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**AN INSIGHT INTO THE SUBALTERN IN MALAYALAM FILM: A CULTURAL
INVESTIGATION OF MALAYALAM FILM *PAPILIO BUDDHA* BY JAYAN K.
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Abstract

The subject of subalternity with its innate consequences is yet to discover support among movie producers in India. Dynamic movie producers of the 1960s endeavoured to address the subject of subaltern and set out to give the subaltern a voice, however they stayed solitary endeavours. Through an inquiry into a Malayalam film (a local film industry of Kerala in India) *Papilio Buddha*, this paper studies the portraiture of Dalit people group in Indian silver screen. In spite of the fact that Malayalam film industry has attempted to address the worry of Dalits, they have been stereotyped from various perspectives and diminished to being sidekicks to villains or incompetent workers having no character. They stayed as instruments to worship the main hero and to help the protagonist to bring out his heroism. They are like the poor helpless victims who always help the hero to display his heroism. *Papilio Buddha* got media consideration when it was denied by the censor board as it investigates the region of Dalit cognizance by concentrating the focal point on the land strike by the Dalit people group and making a counter story to the hitherto glorified pictures made by the state.

Keywords: Dalit, Subaltern, Kerala, Caste, Victims

Malayalam film industry is from the southern part of India. Malayalam cinema always have a very good rational audience, radical themes and good film makers and is unique and internationally acclaimed film industry from India. It is also known to be as *Mollywood* in the Indian film Industry. Even though it is a very small industry compared with Telugu cinema, Tamil cinema and Hindi cinema, still it have gained an appreciation for its technicality and

craft. Works namely, *Marana simhasanam* and *Vanaprastham* have gone for a theatrical release in the Cannes film festival. The social duty of a film maker has been forgotten in Kerala, when a shift arisen especially from realistic idealism to imaginative spaces. Many foreign companies and cross over cinematic markets are now transforming the Malayalam cinema experience. Coming of globalization have turned the film industry into mere commodities which endorse sentiments with consumerism. The topic of subalternity with its inalienable implications is yet to discover support among producers in India and in Kerala. Dynamic movie producers of the 1960s endeavoured to address the subject of subaltern and set out to give the subaltern a voice, yet they stayed solitary attempts. A noxious white collar class hatred for the Dalit address removed the Dalit themes away from the mainstream realistic talks. Meta-accounts of the post-modern Keralite society declined to address the mind boggling complexities of Indian social chain of importance established in religious, monetary, political and social talks. Voices of the subaltern stayed unheard and the expressions looked like the tension and estrangement experienced by the diaspora. Jayan K Cheriyan is an Indian filmmaker who actually hails from Kerala. Currently he is living in Newyork city, United States. So he is part of diaspora film-makers in India. An analysis of his film *Papilio Buddha* within the framework of the cultural studies and subaltern will raise compelling questions about representation of Dalit Identity.

Indian silver screen prospered from the way of life of shadow theatre, puppetry, movie dramatizations and individual artistic expressions with their substantial scale commitment to a pop culture rather than the profoundly adapted traditional works of art of the world class. As the medium caught the creative ability of regular man in India, silver screen developed to oblige different methods of portrayal going from the impossible, fanciful and profoundly sensible social dramatizations to the surrealist pictures in a couple of test movies. Well known film was not generally idealist; some of them clinging to the Parsi theater convention, tended to socially related topics like communalism, sexual orientation issues, defilement et cetera. Films such as, *Jagte Raho* (Maitra and Mitra, 1956), *Sujata* (Roy, 1959) and *Achhut Kanya* (Osten, 1936), spoke to these social shows with a high level of authenticity and social responsibility, whatever is left of the business produced performers transporting gathering of people to a place that is known for dream and inaction. Socially committed movie producers were not generally of the parallel film classification, they additionally added to the standard silver screen. Even though there were changes in the so-called Indian society, but what we find in the national film

that is Bollywood, is that the art films or parallel films which deals with the social consciousness themes are keeping it away from the Dalit issues.

In IMDB website what they say about *Papilio Buddha* is that a band of uprooted untouchables in Western Ghats of India grasp Buddhism so as to escape from position abuse. *Papilio Buddha* investigates the life of a gathering of uprooted Dalits in the Western Ghats of India and tests the new character legislative issues in view of Ambedkarism, picking up force among the Dalits in the district, in the milieu of a continuous land battle. The changing governments in Kerala never see the plight of the Dalits and the fight for the land. The Dalit struggles are still an ongoing process in Kerala. This film is a like an eye opener about the cause of the Dalit. This film got banned in India only because of the derogatory remarks which were made on M.K. Gandhi and some other nationalists. The party who were ruling during that time did not give permission to release the movie in India. The director of this film conveys in the newspaper that, “We are not inventing anything, but only trying to rephrase historical truths in the film” (The Indian Express: 2012). The film investigated another character—political uprising in view of Ambedkarism growing among Dalits in the district. The film was later discharged with a 'Grown-ups only' endorsement keeping a noteworthy segment of film goes from watching it. That is it was given a clear Adults-Only certificate, in-order to avoid a major section in watching that film. According to The Hindu, “*Papilio Buddha* is inspired by several events that happened in various Dalit communities in Kerala, including their struggle for land in places such as Chengara, Meppadi, and Muthanga, and its effect on the Dalit population” (Trivedi: The Hindu).

If we look on to Malayalam film industry, one of the films that dealt with the Dalit issues were *Ezhu Rathrikal* by Ramu Kariat in 1978, in which the Dalits became the mere instruments to idolize the hero. They always are poor victims who offer the protagonist to show his heroism. The voice of the Dalit in the popular films became not so interesting and people always forget them. While dealing with issues like feudalism, poverty, inequality, agrarian crisis, urbanity and corrosion of values, Malayalam industry in one way or the other rejected the Dalit cause. Dalits remain marginalized even in the films in Kerala. Azariah figures out, “Dalits have been oppressed for more than 4000 years and the foremost problem is not poverty but their wounded psyche” (Azariah p. 118). Malayalam silver screen's most punctual history stands observer to this mistreatment established on caste politics in *Vigathakumaran* (Daniel, 1930), first Malayalam dialect film. *Vigathakumaran* and its female hero endured the closed-minded harsh treatment dispensed by rank based social foundations. The unbending nature and

rootedness of the framework penetrating Kerala society removed even those movie producers focused on social equity through their films scrutinizing class dominance and financial inequalities. The undecided position of political talks regarding the matter of standing segregation made it an unsafe territory for movie producers. *Ara Nazhika Neram* (Sethumadhavan, 1970), *Rarichan Enna Pouran* (Bhaskaran, 1956), *Asuravithu* (Vincent, 1968) and *Murappennu* (Vincent, 1965), *Aalkuttathil Thaniye* (Sasi, 1984) and *Thinkalazhcha Nalla Divasom* (Padmarajan, 1985), G Aravindan's *Oridathu* (1987), *Elipathayam*, (Gopalakrishnan, 1981), *Vidheyam* (1994), *MalaMukalile Daivom* (P.N Menon, 1983), *Chithariyavar* (The Scattered, 2004) directed by Lalji George, are some of the main films that dealt with Dalit issues. Currently in 2016 *Kammatipadam* directed by Rajeev Ravi was really appreciable. The actor Vinayakan, who acted in *Kammatipadam* got The Kerala State Best Actor Award in the awards announced on 2017, which shows the change in the society.

The subaltern in *Papilio Buddha* is not a vicious being or barbarous character nor is he a rationally or physically tested individual to be known or identified by the crowd. He is a moral being set in snapshots of history with a voice and a still, small voice that works at a more elevated amount of presence. These subalterns involve in those luminal spaces where enunciation and activity stays unimaginable. Jayan Cherian made this strong wander when standard film industriously exhibited the diverse routes in which administration gets authorized through mistreatment and mortification. Silver screen like other social talks mirrors the social development of subalternity and *Papilio Buddha* meets all requirements for a discourse since it sub-verts well known account structures and rise as a counter-story. *Papilio Buddha* has this group confronting refusals from power focuses and weak attempts at self-expression get squashed savagely. State allots brutal measures of suppression against Dalits, who squat on the disputable woods of Meppara requesting for the established rights. Kariyan, the pioneer of the Dalits, more than once reaffirms this directly over land, in this manner requesting space and acknowledgement. Dalits along these lines experience the rootlessness and distance of the diaspora in the host nation.

While early Marxian scholars clung to the hypotheses of financial base and super structure and consigned the part of super structure in social isolation and stratification, later Marxist scholars moved the locus to culture and comparable establishments. Antonio Gramsci (1971) worried on the dynamic interest of foundations in assembling assent for the hegemonic structures. In *Papilio Buddha*, Shankaran and others have accomplished a specific measure of self-acknowledgment and saw the exploitative way of social stories. They over and again

challenge formally endorsed notorious pictures like that of Gandhi and look to uncover the shallowness and bad faith of overwhelming belief systems. The people who are followers of Gandhi in the film declare peacefulness and utilize animal drive to state the honesty of their strategy. Their demonstrations of subversion of history and convention are responses to this insight. They look for substitutions and re-readings in cultural codes and icons are supplanted. Religious affinities change as a demonstration of insubordination. An entire metastasis in religion and confidence mirrors a verifiable snapshot of Ambedkar's transformation to Buddhism. The film uses subtle elements and depicts transformation of the uprooted Dalit people group.

Sankaran in *Papilio Buddha* winds up in a comparable issue. His Dalit inner voice is an image of the upsetting outsider diasporic self from which he looks to escape. His training in India's chief foundation does not promise him assurance from the severe hardware of the state. He is told over and over 'A pulaya (Dalit) is dependably a pulaya' by companions and enemies alike (*Papilio Buddha*). Endeavours to get away from the burdensome circumstance put him in a confused position which requests his self-acknowledgment as an untouchable. Sankaran's companions, a gathering of adolescents required in sorting out welfare exercises, non-Dalits, who assert their own to be the 'voice of the voiceless', assist during that time which they spent for self-identification. The discourteous voice of the special class recognizes Sankaran as the untouchable and the acknowledgement that even an escape to Christianity won't 'wipe clean' his subaltern status. Manjusree, the Dalit lady who drives an auto, who is profoundly and mentally stirred with a capacity to develop as a pioneer is fiercely assaulted and viciously mishandled via auto drivers who feel undermined by her tireless nearness both as a Dalit and as a lady. Manjusree is brutally raped by a set of auto drivers in the film. She is totally shattered mentally and physically.

Specifically this film catches the tension and weakness of the Dalit people group, because of the social isolation and other tragic events is showcased in the film. Pictures of Dalit bodies are sensibly introduced such as dim cleaned, short stature and wavy hair. *Papilio Buddha* presents sensible caricaturization of the group and has effectively made a good visual representation through rehashed utilization of dark clothing's particularly for the pioneers, figuring out the Dalit masterminds who are part of the Human Rights Movement for the rights of Dalits in Kerala. The film utilizes a natural shading tone all through the portrayal additionally recommending the profound established fondness of these individuals to the land which uplifts the feeling of misery when they are expelled from their country.

The tale of Dalit resistance is likewise the tale of the rise of another pioneer, Sankaran. While making exchange social codes and history, moving loyalties from the customary patriarchal position authority, the movie producer uncovers an unwillingness to let off his social moulding. Sankaran, who experiences a transformative procedure from a flippant and heartless taught young fellow to a solid, definitive Dalit pioneer, bears the name of enormous social criticality. The film concentrates on the various levels of importance related with the name Sankaran. It is started through the visual of a photo of E.M. Sankaran Nampoothiripad, prestigious Communist mastermind and government official from Kerala. The photo has in its corner a little photo of the hero Sankaran as a newborn child. Sankara is the god who was initially of Dravidian beginning and later Sanskritised into the Aryan custom, from Siva to Sankara. The Picture of Siva always surfaces over and over in the film. The auto rickshaws that have a place with the attackers of Manjusree likewise have pictures of Siva. The hero's name symbolizes the elitist otherworldly searcher, Adisankara, whose trip towards the idea of Advaita is an encapsulation of elitist Hindu culture, combining the progressive example in Indian culture. Sankaran additionally helps the gathering of people to remember the effective nearness of E.M. Sankaran Nampoothiripad, the primary Communist Chief Minister of Kerala, the Brahmin Communist pioneer idolized by the subalterns and later disappointed by his position on issues of rank and subalternity. The film more than once makes references to these recommendations, transparently and subliminally, at the point when Jack the outsider looks for elucidations with respect to the name. Sankaran consequently typically helps one to remember the exclusive classes and this is strengthened through references to his instruction at Indian's head organizations. He declines to be a piece of the Dalit struggle and likes to carry on with the life of a high society bourgeoisie.

The film regularly trivialises the force and recondite of the Dalit problem overlooking the way that it addresses convoluted issues managing the polyphonic ethnicities of Dalits. By making doubles of improved pictures and casings, the movie producer expects to catch the perplexing web of connotation procedures required in the topic of Dalit attribute and discusses the Indian social construction or caste system. Substitution of social stories are in abundance in the film—society melodies with new verses, supplanting Gandhi with Ambedkar, statues of Buddha, contaminated man and perfect nature, dark clad Dalits and white clad supporters of Gandhi, tranquil serenades and vicious acts are only a couple of cases. The film constructs itself through polarities, and makes a short-sighted universe of good and bad. These divisions

are made utilizing parallel codes that refute generalizations and socially notable figures of Indian culture.

Portrayal of subalternity is relentlessly risky with inquiries of genuineness of portrayal testing the craftsman in the event that he is a non-Dalit. The political accuracy of the entire exercise raises questions and Dalit commentators regularly react brutally to the visual portrayal of Dalit concealment. They doubt the thoughtful position taken by the movie producer. *Papilio Buddha* turns into a site of contestation with the producer being a non-Dalit. In addition, the festival of victim-hood in the film additionally distances the film from an agent position since Dalit accounts sentence such glorification and wants to talk through subversive practical stories. Creative expressions on Dalit encounters by non-Dalits are regularly talks of pity which Dalits despise since they group their own particular acts as subversive which resist the authoritative methods utilized in assessment. The semiotics of filmic stories catches the pith of the counter hegemonic account which is inexactly organized around the land battles of this estranged, dislodged diaspora populace inside their country. Thus Jayan K Cherian have made a good film which explicitly deals with the displacement and dislodging of subaltern in *Papilio Buddha*.

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