

Patriarchy:

A study on the Malayalam movies ‘Sufiyum Sujathayum’ and ‘Kumbalangi Nights’

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Certificate

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled **Patriarchy: A study on the Malayalam movies 'Sufiyum Sujathayum' and 'Kumbalangi Nights'** is a *bona fide* record of sincere work done by Soney George, Register number: 210021000945, Research Centre and Postgraduate Department of English, Bharata Mata College, Thrikkakara, in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Bachelor of Arts in English Language and Literature under the Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam during the years of study 2021-2024.

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Declaration

I, Soney George, hereby declare that the presented dissertation **Patriarchy: A Study on the Malayalam Movies 'Sufiyum Sujathayum' and 'Kumbalangi Nights'** is a genuine record done by me under the guidance of Mr. Joyson Jose, Assistant Professor, Research Centre and Postgraduate Department of English, Bharata Mata College, Thrikkakara, and has not been previously submitted for the award of any degree or diploma.

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Chapter- 1

Introduction

Patriarchal theory examines the framework of a fictitious society in which men have complete control over women. This theory speaks out forcefully against the denial of fundamental rights for women. An organisational structure known as the patriarchal system unequally divides authority between men and women. Men have total power over women in terms of property, freedom, authority, and leadership in a society that is patriarchal. This world-wide, male-dominated society extended to all contemporary developing nations.

Many female authors expressed their dissatisfaction with patriarchal society. They have written extensively about challenging and raising awareness against the destructive patriarchal system in society. The portrayal of Jane Austen, Simone de Beauvoir, Jhumpa Lahiri, and many other writers made a pathway into the control of existing patriarchal society. Several modern movies delve into the representation of patriarchy by addressing its impacts on society. Malayalam movies also have the tradition of representing insightful portrayals of patriarchal societies and their impact on individuals and families. This project report delves into the representation of patriarchal society in two Malayalam movies released in the twenty-first century.

‘Sufiyum Sujathayum’ is an Indian-Malayalam language movie released in 2020 through an over-the-top platform due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The movie was directed by Naranipuzha Shanavas, famous for his own style of storytelling in the Malayalam film industry. He was considered one of the most talented filmmakers who made significant contributions. The film deals with the unconventional love story between a Sufi mystic and a Hindu woman. The film contains themes of love, spirituality, and cultural harmony. The

primary focus of the movie 'Sufiyum Sujathayum' is on the themes of spiritual beliefs, unconditional love, and sacrifices, but there are elements that show the control of patriarchy.

Sujatha, the female character of the movie, portrayed by Aditi Rao, a versatile Indian actress, is a mute and deaf girl whose voice and desire are restricted not only by her physical trait but also by the patriarchal norms of society. Throughout the movie, her ambitions, desires, and aspirations are suppressed by her father and societal controls. Her inability to speak is a symbolic representation of her marginalised position within the patriarchal structure and the power of male characters over her. She always undergoes patriarchal control in her life.

The next Malayalam movie for study is 'Kumbalangi Nights' released in 2019. It is also an Indian-Malayalam movie that represents a realistic portrayal of relationship and family norms. The movie was directed by Madhu. C. Narayanan, a talented director in the Indian film industry. He was famous for his directorial approach in 'Kumbalangi Nights', which showcased his ability to create the complexities of human relationships and compelling narratives. The movie received widespread acclaim and was praised for its performance, direction, and storytelling.

The movie is set up in the village of 'Kumbalangi' in Kerala and follows the lives of four brothers who face struggles with their own insecurities. Each brother has his own insecurities. The movie celebrated its realistic presentation of relationships as well as its exploration of social issues such as patriarchy, masculinity, mental health, and social expectations.

The movie addresses patriarchy through its portrayal of gender roles within the family and society. The film showcases the dominance of male characters such as Bobby, Saji, Bonny, Franky, and Shammy. Babymol, the female character of the movie, is suppressed by the male characters, like Shammy, who assert control and authority over her. Thus, the movie highlights the societal stigma associated with the control of men over women. The

representation of women in the movies, the resistance of female characters against patriarchal norms, and the basic gender stereotypes presented in both movies are discussed in this study.

Chapter – 2

Patriarchy and Representation of Women in movies: an Overview

Patriarchal Theory proves that societies are organised in a way that privileges men over women and oppresses women from many perspectives. It is a concept that has had an impact on the lives of women and has made them powerful in the public and private spheres. This theory argues for the equal distribution of power between both genders, male and female. The patriarchal theory was set up by Sir Henry Maine in 1861. The chief founder of this theory stated, “The elementary group in the family, connected by common subjugation to the highest male ascendant: the aggregation of families forms gentes or houses; the aggregation of houses makes the tribe; the aggregation of tribes consists of common wealth”(*Dissertations on Early Law and Custom* 219) .

The concept of ‘Patriarchy’ originates from the ancient ‘Patriarchies of Greece’ which was a society controlled by men itself. This system contains a hierarchical structure. Traditionalists do believe that men are born to dominate and women to be subordinate. The elder men in the group or family have complete rights and freedom over others, especially women in the families. The term ‘Pater’ which means ‘Father’ is closely associated with ‘Patriarchy’. Thus, traditional patriarchal societies divide their property among males and completely avoid women from getting property rights.

“The world historical defeat of the female sex. The man took command in the home also; the woman was degraded and reduced to servitude; she became the slave of his lust and a mere instrument for the production of children” (*The Origins of the Family, Private, Property and the State* 120–121). The final decision for all the needs of women was thus taken by the father or husband itself. So women are always controlled by men.

Scholars had different arguments on the origin of the concept of patriarchy. Some argue that patriarchy originated with the establishment of agrarian society, where men used to work in paddy fields, farming, and hunting while women engaged in domestic work. This division gradually develops into a society that privileges men more than women. The rise of capitalism and industrialization also developed patriarchal structures by relegating women to subordinate roles in the workforce. From ancient history onwards, women have been paid very little compared to men for equal work. The gender wage differences also reflect and reinforce patriarchal norms that devalue women as secondary earners.

Domination of male over female is an important aspect of the patriarchal culture and this is one of the reason for the increase of patriarchy in society. Men always possess stronger feelings about themselves and consider the opposite as weak and secondary. They see women as playthings who cannot contribute more than just doing. Also the decision making dwells in the hands of male in family unit and society. The patriarchy culture is deeply misogynistic and focuses on masculinity. Thus Patriarchy is one of the harmful social orders that can oppress the other gender by using power, freedom and authority.

“Cinema is a medium that can translate ideas” (*Catching the Big Fish: Meditation, Consciousness, and Creativity* 10). These famous words of the American film maker provide an overview of the importance of cinema. Film and cinema are not just forms of celebration or entertainment; they are powerful mediums that help in the representation of expression and storytelling that have captivated audiences over the past century. Cinema is a profound form of communication, transcending language barriers and cultural differences to convey messages and evoke emotions and thoughts. It portrays personal stories and dreams, social situations, and imaginations. The remarkable aspect of each film and cinema is its ability to

reflect and shape society. They challenge social norms, provoke controversy, and spark important conversations about issues that affect society.

Indian film industry is one of the multi- million- dollar industry and produces large number of films that represents the societal norms. There are some films which upheld the need to purge the Indian society of patriarchy. But the greatest number of the mainstream cinemas instilled the idea of male dominance and crime against women. The Malayalam movie 'Uyare', tackles the problem of women being attacked with acid. An aspiring pilot named Pallavi is the main character of the film. Her life tragically turns upside down when she falls prey to an acid attack planned by her controlling lover. Most of the movies portrays women as sex symbols and in minimal roles. For Example, 'Machine' is a romantic thriller movie that further solidifies Kiara Advani's image as a sex symbol in Indian film with an opulent and seductive performance. From the ancient time onwards Indian cinema along with molly wood cinema, patriarchy and male power portrayed physically such as martial rape, violence against women, low wages and dowry. Female characters were typically portrayed as virtuous and servants to male characters, embodying idealised roles such as devoted wives, caring mothers and respectful daughters. 'Neelathamara', for instance, is a Malayalam film released in 2019. The protagonist of the movie is Kunjimalu, a young lady from a low-income family who serves a wealthy family as a servant. Most of the women projected in Indian movies are not defining characters that choose their own choices and live as per their own wish. The 2015 movie 'Parched' follows the lives of four women who, as a result of patriarchal expectations and society conventions, live lives of oppression and lack of agency in a rural Indian town. Child marriage, domestic abuse, and being denied their fundamental rights are among the problems that the characters faces in the movie.

The male and female characters have the same choices, but the consequences of the choices are opposite. All the families represented in the movies have a rigid hierarchy in the family structure, headed by a dominant male character who calls the other members of the family to live up to his wishes and rules. In this situation, the woman gets only limited freedom, and her rights are questioned. The rise of feminist ideology helped cause a mild shift in Indian cinema, gave a more sympathetic position to marginalised female characters, and tried to deal with certain women's issues.

In modern cinema, there has been a change in the representation of women. Female characters play greater roles in the changing scenario. Modern movies present female characters with more screen time, and their stories are explored in detail. For instance, 'How Old are You' is a Malayalam movie under the direction of Rosshan Andrews, in which Manju Warriar plays middle-aged Nirupama Rajeev, a woman who, after being disregarded by her family and society, finds herself again and follows her aspirations. The most common way of portraying female characters on the screen is by linking them romantically with the main characters. Another way of representing women as adventure seekers. This image of women is widely spread in action movies. For example, 'Queen' is a Hindi film that chronicles the journey of a young lady who, after her wedding chooses to go on her honeymoon by herself. She visits Paris and Amsterdam while on a journey of self-discovery and adventures. Women can also be portrayed as someone who needs to be rescued. However, the film industry has made some progress in representing women throughout the decades. Since Malayalam cinema has a wide reach in the representation of women and the status of men are still unchanged.

The primary focus is always on the hero, and the heroine is secondary to the hero. The theme of the story has been explored from the male audience perspective. The role of the female characters is bound to any male character, which is central to the story. It may be the hero, the villain, the father, the boss, the husband, the elder person, and so on. Thus, the female character is devoid of any independent existence, and her representation is completely based on the male figures. The new-era movies portray women as mild, scared, and always secondary images compared to male characters. Still, there are movies that show how women are treated in society and have no voice in family matters. This clearly proves that Malayalam movies portray the image of patriarchy and male dominance in a deep way.

In the contemporary world, there is an emergence of movies that are adapted from literary works such as novels, journals, and stories. Book and movie lovers have been in conflict with one another for hundreds of years. Many people think that viewing films negatively affects reading. They think that reading will be replaced by films. But the fact is, movies can also help raise awareness of literary works because they reach a wider audience. Through their distinct and independent narrative processes, literature and film can both probe the fundamental depths of human situations. The ability to imaginatively recreate the reality of human life is possessed by both creative writers and movie authors. What unites a novelist and a filmmaker is the act of creation. Thus literature and cinema have the ability to present social situations.

The patriarchal societies were questioned through the rise of feminist movements. For instance, the feminist movements, which concentrated on women's suffrage and legal injustices, first appeared in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Women's rights to vote were battled for by organisations like the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU).

These movements took various strategies, from legal methods to policy reforms, and spread over various regions around the world. The feminist activists claim that exploitation and subjugation of women occur both within the private sector and in the public sphere. "My own definition is a feminist is a man or a woman who says, yes, there's a problem with gender as it is today and we must fix it, we must do better. All of us, women and men, must do better" (*We Should All Be Feminists* 18). Through these powerful words, Adicie speaks about the fundamental aspects and need of feminism against the control of patriarchy. It is not about gaining Women more strong but it focuses on the strength that women already possess in the society.

The role of feminist writing was very crucial in addressing gender inequality and advocating for basic women's rights. Feminist writings shed light on issues such as gender discrimination, patriarchy, and violence against women. These writings thus challenge societal norms and question the oppressive social system. Feminist activists and writers such as Simon de Beauvoir, Betty Friedan, and Jane Austen made everlasting contributions to feminist ideas and thoughts and strongly argued for greater opportunities and autonomy for women. "One is not born, but rather becomes a woman" (*The Second Sex* 283). This quote challenges the idea that societal influence and patriarchy had a greater influence on shaping the individual identity of women.

One of the Indian developmental feminist activist and poet Susan Basin once said that the person who recognises the equality and humanity of women is feminist. Even nature can be considered feminist because she never discriminates between men and women, rich and poor, black and white. The poet describes that when a man becomes a feminist, it doesn't only break the norms of society but also the patriarchal mind set of women. It is necessary to

understand that one cannot be possessive about a woman because she is not anyone's property. The development of patriarchal theory and feminist ideologies paved the way for strengthening the rights of women throughout these years.

Chapter -3

'Resistance: a Feminist reading of 'Sujatha' in 'Sufiyum Sujathayum'

The representation of women in modern Malayalam movies has undergone a drastic change, as have the feminist arguments made in the portrayal of female characters taking leading roles and exploring challenges. Malayalam cinema has a rise in presenting the lives of women and issues faced by women in depth. The emergence of female characters, female filmmakers, and female writers under the influence of feminist and patriarchal ideologies made significant contributions to the film industry. The Malayalam movies also spread awareness about the rights of women in a more respectful manner. There has been a severe change in the position of women as they have become more educationally and financially independent compared to ancient times. However, this change has not reached its fulfilment by presenting modern, educated women. The greatest number of mainstream cinemas instilled the idea of male toxic hegemony.

Cinema is a reflection of society. In most case, it shows the problem and the solutions for problems and helps a large number of people through faces and voices to solve the problems. Cinema has always played a significant role in presenting issues of human life. "Sufiyum Sujathayum" is a Malayalam movie released in 2020 that reinstates the patriarchal norms deep-rooted in a family in Kerala. The movie was directed and written by Naranipuzha Sreenivas and produced by Vijay Babu. Sujatha, the female character in the movie, represents a life controlled by the people around her. Sujatha was the daughter of Mallikarjunan and Kamala. She is a mute girl who is very talented in many things in her village.

Though she has a physical disability to speak, Sujatha is a talented Kathak dancer, and she frequently visited the Usthad's house to teach the young. This movie presents two phases of

Sujatha's life. The first phase was during her teenage period when she fell in love with a Sufi priest, and the second one was ten years later when she returned to Kerala with her husband Rajeev for her lover's last rites. The director made a simple love story normally seen in villages and the way others take decisions in their lives. Malayalam cinema has had a number of films revolving around the themes of love and heartbreak. But in this movie, in this regard, the director presented the love story like a flowing stream full of emotions.

Sujatha meets her lover Sufi on a day when she used to travel to Usthad's house by bus. Sufi is a male character who is a disciple of Usthad (the Senior Sufi Priest), and he returns to meet his master. In Usthad's house, Sujatha meets Sufi several times, and she falls in love with him. Both of them decided to elope, and accidentally, Sujatha's father, Mallikarjunan, caught them together. He belongs to an upper Hindu religion and believes that interfaith relationships are fraudulent love jihads. So her father argues with Usthad about his disciple's behaviour and the consequences of love that may occur in society. Without the consent of Sujatha, her father, Mallikarjunan, married her to a well-known NRI, Rajeev, in Dubai, and they shifted to Dubai soon after their marriage.

After ten years, Sufi returned to the village to meet his beloved master. Usthad was no more when he reached the village, and he gave out the call to prayer (bank), and suddenly he fell and died during his prayer. Sujatha was living a life under the control of her husband, Rajeev, when she heard about the death of her old love, Sufi. So Rajeev decided to bring her back to the village to attend Sufi's funeral. When they reached Sujatha, she was not allowed to attend the burial because women were not allowed to enter the church as per Muslim belief. Sujatha becomes emotionally weak without seeing her lover's body for a last chance. On that day evening, Rajeev lost his return passport and after searching he assumed that passport could have fallen into the grave. Sujatha's father and her husband decided to open the grave at midnight to find the passport, but they didn't find it in the grave. At this time, Sujatha came

to the grave with her passport because she wanted to see her love for last and threw green beads (a chain used by Muslims for prayer) at his tomb as she wanted to give him back. Then they returned to Dubai.

From the perspective of a feminist, Sujatha, as a physically imbalanced girl, faces patriarchal restrictions that limit her autonomy based on her love and her personal expression. Sujatha's father, Mallikarjunan, and her husband, Rajeev, have absolute authority over her and have made her obey their decisions.

Sujatha's journey revolves around navigating these challenges and fighting against societal norms. Sujatha has to face restrictions from her father and her husband. Her father and husband, Rajeev, acted as true patriarchs and leaders of her life. They impose societal expectations on her, dictating how she should behave and decide to whom she gets loved and married. The struggle of Sujatha against these restrictions forms the central theme of the movie.

Every member of Sujatha's family loved and cared for her. They give her freedom and enjoyable moments in her life. When Sujatha became self-sufficient, she decided to live with a young Sufi priest. But when her father, Mallikarjunan, noticed his daughter's relationship with a man from another religion, he tried to stop her love for the young Sufi. Along with these restrictions, her father uses emotional methods to change her mind, which can also be seen in other movies as tragedies. Thus, Sujatha never gets a chance to unleash her thoughts and desires, and no one helped her to know her wishes and deeds.

The only character in the movie who respected Sujatha's desires was her grandmother. Though she was old and aged, her grandmother was more modern in thought and deeds than anyone in the family. The grandmother always respected her granddaughter's thoughts and wishes. The grandmother made restrictions on Sujatha's marriage to Rajeev because she

knew that Sujatha loved Sufi more. The simple dialogue that Grandmother said to the groom's family, 'Her world is above; let them see it together' is important. This simple dialogue presents the progressive thoughts of a grandmother who understands her granddaughter better than anyone else in the house. By the end, the death of the grandmother is a symbolic presentation because it shows Sujatha lost her last ray of hope in her life. Her disability to present her feelings made others suppress her emotions and feelings.

Some factors that contribute to the perpetuation of patriarchy in Sujatha's life are the following.

The primary cause of patriarchy is the influence of traditional values. As a female character, traditional beliefs and values played a massive role in shaping Sujatha's life. Sujatha's parents had a traditional ideology that restricted her freedom in many aspects. Sujatha was restricted from wearing modern clothes, and her father, Mallikarjunan, always had an eye on her. One day, he chased his daughter on her way to find her meeting with Sufi. From a young age, Sujatha's parents taught her to be submissive and assertive in her life.

Sujatha faced violence and discrimination from her family and relatives. Sujatha feels comfortable and happy with her family members until the time when her love for Sufi, another religious man, is found. Everyone pretended to have sympathy for her. But Sujatha's love sparked violence against her by the family, including her father and her new husband. Sujatha had a physical disability to speak. Some characters in the movie saw her disability as a barrier and this reflected societal discrimination towards people having disabilities.

The family dynamics play a role in the persistence of patriarchy in Sujatha's life. The very important situation that feminist ideologies and patriarchal theory oppose is the family structure in a patriarchal family. In the movie 'Sufiyum Sujathayum', the female character Sujatha belongs to a patriarchal family, with her father, Mallikarjunan, having a decisive

leadership role in her family and all others living as his wishes. After Sujatha's marriage to Rajeev, her husband became her patriarch, and he took control of her decision-making.

Influence of marriage led to the establishment of patriarchy. This movie portrays the traditional practice of arranged marriages in the new era, where families often have significant influence over the choice of a life partner. Sujatha's desire to marry a Sufi priest was suppressed by her family, who made her marry a person who didn't know anything about her. In this situation, as a female, Sujatha has no rights, and her family's decision-making power is concentrated in the hands of male elders.

"The only way for a woman, as for a man, to find herself, to know herself as a person, is through creative work of her own"(*The Feminine Mystique* 28). This is a famous dialogue written by American second-wave feminist writer Betty Friedan to give courage to all women to resist patriarchal norms. The problems that occurred in the lives of women and men have become a source of inspiration for women's authors and filmmakers to present the reality of women's daily lives to the public. The fact is, this problem can be solved only by the resistance of women.

Sujatha was courageous enough to fight against the patriarchal restrictions that came into her life from her father, Mallikarjunan, and husband, Rajeev. Sujatha's resistance against male power is evident in various moments of the movie. Her love for Sufi Mystic and her decision to live her life with Sufi is a form of resistance against the patriarchal institution of marriage, which shows her courage to decide to whom she should love. Although her resistance was stronger, her disability to speak made life oppressive for Sujatha. We can be able to see some factors that contribute to Sujatha's resistance. Sujatha was very courageous to oppose patriarchal norms.

"The emerging woman will be strong-minded, strong-hearted, strong-souled, strong-bodied... Strength and beauty must go together "(*An Old Fashioned Girl* 45).

This statement by feminist writer Louisa May Alcott describes the importance of women's courage in their own lives. Sujatha's personal courage helped her make decisions according to her wishes. Sujatha asserts her own desires and makes choices based on her feelings.

The best weapon for women to fight against the patriarchal culture of society is education. Sujatha was a highly talented girl in her village. Sujatha had a basic education, and her interest in grabbing new sources made her powerful against restrictions and boundaries. The famous writer Jane Austen says about the value of education: "Give a girl an education and introduce her properly into the world, and ten to one, but she has the means of setting well, without further expense to anybody" (*Mansfield Park* 3). The reading habit may also have helped Sujatha learn new ideas and gain knowledge.

By gaining economic stability, Sujatha attained independence. A financially balanced life can lead women to an independent life. Economic autonomy helps women have greater control and be free in society. As a talented girl, Sujatha always tries to become financially independent by doing embroidery and stitching clothes. This factor also helps her gain an independent life.

"What greater thing is there for two human souls, than to feel that they are joined for life to strengthen each other in all labor, to rest on each other in all sorrow, to minister to each other in all pain, to be one with each other in silent unspeakable memories at the moment of the last parting?" (*Adam Bede* 329)

In the modern era, the development of literature and feminist works, including movies and books, made a significant impact on showing the struggles of women around the world. As a director, Shanavas successfully presented the life of Sujatha, a common village girl with

disabilities, and her struggles to overcome patriarchal norms. The feminist ideologies and patriarchal theory thus strongly support the development of women's lives in the new era.

Chapter- 4

Gender Stereotypes: Characters in 'Kumbalangi Nights'

"A woman's strength should not be in her role, whatever she chooses it to be, but in the power to choose that role. It is amazing to me that I even have to make this point, as I see it as the very foundation of our conversation" (Words of Radiance 93).

These empowering words show dignity and support for women and suggest providing basic rights for women. The society in which we live has an important role in shaping the attitudes and behaviours of humans. A stereotype is an oversimplified belief or assumption about the qualities that men and women possess in their lives. Society gives active roles to men and secondary roles to women. Emotions such as anger and aggression are valued more highly in male and female characters, who have emotions like joy and crying. The gender roles in society are presented in the movies very deeply. The gender stereotypes in society appear to be more complex and dynamic in nature. In the film industry, men have a diversity of themes, and female characters are only associated with romance. Gender roles in society lead to the ancient beliefs that women are always communal with nature, which they presented through being sensitive to others.

The basic structure of society is arranged based on various factors, such as customs and morals, which are passed down from one generation to another. The most crucial point is that society's patterns should be balanced, which is obviously impractical in our society, as this trend is seen in every part of our lives. The media has not always given women a positive representation. Women are always portrayed as weak and objects of sex. This underrepresentation of women in movies created an imbalance in society. Women have been presented as an idealised gender in movies. The burden of the daily duties of a woman in a patriarchal society is of less importance for women.

Similar to the majority of Indian regional films, the Malayalam film industry has experienced significant transformations, which eventually mirror the socioeconomic shifts and basic gender roles in Kerala. The movie 'Kumbalangi Nights' directed by Madhu C. Narayan is one of them. After the movie won the Kerala State Film Award, it became a topic of discussion in the Malayalam cinema industry. The movie offers a unique perspective on the socio economic issues facing Kochi's lower-middle-class residents. The screenplay for Kumbalangi Nights was written by Shyam Pushkaran. The four brothers in the story are Saji, Boney, Bobby, and Frankie. Saji is the eldest of the brothers and is heartbreakingly good as a mother who takes care of the house and cooks. His best friend, Vijay, a Tamil who irons clothes, helps him out. The next brother is Bony, who moved away with his friends and is mute. Saji and Bony are step brothers; Saji's father married Bony's mother while the two were little. Bobby is the next character, who constantly gets into arguments with Saji. The charming Shane Nigam gives his best performance to date as Bobby. The final character is Frankie, a boarding school student who makes up excuses to have his friends home since he is ashamed of his brothers. Despite his tight bond with the stupid Boney, Frankie finds these brothers' actions frustrating.

The older brothers, Saji and Bobby, are presented as aimless, slothful, and abrasive when the story begins. Saji and Vijay have started an ironing business with a migrant worker. Following a heated argument with Bobby, Saji made an attempt at suicide. Vijay was killed while attempting to save Saji. The narrative centres on the four boys and how their lives were turned upside down when their mother left them to follow God's path and they lost their father.

The female characters in the movie lived near the house of four brothers. There are also four members, including a male authoritarian person. Among the female characters, Babymol and Simi are sisters, their beloved mother, and Simi's newly married husband, Shammi lived in that house. Baby is a young girl who fell in love with Bobby when she came to treat his brother. Baby is a powerful woman who argues for her own rights and knows what she needs. Simi, her newly married elder sister, was controlled by her husband, Shammi. Simi's husband, Shammi, calls himself a 'complete man'. They are living far better than the brothers in every aspect.

'Kumbalangi Nights' is a movie that discusses several problems that affect society such as basic gender roles, representation of masculinity, mental illness, and patriarchy. The change occurs in the role of characters portraying the ideal Human behaviours. Shammi is a leading character throughout the movie who is considered as the finest example for toxic masculinity and patriarchal norms. Shammi behaved as a perfect gentleman outside. He calls himself a hero. But he was really a man who owned the absolute authority of the family. He arranges his chair during lunch time as he is sitting as the head of the family. Shammi secretly notices the private conversation between the two sisters and he will not leave until he knows about the matter. By the end of the movie, the change in the behaviour of Shammi, from a perfect gentleman to an absolute patriarch shows the massive role of men in the society.

The movie also represents the conflicts between male characters and the dominance of masculinity. After falling in love, the childhood friends Bobby and Babymol decided to marry. So Bobby convinces his elder brother Saji to meet Baby's brother-in-law Shammi to arrange the marriage. When they came to meet Shammi, he got angry with the brothers and asked Bobby to find a job first. Shammi made a clever move by making Bobby under his razor-wielding hands during beard shaving. This shows his dominating and powerful masculine features.

"Teach her that the idea of 'gender roles' is absolute nonsense. Do not ever tell her that she should or should not do something because she is a girl.'Because you are a girl' is never a reason for anything ever"(*Dear Ljeawele, or a Feminist Manifesto in Fifteen Suggestions* 25).

Gender roles are harmful to society. In the movie 'Kumbalangi Nights', both masculine and feminine gender roles are presented through the interchangeable roles of characters. The masculine gender roles are addressed in the movie through the combination of the characters Saji and Shammi. Saji lives in a house with only men, and he has complete rights over them and makes decisions. At the same time, Sahammi behaves as an authoritarian in a house where only women lived. He behaved as the complete owner of the house. Shammi wants everyone to be happy with his decision-making. He also asks his wife, Simi, and her younger sister to avoid small talk and secret sharing in the house. Shammi wished to make everything happen with his knowledge in the house. He also acted as a hegemonic, masculine, psychotic character at the end who attacked everyone. His character is a massive representation of masculinity and patriarchy in our daily lives.

The other male characters in the film also exhibit similar domineering behaviours and gender stereotypes. Regarding gender norms and male identity, Saji, Bonny, and Bobby are the three brothers who most closely resemble Shammi. The only sibling with aspirations in life is Franky, who is the younger brother. As the older brother, Saji makes money for the family. Some people don't work at any jobs that pay money. Bobby exhibits traits of a hegemonic patriarchy. His attitude with his lover, Babymol, exposed his patriarchal tendencies. When Babymol smacks Bobby for trying to kiss her without permission, Bobby gets enraged and yells, "I am a man." Subsequently, Bobby began to alter his attitude after realising his own shortcomings and his family's flaws. In the film, each of these characters exhibits masculine traits.

In the film, the female characters performed just as brilliantly as the male ones. The female characters that appeared for a short period of time in the movie are presented as independent and confident in their life decisions. Characters that demonstrated their femininity as follows. The character Simi, who is the older sister of Babymol and the wife of Shammi, embodies the custom of a typical woman leading a typical home life. Simimol is a wonderful illustration of how women may break free from the cage of patriarchy and male dominance. Simi yells at her husband, Shammi, after he speaks out against her sister, Babymol. She also requests that her spouse should act in a courteous and respectful manner. Simi's view is a great warning for Shammi and society as a whole not to abuse their position of hierarchical authority.

Babymol is a young and vibrant character in the film who is constantly dreaming of her goals and wishes and does not wish to live in a patriarchal environment. Babymol is a self-assured young woman who is in total control of her life. She is a constant representation of the contemporary woman who is conscious of both herself and those around her. Babymol fell in love with Bobby even before she heard her brother-in-law's remarks. Bobby's unemployment has made her more conscious of his goodness and has made her love him even more. The patriarchal theory and contemporary feminist ideas push for this kind of reform in women so they can be independent in their lives and make the right choices. All the women who are subject to patriarchal influence might take inspiration from the babymol character to overcome social standards and oppression.

The mother of four brothers, is another powerful example of a feminine depiction. Even for a short time, she won't be going back to living with her kids in the family. Her commitment to the religious group, which she views as more important at that point in her life, is what she is steadfastly determined to fulfil. In a society that values patriarchy, a mother who chooses to leave the house is viewed negatively. The mother is shown as making a respectful choice in

this film by choosing to live a monastic life. This film serves as an example of the shift in the film industry towards representing women respectfully.

The lover of Bobby's friend and Babymol's coworker, Sameesha, responds bravely to Bobby's remark that her partner is not attractive. She claims that he is attractive and looks like Vinayakan. This statement is noteworthy because Vinayakan is an actor from a backward class.

"Kumbalangi Nights" tackles patriarchy by depicting conventional gender roles and power structures in the family and community. The following are a few aspects that the film portrays patriarchy.

The dominance of male characters are discussed in the movie. The movie shows how power dynamics occur in family and community settings by focusing on how men dominate within the patriarchal system through their relationships, behaviours, and attitudes. Saji takes up the role of leader of the household because he is the oldest sibling in the disorganised family. He frequently exercises his power over the female family members by making decisions without seeking their input. Shammi, represents conventional patriarchal ideals by demanding submission and obedience from his spouse and other family members. Bobby demonstrates toxic masculinity by controlling his lover Babymol with violence and aggression. These individuals together stand for many aspects of male authority.

The women lack respect from other characters in the film. Throughout the movie, the female characters deal with a male character who doesn't give them any freedom or autonomy. Shammi exhibits a lack of regard for the boundaries and independence of women. Shammi abuses his wife Simi at home. This is an indication of low regard for her as a person and a woman. Babymol works in a hostile environment where her male coworkers make crude remarks and gestures in her direction. Shammi's spouse, Simi, is coerced into getting married

against her will. Her lack of autonomy over her own life and destiny serves as a stark reminder of the patriarchal influence on women's decisions.

The film 'Kumbalangi Nights' offers a comprehensive perspective on the conventional gender roles that sustain society. The viewpoints of the female characters in the film make clear how much the gender expectations of women in Malayalam cinema have changed. The way women's typical cultures are presented demonstrates the limitations that these groups face in an ever-changing environment.

Chapter - 5

Conclusion

The representation of women in film and their involvement in the film business have been influenced by feminist theories and patriarchal ideals in the fields of literature and art. As seen in the widespread portrayal of masculine autonomy from the beginning. The films were also impacted by the shifts that took place between the ancient and modern eras. Modern society values, cultural landscapes, and human lives are created during this time. Compared to earlier times, women now play a major role in society. However, the discrimination based on patriarchy and violence has not changed. The supporting roles that women played in films have evolved into main roles in some cases. So, women's issues are represented in the majority of contemporary films.

One of the main drivers of change in people's modern lives has always been the movie industry. It is the ideal medium for spreading messages to people worldwide because it can reflect social, political, and current topics. Modern films explore contentious subjects and societal shifts. Films possess the ability to explore contemporary themes and convey them to the general audience. The way that women's issues were presented in films was crucial. The primary mediums through which gender roles and patriarchal issues in society are presented are literary works and motion pictures. It is essential for drawing attention to the world controlled by men and advocating for social change.

Movies and literature have always been creative mediums for concept expression. The application of imagination is a key theme that unites the two. While literature expresses ideas and concepts through words, cinema does so through visual means. Both of them are extraordinarily talented pieces of art. Feminists and thinkers utilised literature as a weapon in the early times to address issues pertaining to women. However, films today have a

significant impact on how a culture that discriminates against women is presented. Visualising the images gives the audience a closer sense of control over the happenings.

According to Sir Henry Maine's patriarchal theory, women must be empowered in a society that fully grants men all freedoms and rights. Since ancient times, society has been structured so that the eldest male parent has complete authority over all rights and that everyone else must abide by his judgements. Women are absolutely denied access to basic necessities and rights. Sir Henry Maine and other writers challenge harmful patriarchal conventions by utilising feminist ideals and patriarchal theories. Accordingly, this idea supports giving women the same status and rights in society.

This paper examines, through a detailed examination of two Malayalam films, the fundamental patriarchal rules and the portrayal of women in the contemporary Malayalam film industry. The two films under discussion, "Sufiyum Sujathayum" and "Kumbalangi Nights," depict conventional gender roles in society through various narrative techniques.

A film called "Sufiyum Sujathayum" examines cultural differences, the concept of love, and conventional family values. In the film, "Sujatha" is a physically challenged character whose inability to talk was abused by her family. Her family forces her to comply with the patriarchal norms of society. Sujatha's goals and dreams end up being just unfulfilled dreams. Sujatha's husband, Rajeev, a well-known NRO, and her father, Mallikarjunan, took charge of her life. Although the film primarily centres on the romance between Sujatha and a Sufi priest, it also criticises patriarchal norms and attitudes. Additionally, her path of resistance against patriarchy highlights the urgent need for women's lives to change.

On the other hand, "Kumbalangi Nights" also addresses the patriarchal circumstances that exist in families in an evolving environment. The lives of the male and female families are the basis for the film. There is discussion about the patriarchal portrayal of the film's gender roles and families. Saji, the older brother of the other three brothers, was in charge of one of

the families. The following family is ruled by Shammi, and Babymol, her sister Simi, and their mother are required to abide by Shammi's laws. The film has received a lot of praise for portraying Keralan commoners' lives in a realistic manner. The movie describes women as traditional housewives and caretakers. It also shows the danger of masculinity, which restricts women from achieving their rights. Thus, the movie highlights the complexities of gender dynamics and the dangers of masculinity in family and society.

The supporting roles that women play in both films highlight the patriarchal and dominant positions that permeate our culture. In our daily lives, men still show themselves with a lot of masculine qualities. It is up to us to take the key and open the door to toxic patriarchy and gender discrimination. This system must be opposed by us. This could aid in defending women's rights.

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