

## **CHAPTER -1**

# **1. INTRODUCTION**

The cinematic landscape has undergone a remarkable evolution since its inception, shaping the way we perceive and understand the world around us. The journey of world cinema is a fascinating narrative that begins with the advent of moving images in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Concurrently, Indian cinema, with its unique narrative styles and cultural nuances, has contributed significantly to this global tapestry. Within the vast realm of Indian cinema, the Malayalam film industry stands out as a rich and diverse cinematic space, harboring auteurs like Adoor Gopalakrishnan, whose works have left an indelible mark on the annals of filmmaking.

## **1.1 Evolution of World Cinema**

The roots of world cinema can be traced back to the Lumière brothers' invention of the Cinematography in 1895, marking the birth of moving images on celluloid. The Lumière brothers' early films, such as "Workers Leaving the Lumière Factory" and "The Arrival of a Train at La Ciotat," heralded the beginning of a new era in visual storytelling.

### **1.1.1 Silent Cinema Era**

The initial years of cinema were dominated by silent films, where the narrative unfolded without synchronized sound. This period, characterized by expressive acting and elaborate visual storytelling, saw the emergence of iconic figures such as Charlie Chaplin and Buster Keaton. The silent era persisted until the late 1920s, when technological advancements brought sound to the silver screen.

### **1.1.2 Introduction of Sound in Cinema**

The release of "The Jazz Singer" in 1927 marked a watershed moment in cinematic history, as it became the first feature film to incorporate synchronized sound. This ground breaking innovation revolutionized filmmaking, offering a new dimension to storytelling through dialogue, music, and ambient sounds.

## **1.2 Evolution of Indian Cinema**

Indian cinema, often referred to as Bollywood, started with the release of *Raja Harishchandra* in 1913, directed by Dadasaheb Phalke. This marked the inception of Indian narrative cinema, blending mythological elements with indigenous storytelling traditions. Over the decades, Indian cinema evolved stylistically, encompassing various genres and influences.

## **1.3 Evolution of Malayalam Cinema**

Malayalam cinema, a significant contributor to Indian cinema, found its footing in the 1920s. The first Malayalam feature film, “*Vigathakumaran*” (1928), directed by J.C. Daniel, represented a significant milestone. Malayalam cinema has since evolved to reflect the cultural diversity of Kerala, embracing social issues, realism, and a unique narrative ethos.

## **1.4 Adoor Gopalakrishnan and His Cinematic Framework**

Adoor Gopalakrishnan, a prominent figure in the Indian New Wave cinema, embarked on his directorial journey in the early 1970s. His cinematic framework is characterized by meticulous storytelling, emphasis on realism, and exploration of intricate human emotions. “*Swayamvaram*” (1972), “*Kodiyettam*” (1977), and “*Elippathayam*” (1981) are exemplary of Adoor’s cinematic finesse during this period.

In conclusion, the evolution of world cinema has been a dynamic and transformative journey, with India and, more specifically, Malayalam cinema, making profound contributions. Adoor Gopalakrishnan’s films stand as a testament to the richness of Indian cinema, offering a unique perspective on the human experience and solidifying his legacy as a master storyteller. This dissertation will delve deeper into these cinematic trajectories, analyzing their impact on cultural narratives and cinematic expression.

## **CHAPTER -2**

## 2. CONTENT

### 2.1 The Era of Adoor Cinema (1970-1981)

Adoor Gopalakrishnan's films during the 1970s and 1980s represent a shift in Indian cinema, away from mainstream conventions. "Swayamvaram" explores the challenges of a young couple defying societal norms, while "Kodiyettam" and "Elippathayam" delve into the complexities of self-discovery and societal decay. Adoor's cinema, marked by its intellectual depth and artistic integrity, became a hallmark of the Indian New Wave movement.

K. G. George, an acclaimed filmmaker in Malayalam cinema, directed several influential films during the 1970s and 1980s. Here are three films directed by K. G. George during this period, along with a brief overview of their representation of women "Swapnadanam" (1976), "Yavanika" (1982) and "Lekhayude Maranam: Oru Flashback" (1983) the women Representation in "Swapnadanam" is known for its exploration of complex human relationships. The film portrays the character of Devi, played by Sathar's wife Sheela, who is caught in a web of emotional turmoil. Devi's character is intricately woven into the narrative, reflecting the challenges faced by women in dealing with societal expectations and personal desires. The film is notable for its nuanced portrayal of the female protagonist's struggles and aspirations.

While "Yavanika" is primarily a suspense thriller that revolves around a murder mystery, it includes well-defined female characters. The film features the character Malathi, played by Suparna Anand, who plays a significant role in the narrative. Malathi's character adds layers to the storyline, and her representation contributes to the film's overall impact. However, it's essential to note that "Yavanika" is more centered on its male characters and the investigative plot. Although "Lekhayude Maranam: Oru Flashback" was released in 1983, just beyond the specified timeframe, it's worth mentioning for its significance. The film features a strong female character, Lekha,

portrayed by Mammooty's wife Sulfath. Lekha's character undergoes a tragic transformation, and the film explores her experiences and challenges. The portrayal of Lekha reflects K. G. George's penchant for addressing complex social issues through his characters.

K. G. George's films are known for their exploration of human psychology and societal dynamics. While his films often focus on male protagonists and their struggles, the female characters in his works are crafted with depth and contribute meaningfully to the overall narratives. The representation of women in K. G. George's films reflects the complexities and challenges faced by women in the socio-cultural milieu of the times.

While both K. G. George and Adoor Gopalakrishnan are prominent filmmakers in Malayalam cinema, their styles and thematic choices differ. Let's compare the representation of women in films directed by Adoor Gopalakrishnan from 1972 to 1982 with those directed by K. G. George during the same period.

#### 2.1.1 "Swayamvaram" (1972) – Adoor Gopalakrishnan

2.1.1.1 Women Representation: "Swayamvaram" explores the challenges faced by a young couple in defying societal norms. The female protagonist, played by Sharada, represents a departure from traditional female roles. Her character is portrayed as an individual with agency, making choices and facing the consequences. Adoor's approach to women representation in "Swayamvaram" is characterized by a focus on personal struggles within the societal context.

#### Comparison with "Swapnadanam" (1976) – K. G. George:

2.1.1.2 Both films touch upon societal norms and the struggles of women, but "Swayamvaram" emphasizes the personal choices of the female

protagonist, while “Swapnadanam” delves into emotional turmoil within complex relationships.

#### 2.1.2 “Kodiyettam” (1977) – Adoor Gopalakrishnan:

2.1.2.1 Women Representation: The film focuses on the male protagonist, played by Bharath Gopi, and his journey of self-discovery. While the female characters in “Kodiyettam” are supportive, they are not central to the narrative. Adoor’s representation of women in this film is more subdued, reflecting the film’s focus on the internal struggles of the male lead.

Comparison with “Yavanika” (1982) – K. G. George:

2.1.2.2 In “Yavanika,” women characters play significant roles within the thriller genre, contributing to the plot’s intricacies. Unlike “Kodiyettam,” “Yavanika” places emphasis on multiple female characters who influence the narrative.

#### 2.1.3 “Elippathayam” (1981) – Adoor Gopalakrishnan:

2.1.3.1 Women Representation: “Elippathayam” explores the psychological isolation of its male protagonist within a declining aristocratic family. While the female characters in the film contribute to the narrative, their roles are shaped by the overarching theme of societal decay. Adoor’s portrayal of women in “Elippathayam” reflects the impact of societal changes on gender roles.

Comparison with “Lekhayude Maranam: Oru Flashback” (1983)  
– K. G. George:

2.1.3.2 Both films address the impact of societal dynamics on female characters, but “Elippathayam” focuses more on the psychological aspects of the male lead, while “Lekhayude Maranam” places a tragic transformation experienced by a female character at its core.

In summary, Adoor Gopalakrishnan’s films from 1972 to 1982 often depict women within the context of societal changes, emphasizing individual choices and struggles. On the other hand, K. G. George’s films during the same period tend to explore emotional turmoil within complex relationships, with women characters playing significant roles in influencing the narrative. Each filmmaker brings a unique perspective to the representation of women, reflecting their distinct cinematic sensibilities.



## CHAPTER 3

### **3.1 Pennu, the Language of Representation: A Study of Women Characters in the Films of Adoor Gopalakrishnan**

This study focused on the "Pennu" the language representation a study of women character in Adoor Gopalakrishnan films. Adoor Gopalakrishnan was an unwavering filmmaker who was among the first in India to produce "new wave" or "avant-garde" films. Our socio-political realities serve as the foundation for all of his films. The treatment of women in the Adoor films is the main topic of this article. Gender has long been a significant topic in the creative industry. The representation of the other gender is always crucial when it comes to the subject of mainstream art, or cinema. When Adoor's films are analysed, it becomes clear how he differs from other directors in how he portrays female characters. The primary focus of the research is how femininity is portrayed in films, and it also aims to understand how the word "pennu" (woman) functions as a language of representation in the discourse surrounding gender in films.

### **3.2 Spatial Politics of Women in Adoor Gopalakrishnan's Films**

This research work on spatial politics of women in Gopalakrishnan films are based on three films, primarily include, specific reference to the Elippathayam (Rat-Trap, 1982) Nalupennungal (Four Women, 2007), Orupennum Randanum (Women and Two Men, 2008). These Films are historically contextualized by women centered spatial practice of society as well as public and private. This study is concerned with exploring the manner in which spatial politics of women in Adoor Gopalakrishnan's films. For this purpose, the researcher has chosen qualitative Critical Discourse Analysis method.

### **3.3 Novel Interpretations: A Study of Adoor Gopalakrishnan's Selected Films Based on Literary Texts**

This study focused on the Cinema as an avenue of expression is an art par excellence, whereby it re-creates a different world through images and sound. Of the various disciplines of art that have shown interdependence and affinity between two art forms, film and literature attains a special interest. Even while undergoing revolutionary changes in the process of establishing their own identity in the complexity of twentieth century art, these two art forms have not been behind in following the trend of artistic exchange rather than artistic purity. This shift from artistic independence to artistic interdependence has become a unique and essential feature of aesthetic development in the twentieth century. The paper propose to look into three films of Adoor Gopalakrishnan Mathilukal (Walls, 1989), Vidheyam (Servile, 1994) and Naalu Pennungal (Four Women, 2007) based on literary texts by renowned authors in Malayalam literature Vaikom Muhammad Basheer, Paul Zacharia and Thakazi Sivasankara Pillai respectively.

### **3.4 Spatial Practices of Women In India, Malayalam, Adoor Gopalakrishnan's Films**

This study is an attempt to understanding the importance and the spatial dimensions of physical location in the narrative trajectory of women in Indian Films. The narrative structure of Indian film is unique in the sense that it is very peculiar and different from the films of the world but in spatial contexts was not yet seriously discussed. Most Indian films are punctuated with domestic and outside the spatial location which are very deeply synthesised with social reality. In the modern and progressive film study discipline covered the different aspects of films and its narrative elements in the cinematic world. However spatial perspective is very rare and

very complex in the narrative trajectory of India, specifically Malayalam films.

### **3.5. A Critical Discourse Analysis of Spatial Practices and Women in Adoor Gopalakrishnan's Films**

This is to certify that this dissertation entitled “A Critical Discourse Analysis of Spatial Practices and Women in Adoor Gopalakrishnan's Films” is submitted to the University of Madras in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Journalism and Communication. This is a record of research done by K PRADEEP, during the period of his study in the Department of Journalism and Communication, University of Madras, under my supervision. It has not formed the basis of award of any Degree/Diploma/Associateship or any thesis.

## CHAPTER 4

## **4. METHEDOLOGY**

4.1.1. Qualitative Study

4.1.2. Surveys and Questionnaires:

4.1.2.1 Design surveys to gather quantitative data on public perceptions about the women representation in Malayalam cinema.

4.1.2.2 Include questions about the influence of Malayalam cinema among youth

4.1.2.3 Take surveys among workers in film industries (new faces or new directors)

## REFERENCE

- *Pennu, the Language of Representation: A Study of Women Characters in the Films of Adoor Gopalakrishnan*
- *Spatial Politics of Women in Adoor Gopalakrishnan" s Films*
- *Novel Interpretations: A Study of Adoor Gopalakrishnan's Selected Films Based on Literary Texts*
- *A Critical Discourse Analysis of Spatial Practices and Women in Adoor Gopalakrishnan's Films*
- *Spatial Practices Of Women In India, Malayalam, Adoor Gopalakrishnan's Films.*