

**RECONSTRUCTING MASCULINITIES: A SELECT STUDY OF CONTEMPORARY  
MALAYALAM CINEMA**



*Project submitted to St. Teresa's College (Autonomous) in partial fulfilment of the requirement for  
the degree of BACHELOR OF ARTS in English Language and Literature*

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## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this project titled “Reconstructing Masculinities: A Select Study of Contemporary Malayalam Cinema” is the record of bona fide work done by me under the guidance and supervision of Ms. Athira Babu, Assistant Professor, Department of English.



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## CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify that this project entitled “Reconstructing Masculinities: A Select Study of Contemporary Malayalam Cinema” by Sana Binoy is a record of bona fide work carried out by her under my supervision and guidance.



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# **Reconstructing Masculinities: A Select Study of Contemporary Malayalam Cinema**

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Society, as well as cinema, has taken a huge shift from their perspective of gender and gender roles that prevailed in the society earlier. My project is the study of masculinity that mainly focuses on R.W.Connell's theory of masculinity, different shades of masculinity and the evolution of masculinity in Malayalam cinema. R.W Connell introduces different types of masculinity in her work. The aim of the study is to understand how the concept of masculinity has changed over years. It also aims at how these changes is reflected in different areas such as in Cinemas. The first chapter gives an overview of Masculinity theory proposed by R.W. Connell. Followed by taking various examples of cinema of different time period, it shows the evolution of masculinity in Malayalam cinema in the second chapter. The third chapter the analysis of two recently released Malayalam cinema, *Kaathal-The core* and *Nna than case kodu* starring two renowned actors of Mollywood proving how the mindset of actors and filmmakers change when the perspective of masculinity in society changes.

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## Introduction

We live in a society where there are certain expectations that already exist which are meant to achieve irrespective of gender, caste, race, religion etc. Such expectations often creates conflicts and disturbs the harmony and peace of the society. An individual is said to be shaped by the society. The behavior, character, mannerisms etc. are already set up in the society and the only job left for the person is to obey this. When it comes to gender, there are certain characteristics that are expected from a male as well as female by the society. These are often termed as gender role or sex role. It is defined as socially accepted behavior, characteristics and role that an individual has to play in the society based on their gender. Gender role influences human identity starting from the clothes they wear to the food they eat. The term Masculinity is one such word that is highly related to society and gender role.

The term Masculine or Masculinity is not only a biological term but a term constructed and defined socially, historically and politically. Masculinity refers to the certain attributes, behaviors and characteristics a society expects a boy or man to exhibit. We live in a society where we are always taught that boys or men will never cry and pink is a color for girls and blue is the color for boys. Men are said to hide their emotions and run a family no matter what. From our very young age till now, society injects certain attributes that are considered to be either masculine or feminine. Men need to have a healthy and balanced masculinity. They are humans before men. Each individual has the right to express their emotions, insecurities and vulnerability. Men who are connected with their emotions has a life of peace, satisfaction, self-esteem and happiness. They also lead a life with less mental problems and depression. It's the society that doesn't allow men to break the shell and come out to the real world of emotions. The traditional expectations of masculinity such as strong, unemotional etc. have harmful effects and consequences on individuals. The society considers these men as real men. However, men are just like women. Even though they have

pain and worries, there is no platform for them to exhibit so they keep those feelings to themselves which again will have negative impact on their mental as well as physical health. Initially, these types of stereotypes have been visible everywhere. Starting from home to portrayal of male characters in movies. “Why do you cry like a girl”, as if a crying or expressing emotions are only said to girls, to the portrayal of handsome, fit, healthy masculine figure who fights with other twenty men, lies the suffering of men. Men are said to study, earn, look after the house, take decisions whereas women are supposed to do the household work.

However, there are positive changes brought up by this generation in the society. It redefines what is to be a real man. This generation breaks the strong and rigid perspective and stereotype of masculinity. This generation neglects or rejects the traditional masculine ideas of being strong, arrogant, unemotional etc. and accepts a wider range of emotions that is exhibited by a man. Now, society is happy when a man opens about his feeling, shows up his emotions and talks on sensitive topics. As time changed, societies approach towards the idea of Masculinity also changed and still keeps changing.

The first chapter discusses about the various theories put forward by different theorists all over the world. This project had come across different theories by theorists like Micheal Kimmel Scott, Judith Pamela Butler, Thomas W Liqueur and R.W Connell. Out of these the project sheds light upon the theory by R.W Connell. In her theory she explains about different types of masculinity which became a turning point in gender theory. Hegemonic masculinity, subordinate masculinity, Complicit masculinity and Marginalized masculinities are different types of masculinity put forward by R W Connell. It is based on these differentiations that analysis of movies are focused in the project. The theory, different types and criticisms on Connell’s theory have been explained in detail in the first chapter.

The second chapter focuses on the transition of the idea of masculinity in Malayalam cinema. It deals with questions like how Malayalam cinema portrays masculinity from 1950s to 2000s. Earlier, people were not ready to accept cinemas that explored different shades of masculinity. It mainly focused on traditional norms of masculinity such as hero being depicted as strong, arrogant and impulsive. Film makers felt apprehensive to make films and actors lacked courage to act on such movies that involves gender dynamics because back then society was not able to accept it. Now the situation has changed. Film makers and actors are making exceptional movies in Malayalam cinema based on gender dynamics and exploration of different shades of masculinity. Different movies along with its characteristics from 1950s to 2000s has been explained in the second chapter. The transition of masculinity in Malayalam cinema is a gradual process but its changing as the society changes.

The third chapter briefly analysis two renowned movies *Kaathal-The core* and *nnan thaana case kodu* that enacts the different shades of masculinity. It clearly witnesses the transition of Malayalam cinema as well as that of the actors. The lead roles in both the movies are renowned actors who portrayed traditional norms of masculinity in cinemas. This proves that as the society changes the mindset of the people along with the acceptance also changes. In *Kaathal-The core* the lead exhibits hegemonic traits where as he is actually inhibiting subordinate masculinity. This can be due to the fear of acceptance from the society and family. In *nnan thaana case kodu* , although the lead doesn't portray any traits of hegemonic masculinity at the beginning of the film, later due to his situation and environment he finds the need to gather courage and power to fight against the dominant masculinity. Here the lead belongs to the marginalized masculinity. The transition from marginalized masculinity to hegemonic masculinity also proves that changes in the society is the main factor on deciding the masculinity of a person. It also proves that; masculinity is gained through experience and is not fixed or innate.

This project tries to analyze how the idea, concept or perspective of masculinity have changed over the years.

## Chapter 1

### Understanding Men and Masculinity

*“It’s good to see a man who isn’t afraid to live out his masculinity”*. There are many studies related to Masculinity. The study of gender and sexuality in literature is referred as Gender Theory. Another prominent study on Masculinity is referred to as Theory of Masculinity. There are many theorists who came up with Masculinity theory. Raewyn Connell, Michael Kimmel, Judith Butler and Thomas Laqueur are some of them.

Michael Scott Kimmel is an American retired sociologist who specialized in Gender studies. He was a Professor of Sociology at Stony Brook University in New York and founder and editor of the academic journal Men and Masculinities. He was a longtime feminist and a spokesman of NAMOS. He has written on a variety of various topics related to men such as men’s movement, gender roles and masculinities. Kimmel’s theory of masculinity mainly focuses on the idea that masculinity is socially constructed and performed, not determined biologically or through inheritance. It’s the society that decides the masculinity of a men.

Judith Pamela Butler is an American Philosopher and Gender studies scholar. Her work has influenced political philosophy, ethics, queer theory, literary theory and the fields of third wave feminism. Butler’s work primarily focuses on Gender as a whole but her theories have implications for understanding masculinity. Butler’s theory of gender performativity is a contrast to Micheal’s theory of masculinity. Butler’s theory emphasizes that masculinity is innate or fixed. According to Butler, Gender is something that individuals continuously ‘do’ through their actions, behaviors and expression.

Thomas W. Laqueur is a historian known for his work on the history of sexuality and gender. Laqueur made a significant contribution in understanding the true essence of masculinity and femininity and how it has changed over time. In his theory he focuses the

different factors that shape gender norms. These factors include social, cultural and scientific factors. Laqueur's theory doesn't fully focus on masculinity but his theories paved way in understanding the concept of masculinity in different social context.

The theory of masculinity by Australian sociologists Raewyn Connell, is the most influential theory in the field of men and masculinity. Raewyn Connell born on 3<sup>rd</sup> January 1944, is an Australian Sociologist and Professor at Emerita at the University of Sydney. Connell is internationally known for her contribution in the field of Masculinity studies. The book she wrote '*Masculinities*' (1995,2005) is quite famous in this field. Much of her research contains biographical elements. She has also published survey, historical research, institutional analysis and social theory. Moreover, Connell has been an Advisor on Gender equality and peacemaking, an initiative by United Nations. Connell is a Transsexual woman who made a formal transition late in life. Most of her works are published under the name R W. Connell.

Connell's theory provides a basic framework of how masculinity is constructed and maintained in the society(("(PDF) Connell's Theory of Masculinity – Its Origins and Influences on the Study of Gender1")) In her theory of masculinity, Connell argues that there is not one masculinity, but different masculinities, each associated with different positions of power. She also argued that men will be so emotionally disconnected that they don't care about their emotional state such as depression. This happens because many males have learned from the men they look up to in their life like their father, friends and other peers that they should not show emotions as it can be seen as a weakness. Initially this theory was a topic of discussion as back in time only one type of 'masculinity' prevailed. It is now that this theory came into context. Now we witness, as Connell mentioned, there is not one masculinity but different masculinities. We witness different shades of masculinity and the most interesting part is that men are not shy or afraid to open up or exhibit their true identity.

R.W. Connell, in her theory, mentions about four types of masculinity. Those are Hegemonic, Subordinate, Complicit and Marginalized. Hegemonic masculinity refers to the 'typical' masculinity of men being dominant, physically strong, lack of emotions and whiteness. It is considered the standard of masculinity against which other types are judged. The characteristics of Hegemonic masculinity includes violence and aggression, physical strength, and athleticism. (McVittie and Goodall)

Connell argues that hegemonic masculinity is dynamic because it can change over time and different social context. She points that this type of masculinity is maintained through various platforms such as media, education and politics. Subordinate masculinity refers to men who doesn't belong to the hegemonic masculinity and therefore treated as lower on the gender hierarchy. Connell points out gay as the example of Subordinate masculinity. Here we witness a dominance of heterosexual men and the subordination of homosexual men. The third type is Complicit masculinity. It refers to those men who doesn't possess hyper-masculine traits but still benefits from the privileges and supports its perpetuation. Last type is Marginalized masculinity. It refers to the interaction between gender hierarchies and other social hierarchies such as socioeconomic status and race. These are the only group of men who are affected by factors outside gender roles. Marginalized men fit into hegemonic masculinities but their acceptance does not affect other men.

Although Connell's theory has influenced many works of different theorists and was also a major contribution in field of Psychology, It was also subjected to many criticisms. Some of the major critiques are Essentialism, lack of intersectionality, over emphasis on power and domination, neglect of femininity and limited emphasis on agency and resistance and western centric bias.

Critics argue that Connell still focuses or emphasizes on the essentialist notions of gender. This focus oversimplifies the complexity of masculinity which Connell fails to focus. Connell's theory may overlook the diverse ways in which masculinity comes out from different contexts such as cultural, social, and historical context.

Connell connects the intersections of gender with other social factors such as class, race, sexuality and ability. Critics argue that each man comes from different types of background and hence masculinity cannot be experienced uniformly. These social factors just help to shape the experience and performance of masculinity. Since Connell emphasizes more on domination and power of masculinity in her various works and theories, critics argue that this may mislead people thinking that all men are emotionless and dominated. They say that, this creates a wrong image of masculinity. As Connell only focuses on masculine studies and masculinities neglecting the study of femininity and how it interacts with masculinity, critics argue that understanding masculinity by neglecting the other sex limits understanding of gender dynamics and reinforces binary thinking about gender.

Some critics argue that, Connell portrays men as passive recipients of hegemonic masculinity which brings down how men actively negotiate, resist or challenge the gender norms. Critics also argue that Connell's theory is western-centric as most of the researches are from western society. This makes it difficult to understand the men in other societies as each one of them differs in experience and performance. Masculinity theory is very much relevant in today's world. Gender equality movements, men's mental health, fatherhood and parenting, media, violence prevention are some of the factors by which masculinity theory remains relevant in today's world.



Traditional norms of masculinity paves way to gender inequality and harmful behavior. The masculinity theory provides a framework of understanding these dynamics and exploring different expressions of masculinity which is more inclusive and acceptable.

Due to the traditional norms of masculinity, men suffer from depression and mental pressure. The theory helps in actually understanding the meaning of masculinity and helps in reducing burden and pressure for men to adapt to the traditional norms.

Masculinity theory offers insights into changing roles of men in society as well as in family. This includes discussions regarding parenting, fatherhood and the impact of gender norms on parenting practices. Scholars examine the representation of masculinity in television, social medias, advertising and other forms of media as well as how these representations shapes men in real world and society.

Masculinity theory challenges gender based violence such as domestic violence, sexual assault and harassment and paves way to promote healthy, respectful forms of masculinity. Masculinity theory plays a very important role in understanding and promoting the complexity of gender identity and gender equality for the well being of people living in the society.

## Chapter 2

### Mapping the Masculine Construction in Malayalam Cinema

People get highly influenced by films or advertisement or anything that happens in television and social medias. What happens in television and social medias are also a reflection of what is happening in the society. Film makers are quite aware of the likes and dislikes of the audience and are also aware of the facts that triggers them. Earlier in cinemas, each and every male character were presented or portrayed based on Hegemonic Masculinity. They were presented as strong, arrogant, unemotional masculine figures who were ready to fight with twenty other men. They were well aware of the current social scenario that prevailed during those times. The fear of acceptance by audience made film makers think about action movies other than sensitive ones. The actors too were afraid to choose characters that had a different shade of masculinity.

Going back to times, during 1950s to 1970s, Malayalam cinema witnessed various movies where the lead delivered traditional norms of masculinity. *Nair pidicha pulival* (1958), *Veluthampi dalawa*(1962), *Odayil ninn* (1965) and *Chemmeen*(1965), *Irruttinte Aatmav*(1967), *Kuttavali*(1978) are some of the movies where the protagonists portrayed traditional masculine traits such as courage, determination, bravery, sense of duty, physical strength, resilience, integrity and perseverance. These films from 1950s to 1970s provide insights on how masculinities are portrayed and perceived in the society back then.

The films from 1980s to 1990s reflect the evolving narratives and representatives of male characters in Malayalam cinema during that period. These movies offer traditional norms of masculinity along with addressing contemporary issues. The movies like, *Thoovanathumbikal*(1987), *Oru vadakkan veeraghadha*(1989), *Mathilukal*(1990), *Aaram thampuran*(1997) offers different perspectives of masculinity along with addressing socio-cultural issues. There is an evident transition in the portrayal of male characters in the Malayalam film Industry. *Aaram Thampuran* (1997) can be taken as a typical example of

Hegemonic masculinity. Mollywood's big M, Mohanlal, in these movies, portrayed a figure of strength and arrogance, who is the protector of the weak. The title of the movie aptly suits the same.



Fig.1. Poster of Malayalam Movie *Aaram thampuran*.

The posters in fact showed the masculine characteristics of the male character. The poster of the movie *Aaram Thampuran* depicts the ultimate masculine-feminine role a society expects. The two female characters, even in the poster, are portrayed as meek and submissive where as the male figure shows power. The movies success sheds light on the toxic masculine hegemonic nature of the Kerala society.

The 21<sup>st</sup> century with the advent of digital literacy and globalization has brought changes in the moral codes of social inclusion. The new generation is trying to make a change by reinterpreting the gender norms. Film makers started making sensitive and more family-oriented movies. Actors who once taught the codes of masculinity started portraying

role with different shades of masculinity. New age film makers started breaking stereotypes and society started accepting this new perspective of masculinity. Earlier an actor who had a muscular figure, capable of fighting other men was considered for the role of the protagonist or hero whereas now, the scenario has changed. Actors who once played the role of supporting characters now started to play the lead in films.



Fig.2. Poster of Malayalam Movie *Njan Merikutti*

The poster introduced a mainstream actor essaying the nuances of gender transition and related troubles. This reimagining of gender identity supported and strengthened several socially marginalized groups. This is an example of the transition Malayalam cinema has witnessed over the years.

The evolution of masculinity in Malayalam cinema can be traced from traditional masculinity to transitional phase to modern masculinity and then to breaking stereotypes and finally to exploring masculine vulnerability.

The period from 1950s to 1970s is considered to be of traditional masculinity as the movies portrayed male characters as strong and courageous heroic figures. The movies from the periods of 1980s to 1990s showed the different phases of masculinities by exploring the vulnerabilities, doubts and complexities challenging traditional norms of masculinity that exhibited strength and heroism.

The 21<sup>st</sup> century witnessed film makers coming up with films like *Mothoon*(2019) and *Kumbalangi nights*(2019) where male character were struggling with issues like love, friendship and personal fulfillment in the contemporary society. Filmmakers explored themes like identity crisis, emotional intelligence and the intersectionality of gender with other factors like race and class.

*Kumbalangi nights* is a movie that is a celebration of various kinds of emotions, vulnerabilities and insecurities. It portrays the beauty of human connections and relations effortlessly. Each brother portrayed in the movie shows different intrapersonal problems and vulnerabilities they faces. The character Bobby, played by Shane Nigam, defies the traditional norms of masculinity by portraying compassion and sensitivity. The film also breaks down traditional family role and runs a family beautifully in the absence of a patriarchal figure. The movie give importance to communication and emotional intimacy between the brothers.

Slowly Malayalam cinema started breaking stereotypes and started focusing in depiction of male characters in more realistic way. Characters no longer fit to rigid traditional masculinity traits rather embodies a variety of traits and experiences. It allows male characters to express their emotions, vulnerabilities and weaknesses. In recent times, films are deeply involved in portraying the emotional lives of male characters. It also portrays the struggle they face with mental health, trauma and societal expectations.

## Chapter 3

### Reconstructing Masculinity in Contemporary Malayalam Cinema

The film industry has taken a major shift of perspective in the case of Masculinity. It is very much evident in the recently released Malayalam films *Kaathal- The core*. *Kaathal- The core* is a Malayalam Cinema released on 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2023. The film is written by Adarsh Sukumaran and Paulson Skaria and directed by Jio Baby. The film is produced by Mammootty Company and stars Mammootty and Jyothika. The movie had positive responses and reviews and was opened up to critics who praised the performance of Mammootty and Jyothika. The movie deals with very mature and sensitive topics such as marriage, justice, self-identity and personal fulfillment. The movie establishes a strong mental, emotional connection with the audience throughout 2 hours.

Mammootty plays the character of Mathew Devassy who is portrayed as a Homosexual figure. Homosexual refers to those people who are sexually and romantically attracted to people of one's own sex. Even though Mathew is married to Omana, role played by Jyothika, he hides his sexuality from her as well as public and it's toward the end that audience comes to know that he is homosexual. Mathew Devassy lives with a family of four, his wife Omana, daughter Femi, and his father Devassy, who leads a dignified life in the village. In the movie, he gets the opportunity to contest in the local government elections due to his father's contribution to the respective party. The villagers are very much fond of Mathew and his family is quite famous in the village. It is during this time that Omana files a divorce petition against him, accusing him of being homosexual. Omana files a petition alleging that he has not fulfilled his marital obligation as a husband. During all these times Mathew denies this allegation based on his sexuality.



Fig.3. A scene from Malayalam movie *Kaathal- The core*

The turning point of the film comes at 1:04:56 when defense attorney asks Omana how many times they had sex, to which she replies four times- in their twenty years of marriage. It is at this time that the audience comes at the conclusion of him being homosexual because throughout the first half of the movie, the character doesn't exhibit any traits of homosexuality. He behaves like a heterosexual. He hides his identity fearing public because being homosexual or being different from other masculine figures were considered as inappropriate.

According to Connell masculinity theory, a person who shows characteristics or trait of homosexuality, is referred to a Subordinate masculinity or rather categorized under subordinate masculinity. Subordinate masculinity involves men who do not possess the traits of hegemonic masculinity. So according to Connell's theory of masculinity, Mathew and Thankan possess subordinate masculinity. Connell takes out 'gay' as an example of subordinate masculinity. Connell says that masculinity is not fixed and takes various forms depending upon the socio-cultural and historical context. It is through this subordinate masculinity that Connell explores the different gender norms, identities, forms and expression

of masculinity. Hegemonic masculinity is associated with power, dominance and privilege whereas subordinate is associated with minority and marginalized.

Mathew Devassy, in *Kaathal- The core*, is portrayed as an introvert. He is a famous and belongs to a reputed family in the village. In the movie the villagers don't have a doubt of Mathew being homosexual because he behaves like all other men, and villagers doesn't find anything suspicious. Another prominent character is that of Thankan. Thankan is Mathew's alleged partner accused in this case. While observing Thankan throughout the movie, he also doesn't portray any traits or behavior of a homosexual person. The character doesn't even give a hint, to the audience in real and villagers in the movie, that he is homosexual. Here we can see two characters struggling to hide their identity in public. They feared that the society including their families will not accept it. The filmmaker tries to convey that in the real world too, there are many Mathews and Thankans who are hiding their real identity afraid of the society that considers hegemonic masculinity as the dominant one. Like Connell said masculinity can take different forms in different context and background, a person who is homogenous in nature but acts heterogenous to fit or adapt into different environments. Homogenic masculinity is not universally accepted by every man. Men find different branches of masculinity in their journey of life in which sometimes paves way in realizing their true identity. Some people think themselves to be hegemonic but later through different life experiences realizes that they belong to subordinate, complicit or marginalized masculinity. Here, as mentioned earlier the case is different. Mathew and Thankan knew they were homosexual yet refused to open because of the fear they had thinking about the society. This is very much evident when Mathew continuously declines all allegations against him of being homosexual. It's Devassy, his father, who finally confesses in the court that he is homosexual since childhood. On the other hand, Thankan suffers emotionally as he is also scared of admitting his true identity.





Fig.4. A scene from the movie *Kaathal- The core*

This scene is a very prominent scene from the movie where after divorce Mathew and Omana realizes that reality of them being separated. Although Omana loves Mathew, it's is not love being portrayed here. It shows platonic friendship. Omana decides to part ways for not only her benefit but also for Mathews. It is in this scene that she unfolds it.

In the movie, when people came to know about the relationship between Mathew and Thankan, although they faced teasing and disrespect, there was a great acceptance by the people than what they (Mathew and Thankan) actually thought. It was a clear-cut depiction of today's society. Even though today's society doesn't accept it fully, it is far better than what is compared to the olden times. Many actions are taken in order to protect the safety and rights of the minority. These include legal actions, laws, organizations, anti-discrimination policies etc. LGBTQ+ people are finding greater acceptance and importance in the family as well as society.

The great actor of Indian cinema, Mammooty, has portrayed various faces of masculinity throughout his career in Malayalam cinema. From the typical traditional masculinity which portrays hero as strong, unemotional, arrogant and competitive to a different shade of masculinity like the subordinate masculinity portrayed in the movie

*Kaathal- The core*. From his early performances to the recently released movie plays a very important role in the evolving structure of society and its acceptance. When his acting career started back in 1970s he played roles that emphasized hegemonic and even toxic masculinity. He played roles of handsome, powerful, erudite, strong, and independent hero. His roles were cited as examples of a perfect hero. There is a very famous dialogue from the movie *Oru Vadakkan Veeraghadha*. It says “*Chandhuvine tholpikan aavilla makkalle*”. Later in 1990s, he started choosing characters that showed vulnerabilities, emotion, and weaknesses.

To conclude, *Kaathal-The core* film portrays, subordinate masculinity according to Connell. The characters of Mathew and Thankan behaves hegemonic in public whereas, are subordinates in nature. They never opened up about their sexuality fearing society and its traditional norms of masculinity. This tells that society plays a major role in shaping an individual.

Another recently released movie that shows a different shade of masculinity is *Nna than case kod*. *Nna than case kod* released in 2022 is a satirical Malayalam movie directed by Ratheesh Balakrishnan Udhuwal. The film is produced by Santhosh T Kuruvila, Kunchacko Boban and Udaya pictures. The story revolves around the lead Kozhummel Rajeevan’s, character played by Kunchacko Boban, struggle to seek justice which gets delayed due to his moral background. Kozhummel Rajeevan used to be a thief in his early years.

Rajeevan stops doing all the illegal activities and decides to work as a laborer because of Devi, the character played by Gayathri. He falls for Devi, a Tamil laborer and decides to live together. This is when he gets hit by a tragedy. To avoid being hit by an auto, to his way back home, he jumps over the boundary wall of a house. Unfortunately, that house belongs to a person called Kunjikannan, who is the Member of Legislative Assembly. Rajeevan is being accused of theft and gets arrested. Here begins the actual plot of the story. Rajeevan himself

argues his case in the court and provides all the evidence that drags PWD minister K.P Preman into the case by accusing him for the problem of the road that created a hurdle of problems. Although Rajeevan finds it very difficult to collect all the evidences, his strong desire to prove his innocence in court made him strong and created a mindset of not giving up.



Fig.5. A scene from the movie *nna than case kodu*

Rajeevan's character in *Nna than case kod*, according to Connell displays Marginalized masculinity. Marginalized masculinity talks about those men who are marginalized due to their economic, social and cultural background. This refers to the experiences and representation of marginalized sections of men in the society. In films, these types of masculinities can be depicted in different ways showing the vulnerabilities, struggles and oppression these men face against the dominant form of masculinity. These people even though possess traits of hegemonic masculinity, gets marginalized due to various socio-cultural, political and economic background.

In *Nna than case kod* the economic background and social status of the accused, Rajeevan, is low. The people standing against Rajeevan, that is the MLA and PWD minister

are economically, socially and politically dominant along with their hegemonic form of masculinity. This makes Rajeevan to be labelled under marginalized masculinity. His social situations in his early ages made him a thief. But his feelings toward Devi made him think about being a laborer. From this too we can understand that he is a man who exhibit emotions and is ready to change for a woman. This also indicates that he doesn't possess any traditional norms of masculinity. According to traditional norms of masculinity, men ignore the works and words of women. But the transition of Rajeevan from a thief to a laborer is an example of him not subjected to traditional norms of masculinity.

Race, sexuality, class, disability, cultural background and mental health are the different ways in which marginalized masculinity is portrayed in movies. The difference in race, sexuality, any disability faced by a man, cultural background and the way of expressing their mental health status determine the masculinity of a man. In the movie, Rajeevan is not inherently dominant but his fight for justice makes him dominant. His resilience and mental strength of not giving up and to fight against the powerful politicians is that of hegemonic masculinity. The shift of marginalized masculinity into hegemonic one came into vision when only the male protagonist was given a platform. In the movie court was the platform. All other male characters reflect different shades of masculinity. Most of them portrays weak characters. In this movie, all the female characters are established as strong, bold independent women who have an influence on the male characters. These characters include Devi, MLA's wife, and the lover of auto driver. This shows the changing mindset of the society where in, female characters influence the male characters. This is also a major transition of themes in Malayalam cinemas.

Kunjachacko Boban's evolution of masculinity in Malayalam cinema is a very interesting shift. Analyzing his journey through the lens of Connell takes an interesting transition. He was known for his romantic characters. He portrait charming characters that

conquered women's heart. Over these years, Kunchacko Boban has taken a shift from roles that adhere to traditional norms of masculinity. He started portraying characters that are not scared of expressing their emotions, vulnerabilities and insecurities. Instead of characters that gave importance to love, he started taking up roles that involve good communication and problem-solving skills. He also started breaking gender stereotypes and complexities of masculinity. Boban is one of the actors who are willing to experiment diverse roles that challenge traditional norms. It is the change in society and its perspectives that changes the theme and willingness of actors to do movies on these sensitive topics.

To conclude, *Nna thaana case kodu* portrays Marginalized masculinity according to Connell. The character of Rajeevan is not hegemonic at the beginning later shows courage and power to prove his innocence. This shows that it's the situations that make a marginalized man to hegemonic man.

## Conclusion

In film studies as in other contexts, the idea of masculinity is considered contested. It is not only tied to dominant social values but also affects the marginal groups and practices. This project focuses on the theory of masculinity by Raewyn Connell. Connell explains the different types of masculinities in her theory. These types of masculinities is taken as the base of the project. These types include Hegemonic masculinity, Subordinate masculinity, Complicit masculinity as well as marginalized masculinity. We analyzed two movies based on these different shades of masculinity

The movies took for Analysis is recently released Malayalam movies, *Kaathal- The core* and *Nna thaana case kodu*. There is a shift in transition in the perspective of masculinity through these films in Malayalam Cinema Industry. The male lead character of Mathews, in *Kaathal- The core* portrays Subordinate masculinity which is a very prominent type of masculinity in today's society. The second movie *Nna thaana case kodu* portrays Marginalized masculinity.

The actors who injected the idea of being strong, powerful and dominant, which are the character traits of hegemonic masculinity, are the ones who takes a different path from hegemonic characters to subordinate or marginalized ones. Actors like Mammooty who once were an example of traditional masculinity started to be a part of these movements of exploring masculinity is quite motivating. The society which once criticized movies like *Mumbai Police* (2013) just because the lead was homosexual, now started accepting roles and films based on sexuality. Actors started exploring different variances of masculinity by taking up characters that portrays a different shade of masculinity. All these are proofs of the changing mindset of society. Another side of hegemonic masculinity to be handsome and romantic is also being shattered through these films like *Nna thaana case kodu*.

We looked at the evolution of Malayalam cinema. Still it's evolving. Many film makers are coming up movies that explores identity, gender dynamics and breaks gender norms.

Malayalam cinema is witnessing the emergence of movies like *Puzhu*(2022), *Brahmayugam* (2023). As Malayalam cinema continues to explore different shades of masculinity, this is a very relevant topic in todays society and has research possibilities in future.

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