

Casket Literaria




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PREFACE

The realm of Arts contains an enormous range of ideas, theories, perceptions, interpretations, critical analysis etc. Keeping this in view, as to make it helpful for the learners of GEMS Arts and Science College, this book titled "Casket Literaria" on Arts analyses a variety of subjects in the best way helping the Learners or faculties art related Research Works and thereby the future course of their Life. This venture can, indeed, ensure an advanced level of supports with selected subjects coming under the Purview of Arts.

Casket Literaria is a collection of varied articles of the well experienced faculties which published under the strict scrutiny of the Expert Committee appointed by the Management Governing Council. Hence quality and relevance on the content of the book have been ensured. The contents includes Social issues, Literature, Creativity, analytical study, views and previews on different matters and so on. Special care also has given to keep the entries correct with the incessant change being taken place in the day today life of the society. Besides, this edition has equally considered the new google generated Era's nature and scope in Art works.

Indeed Art, like life itself, opens the unfathomable depth of the possibilities for any learner or researcher of the coming future as well.

DR. Mohammed Nazeer. K.E.




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HISTORY, REPRESENTATION, ISLAMOPHOBIA, AND STATE VIOLENCE: A CASE STUDY ON MALAYALAM CINEMA: MALIK

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ABSTRACT

This article explores the impact of movies on shaping public consciousness, focusing on the Beemapally police firing incident in Kerala, which occurred on May 17, 2009. Despite being one of the most significant instances of state violence in Kerala's history, mainstream media provided limited coverage, often portraying it as a communal clash— a narrative fabricated by the state. In this context, the film Malik, released in 2021, becomes a crucial case study as it is based on the Beemapally police firing incident.

This study aims to address four important questions: 1) How does Malayalam cinema represent coastal areas/residents and Muslims? 2) How does Malayalam cinema contribute to the creation of collective consciousness about certain communities and regions? 3) How are the stereotypical and overgeneralized narrations of the Beemapally region, created by media and cinema, utilized to normalize the Beemapally police firing incident? 4) What are the contradictions and similarities between the movie 'Malik' as a work of documentation of the Beemapally police firing?

Through a comprehensive analysis of Malayalam cinema, including its representations of coastal areas, residents, and Muslims, this study seeks to unveil the collective consciousness



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Party of India (Marxist) (CPM) under the Left Democratic Front (LDF). However, 'Malik' depicts the character Abu (played by Dileesh Pothan) as the main political mastermind behind the Beemapally police firing, associated with a Muslim political organization. This portrayal attempts to shift the blame by suggesting that the residents of Beemapally are manipulated by their own community leaders.

The film focuses on the politics of the protagonist, Alika, who is presented as the only leader opposing communalism, while the majority of others are portrayed as racists or opportunists who exploit communal tensions. The movie reinforces stereotypes about the Muslim community, including the smuggling of AK-47s from the Gulf and the community not allowing others to enter the mosque during a tsunami. These prejudiced narrations serve to perpetuate public perceptions shaped by earlier collective consciousness created by movies and media, contributing to Islamophobic representations.

It is worth noting that fact-finding reports by organizations like the People's Union for Civil Liberties and the National Confederation of Human Rights Organization have stated that there were no communal conflicts during the Beemapally police firing incident. However, 'Malik' portrays Muslim communal forces as responsible for the altercation that led to the police firing.

Additionally, a forensic team recovered explosives from the Beemapally region shortly after the police firing, leading to theories and justifications for the unauthorized police action. The film 'Malik' depicts the smuggling of guns and foreign explosives into 'Ramadapally,' further reinforcing racial imaginings. However, the Central Bureau of Investigation, which investigated the source of the explosives, filed a closure report in 2013, stating that no links could be established between the riots and the explosives and failing to establish how they reached the Beemapally region.

Cinema, as a powerful mass communication medium, has the ability to shape society in both positive and negative ways. The representation of various communities, castes, races, genders, regions, and classes within cinema holds significant importance



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Anoop Menon) and a police officer. This dialogue provides insights into how Malayalam cinema has influenced the collective consciousness regarding the Beemapally police firing incident. The dialogue mentions Bilal Colony (Beemapally), a neighborhood adjacent to the mosque, which is predominantly inhabited by minority communities. It implies that the police faced challenges in reaching the area promptly, and it suggests that the colony has been associated with attempts to capture black market goods and instances of shootings.

This dialogue highlights how Bilal Colony (Beemapally) becomes portrayed as a threat due to its association with Muslims and their minority status. It also alludes to the existence of an informal market that sets Beemapally apart within Kerala. Furthermore, the dialogue's statement about the reason behind the police firing incident misrepresents the region and the actual circumstances surrounding the Beemapally police firing. Additionally, the description may imply a perception that the mosque poses a significant threat to the colony.

Forth Estate Critique (FEC) Google group

"Everything in the press release is sincere. Except for the Beemapally incident. I will fully support the police in what they did over there. No community, however strong they are, don't have the right to organize a violent campaign. And Beemapally is known for its violent nature. Just go there and spend a few minutes there to feel this hostile nature." (Forth Estate Critique (FEC) Google group, December 26, 2009).

The above statement is about Beemappally police firing published on an online media platform.

Through the analysis of these dialogues, scenes, and statements in Malayalam cinema, it is apparent that the construction of stereotypical and overgeneralized narratives regarding coastal areas and the Muslim community has profoundly influenced the portrayal of these subjects in films and shaped popular perceptions. These misrepresentations have played a role in the formation of a collective false consciousness specifically concerning the Beemapally region. This fabricated consciousness has been used to justify and normalize the



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- Malayalam cinema tends to otherize both the Muslim community and the coastal community.

- There is a propagation of Islamophobia through the portrayals and narratives present in Malayalam cinema.

These conclusions highlight the problematic stereotypes and negative representations present in Malayalam cinema, perpetuating biases and contributing to the stigmatization of coastal men/areas and the Muslim community.

Geographical and Social importance of the Beemapally Region

The significance of Beemapally lies in its geographical location as a coastal residential area, where the majority of its inhabitants are engaged in fishing activities and other occupations that are dependent on the sea. Additionally, Beemapally is characterized by its Muslim majority population.

The geographical and social importance of Beemapally is particularly relevant in this study due to the stereotypical and Islamophobic representations propagated by Malayalam cinema. These representations have often targeted coastal areas and the Muslim community. Given that Beemapally encompasses both of these characteristics—being a coastal region and a Muslim majority area—it becomes a focal point for examining the impact of such representations.

Beemapally police firing in Malayalam cinema and Media

"The ghettoized Muslim location of Beemapalli has come to be marked as a deviant space that stands away from the mainstream of the capital city of Thiruvananthapuram, which is seen as a caste (Hindu) space inhabited by well-settled government officials. The festivals, rituals and social life of Beemapalli are viewed with suspicion and stereotyped in popular media and discourses".(Ashraf K & Jenny Rowena)

The film "Traffic," directed by Rajesh Pillai and released in 2011, includes a dialogue between Ajmal Nasser (played by



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Amal Neerad in 2007, wherein the notion is reinforced that "not all Muslims are terrorists, but all terrorists are Muslims."

Baba Kalyani," a suspense thriller film directed by Shaji Kailas in 2006, reintroduces a prevalent Muslim stereotype by associating Hawala, an illegal money transfer system, with Muslims and a perceived Pakistan nexus. The character Babu, portrayed by Indrajith Sukumaran, is a college lecturer who is later revealed to be the mastermind of a terrorist organization in the state. He is depicted as a Malayali Muslim with connections to Pakistan-based terrorist organizations. The film suggests that he has received Jihadi training in Pakistan and is planning a large-scale attack. Baba Kalyani, played by Mohanlal, is a high-ranking police officer who aims to thwart the impending terrorist attack.

This kind of representation reinforces Islamophobic sentiments within our society. The movie exemplifies how Malayalam cinema contributes to the otherization of the Indian Muslim community by portraying them as willing collaborators with Pakistan-based terrorist organizations.

Analyzing the representation issues of coastal men/areas and Muslims in Malayalam cinema, it can be concluded that:

- Malayalam cinema often portrays people living in coastal areas as inherently violent in nature.
- Fishing is depicted as providing coastal individuals with a special strength that they use to engage in conflicts, both among themselves and with others.
- Coastal areas are depicted as constantly plagued by conflict, necessitating police intervention to maintain peace.
- Malayalam cinema often portrays coastal areas as hubs for various illegal activities and smuggling.
- The Muslim community is often portrayed in Malayalam cinema as symbolic of terrorism and engaged in illegal activities.
- Wherever the Muslim community is depicted in Malayalam cinema, there is a tendency to present a heightened risk of communal clashes.



communities. Such conversations can be found in various movies, where they serve as a repeated threat or warning. This portrayal suggests that fishing imbues coastal residents with a distinct power, which may instill fear in others. Consequently, this discourse contributes to the perception of beaches and coastal areas, like Beemapally, as potentially violent spaces, where the inhabitants are easily cast as aggressors. These stereotypical representations create a collective consciousness within popular society, fostering the belief that individuals living in coastal regions require increased police control.

The 1994 film "Commissioner," directed by Shaji Kailas, begins with a scene set at the Beypore estuary, showcasing boats entering the area. Suresh Gopi, disguised in a black suit, engages in a fight with a group of individuals who arrived on a boat. After revealing his true identity as a policeman, the movie title "Commissioner" appears in a close-up of Suresh Gopi's face, accompanied by the loud sound of waves in the background. In the subsequent scene, it becomes evident that the initial sequence depicted the confiscation of gold worth Rs 5 crore from individuals associated with Kunjumoiheen Saib. This portrayal establishes a connection between illegal activities, cultural degradation, smuggling, and the Muslim community, thus validating Suresh Gopi's character as a progovernment leader.

The 2006 film "Balram vs Tharadas," directed by I. V. Sasi, centers around an explosion that occurs in Hussain Sahib's field, leading to the police discovering weapons there. Similar to other films in various languages, the movie portrays a Good Muslim Bad Muslim Theory, evident in the Muslim characters throughout the narrative. Salim, the son of Hussain Sahib mentioned earlier, is depicted as having extremist connections and affiliations with numerous underworld figures.

In the film, Hussain Sahib is portrayed as a good Muslim, while Salim is portrayed as a bad Muslim. However, the responsibility for terrorist activities, arms smuggling, and explosions is solely attributed to the Muslim community. These portrayals contribute to the propagation of Islamophobic stereotypes, as exemplified by the movie "Anvar" directed by



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ancestral homes of Brahmins. These elements suggest that the film is set in Thiruvananthapuram and indicate that, apart from the Chariyathura area, the majority of residents surrounding Beemapally are upper-caste Hindus or Brahmins. The inclusion of the Agraharam symbol in 'Malik' further emphasizes the film's setting in Thiruvananthapuram and the presence of such communities in the vicinity of Beemapally.

Informal market: Beemapally is known for its vibrant informal market, distinguishing it from other regions in Kerala. 'Malik' portrays the presence of an informal market in Ramadapally, reflecting the distinctive characteristic of Beemapally.

Komb Shibu as David: Komb Shibu, a man involved in collecting money through intimidation in Beemapally, is reminiscent of the character David in 'Malik.' Both characters employ similar tactics to manipulate and threaten individuals, highlighting a parallel between the film and the real incident.

Firoz as Ameer: The tragic killing of a 16-year-old boy named Firoz, who was attacked by the police, finds a parallel in 'Malik' through the character Ameer, Sulaiman's son, who represents a similar fate.

These similarities illustrate how 'Malik' draws inspiration from the Beemapally police firing incident, incorporating elements such as location, characters, and events into its narrative. By mirroring real-life features of Beemapally, the film aims to bring the characteristics and experiences of the region to life.

The movie 'Malik' has had a significant impact on the public discourse surrounding the Beemapally police firing in Kerala, which occurred thirteen years prior. The film aims to shed light on the fact that the police were responsible for the killings, highlighting it as a clear case of state violence. However, there are certain misrepresentations and shifts in blame within the movie that are important to consider.

One notable misrepresentation is the portrayal of the political leadership. The Beemapally police firing took place during the tenure of Chief Minister V S Achuthanandan and Home Minister Koderi Balakrishnan, both from the Communist



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as it influences people's understanding of others. In the case of Malayalam cinema, there has been a misrepresentation of coastal residents and the Muslim community, leading to the creation of distorted perceptions and manipulation of collective consciousness surrounding these communities. This misrepresentation has served to normalize the injustices faced by these communities, as evidenced by the Beemapally police firing incident. There are notable contradictions between the actual events that transpired in Beemapally and the portrayal of the story in the movie 'Malik.' However, it is crucial to recognize that the incident in Beemapally was an act of police terror and state violence.

The film's portrayal of events and its influence on public perception highlight the complexities of narrative construction and the need for critical analysis when examining representations in cinema and media.




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