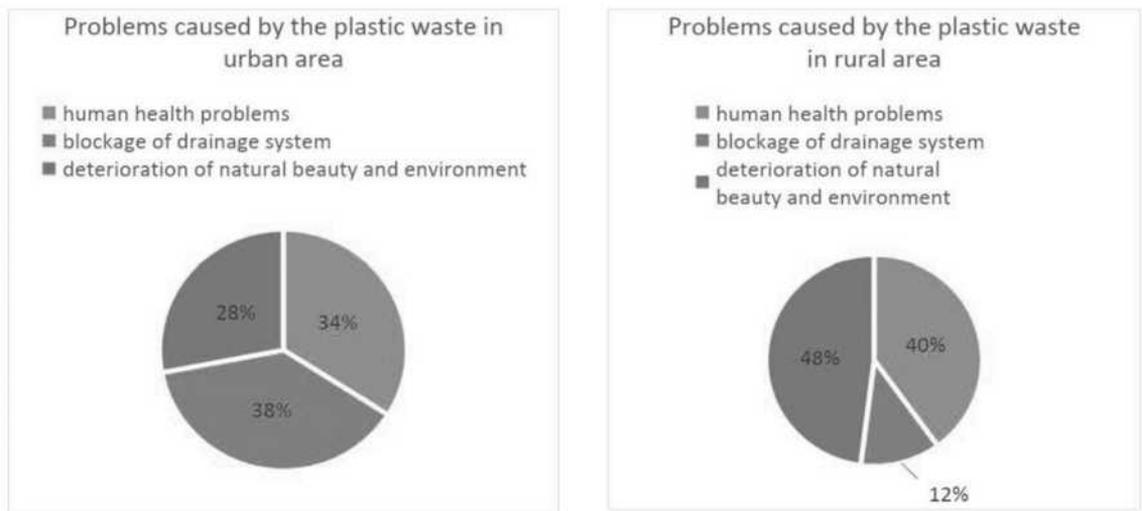
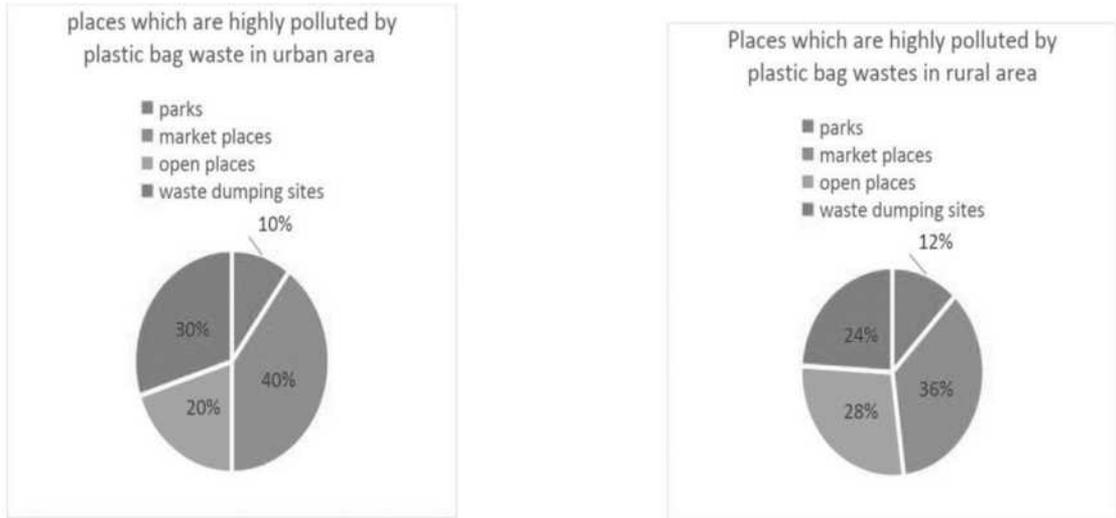


Fig.13 Areas which are seriously polluted by plastic bag wastes



● **TO KNOW THE INITIATIVES TAKEN BY THE AUTHORITIES**

The state government of Kerala has banned the manufacturing, sale, storage and transportation of single-use plastic products like carry bags, disposable cups, straws, PET bottles, etc. from January 1, 2020.

This key decision was taken at a cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on November 21, 2019, after taking into account the environmental and health issues the state faces given that it generates close to 45,000 tonnes of plastic waste a year. Kerala had already imposed restrictions on the use and sale of plastic less than 50 microns in 2018 and facilitated its proper collection, segregation and recycling. However, that decision’s robust implementation and availability of affordable alternatives remained a challenge.

With the current notification, the governing body has not only listed the banned products (branded and non-branded as well as compostable alternatives) but has also delineated and recommended substitutes in their places respectively (as represented in the table below), as part of a broader strategy toward more sustainable production. The notification also reiterated that the government will impose a fine of Rs 10,000 (Rs 25,000 for the second time and Rs 50,000 for subsequent violations, along with cancellation of the unit’s license) on producers, wholesale distributors and retailers if they fail to comply with the guidelines. Products such as those manufactured or imported by the Kerala State Beverages Corporation, Kerala Kerakarshaka Sahakarana Federation Ltd (KERAFED), Kerala Co-operative Milk Marketing Federation (KCMFM or MILMA), Kerala Water Authority and other PSUs are exempted from this ban and will instead be covered within the existent ambit of the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) plan, which needs to be channelised through the existing waste collection facilities set-up by the local bodies as mandated previously by the state government.

Besides, it is worth to mention that Kerala is one of the few states in India that has time and again mulled over the promotion and adoption of eco-friendly concepts like green protocol, Thiruvananthapuram Municipal Corporation (TMC) resource recovery centre (Clean Kerala Company), the Suchitwa Mission (Department of Local Self Government), zero-waste lifestyles and green habitat among others. Despite such noble initiatives, the usage of plastic items continued unabated in the state which became visibly evident after the devastating flood of August 2019, when massive chunks of plastic debris and bottles washed back on shore from the overflowing rivers and seas.

● **BENEFITS FROM THIS BAN**

Addresses the enormous problem associated with plastics like littering, excessive consumption at source, etc. which will ultimately minimise the mucking up of the landfills, waterways and breeding grounds for mosquitoes and flies. If the single-use plastic (43 per cent of waste) ban gets implemented successfully, Kerala's strategies can be used as a model for other states. Bans on plastic items also cause an uptick in business for reusable items manufacturers and lead to increased employment opportunities in that sector. Allows the fined money to be used strategically in the waste management sector such as building infrastructure, associated policies, creating awareness, conducting training programs for workers, facilitating more R&D (as post-disposal impacts for plastics are extremely high), etc. Provides an opportunity (if the value chain system is inclusive i.e. including all the stakeholders) to the plastic manufacturers to change their business model to one that fits with a more sustainable ideology. Reduces the dependency and pressure on limited non-renewable resources. Opens avenues for stakeholders to rethink, renovate and allocate budgets for technologies that would be able to capture the economic value of plastics, incentivising their recovery and recycling.

Concerns: Where plastic bans falls short While the move is a decisive step in expressing commitment to environmental causes, complete bans have a poor track record in altering the behaviour of different stakeholders. It often leads plastic manufacturers to scale back their businesses, and results in lobbying of the industries that ultimately 'harms the economy'. Such bans are hardly considered to 'nudge' or stimulate more conscious consumption behaviour in people as enforcement of the law prompts behaviour in the opposite direction and instils fear of punishment from the criminal justice system in them.

Kerala being a consumer state, most of the products come from other states with the already prescribed standard package which is used in the rest of the country, and hence the immediate ban on plastic items would impact its manufactures.

Like the two sides of a coin, a ban on plastics has its own pros and cons. Yet, the focus should be on striding over the challenges by making the system inclusive, pragmatic and time-bound.

Besides that, authorities implemented numerous awareness classes in order to disseminate the information regarding the hazards caused by the plastic bag waste and their disadvantages. Of the 150 respondents 84%(urban) 60%(rural) of them were familiar with the awareness programmes regarding the ban of plastic in their locality.

Among them 6%(urban) and 8%(rural) of respondents had participated in an awareness class conducted in their locality. Most of the respondents of the study area were not satisfied with the legal measures taken by the authorities (88%urban, 96%rural) and the rest of them were content with the measures.

Fig.14 Measured percentage of respondents who had participated in awareness classes regarding the ban of plastics.

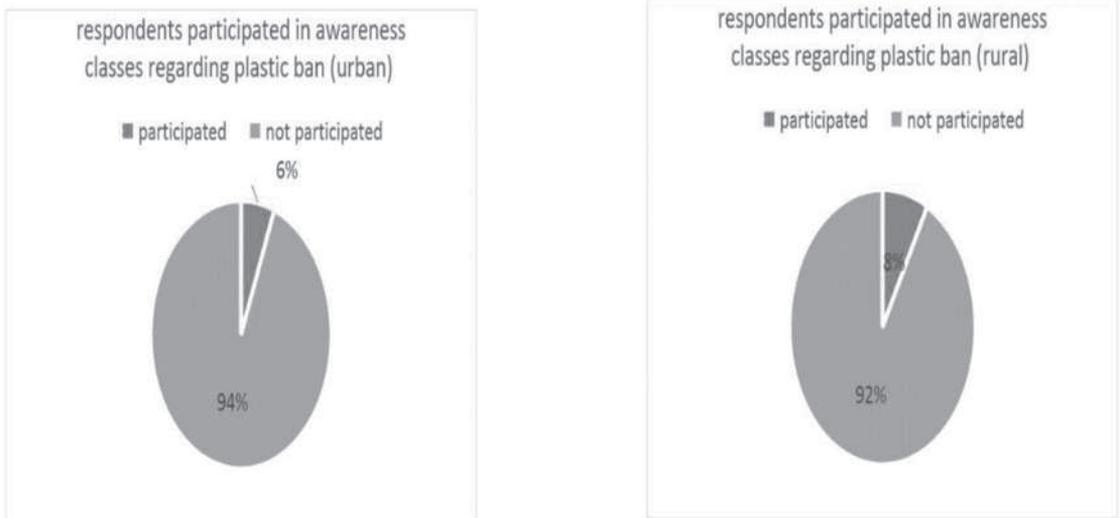


Fig.15 Opinion of respondents regarding the legal measures taken by the authorities

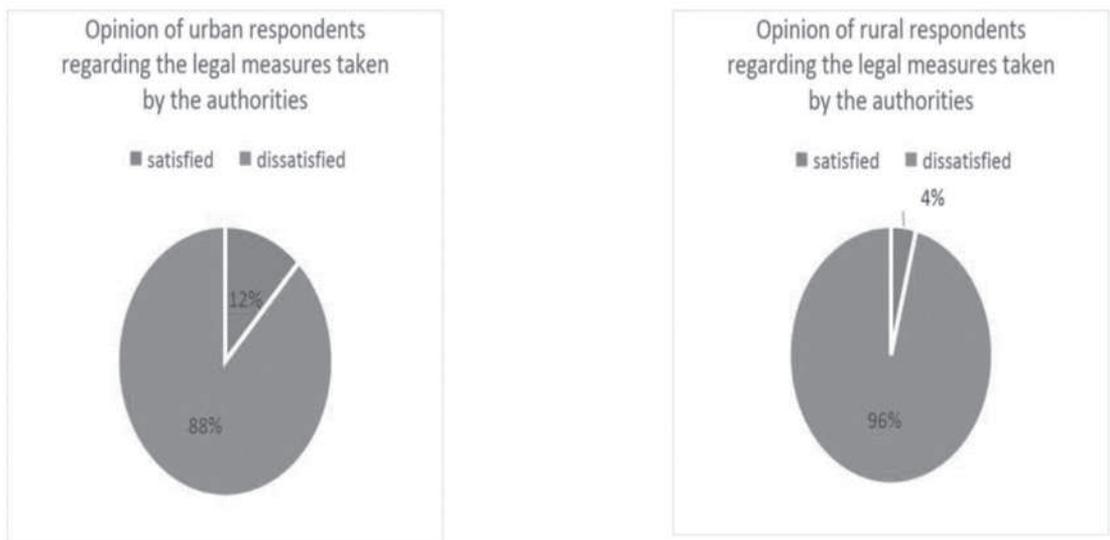


Fig.16 Impact to the business after the implementation of single use plastic ban in kerala

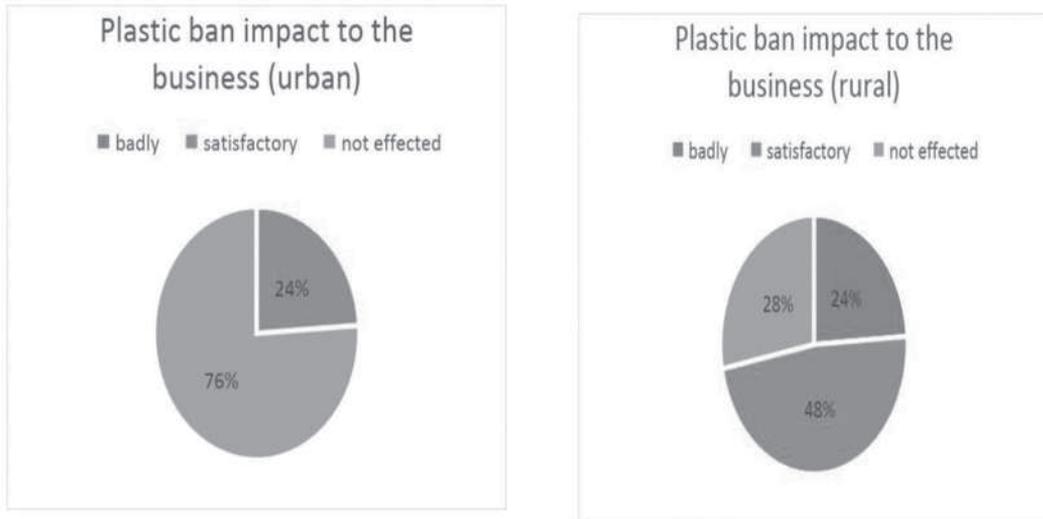
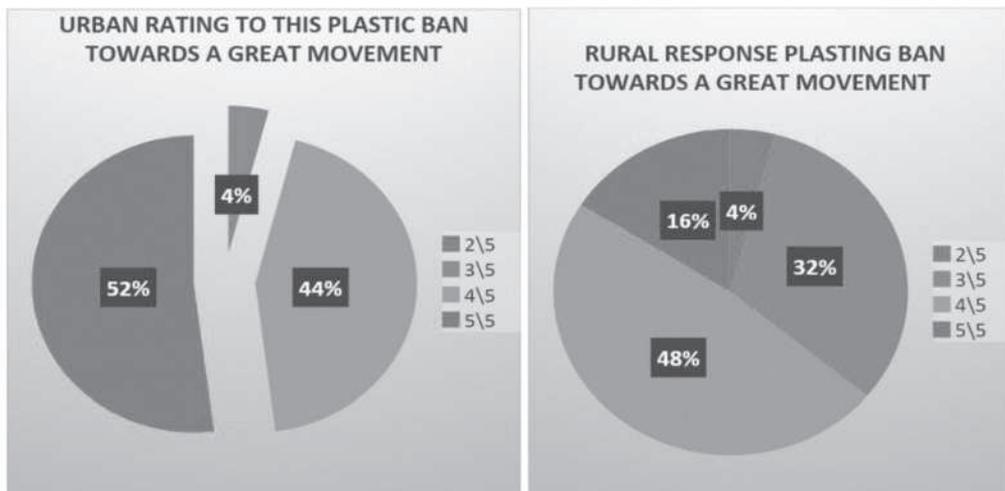


Fig.17 “Plastic ban is a great movement towards a new plastic free india”?



CONCLUSION

The result of the present study indicated that most of the respondents, regardless of their demographic background, are in favour of banning plastic products distribution and use of these plastic products, and are aware of the adverse effects of plastic bag wastes on environment, animal and human health. However, plastic bags were widely used by the community more than any other plastic products mainly due to their cheapness, availability etc. The survey results and field observations indicated that the rate of usage of single use plastic bags have decreased considerably after the ban in Kerala. By and large, it can be recommended that various campaigns need to be organized in order to mobilize the public and other stakeholders (Government agencies, business associations, retailers, research institutions, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), youth associations, women associations, religious institutions, donors and the media) against indiscriminate use and disposal of plastic bags in order to minimize the excessive accumulation of plastic bag wastes in the environment. Moreover, passing the bill of single use plastic ban alone is not sufficient to curb the problem of plastic bag wastes. Therefore, the state government in collaboration with other concerned authorities of the urban and rural area should encourage people to use environment-friendly alternative materials, such as cloth bags, paper bags and natural fibre bags by making these alternatives easily available, and cheap among both communities so that we can convert this decreasing trend of plastic bag usage to plastic free Kerala.

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