



Cinematic Erasures: Configuring Archives of/in Malayalam Cinema

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Abstract

This paper looks at cinema-within-cinema as a way of archiving the history of cinema. It looks specifically at the way in which the history of Malayalam cinema is archived in the film **Celluloid** (Malayalam, 2013, dir. Kamal). Looking at the way in which the film **Celluloid** narrates the story of P.K. Rosy, the actress of the film **Vigathakumaran**, who as a ‘lower caste’ [Dalit] girl played the role of a Nair lady in the film, leading to the tragic ways in which the first film descended into the dark past, the paper argues that there is a systematic erasure of Dalits in the process of archiving history of cinema, in cinema.

Key words: *Malayalam cinema, cinema-within-cinema, film history, archive, caste, Dalit*

Introduction

Cinema as a twentieth century invention is primarily a visual-sound medium of entertainment, and at the same time constitutes a critical archive of modern history (Vasudevan, 2010; Amad, 2010). It holds much information, even while being a piece of art. Different areas of knowledge find cinema as a source of knowledge pertaining to various historical periods to understand the socio-political and cultural contexts. Scholars have worked on the idea of archive and history (Foucault, 1972; Derrida, 1992); some have worked on cinema as history (Rosenstone, 1988). However, very few scholars such as Vasudevan (2010) have looked at cinema as an archive of history. This essay wishes to take a step forward, drawing from such studies that look at cinema as an archive; at the same time, the essay approaches cinema through the framework of “cinema-within-cinema”.¹ The films that it considers are those made in India, particularly in Malayalam.

Even though there are some studies on cinema-within-cinema as a form of inter-mediality (Higgins, 1984), hardly any significant academic work contextualizes it for Indian cinema.

Cinema-within-cinema can be in the form of a story whose theme is cinema, or a narrative that is conscious of the production of cinema. More precisely, cinema becomes the subject of its story telling, and is thereby reflexive in nature. Robert Stam has attempted to characterize the reflexive films in Hollywood in the following ways: 1) they explore the filmmaking milieu; 2) they expose the actual processes of film production, whether directly or by analogy; and 3) they flaunt their artifice by calling attention to filmic technique (1992:77). Apart from these, cinema-within-cinema offers a spectrum of an expanded domain of cinematic inter-mediality, so as to produce self-reflexive narratives. These reflexive narratives work as a self-conscious archive as well, where cinema as a culture industry, tries to document itself through the medium of cinema, thereby writes its own history.

This paper tries to foreground the concept of cinema-within-cinema to study cinema as an archive of itself. Firstly, it traces the trajectory of cinema-within-cinema as a narrative mode, with special focus on Malayalam cinema. Secondly, it examines the concept of archive and how cinema works as a historical archive. A third concern of this paper is to analyze how there is a systemic erasure of Dalits in the process of archiving Malayalam cinema through cinema by analyzing the film *Celluloid* (Kamal, 2013).

Cinema-within-Cinema

Cinema-within-cinema in Hollywood attracted academic attention from the 1970s (Anderson, 1978; Stam, 1992; Ames, 1997). It is not an exclusive genre, as it comprises various genres, but it can be taken together to form a distinctly recognizable genre (Anderson, 1978). In Hollywood, film-within-film started appearing from the days of silent film onwards. Those films concentrated on the glamour associated with Hollywood, but they simultaneously demystify and mystify their subject as Ames (1997) argues. The self-reflexivity these films offer is submerged in the paradoxes of cinema.ⁱⁱ Ames also argues that most of the films on Hollywood claim to offer truth as opposed to myth but are inevitably engaged in the very myths that they claim to expose.

Unlike Hollywood, cinema-within-cinema as a genre appears in Indian cinemas only in the later stages of sound cinema. In Hindi cinema, Hrishikesh Mukherjee's *Guddi* (1971) and Shyam Benegal's *Bhumika* (1977) are the first prominent movies in the genre of cinema-within-cinema. *Guddi* portrayed the recurring theme of cinematic world as fictional in opposition to the real life world through the story of a school girl (Guddi) who admires the star Dharmendra; whereas *Bhumika* was based on the life of Hansa Wadkar, a Marathi/Hindi film and stage actress. After these, in the last two to three decades *Rangeela* (Ram Gopal Varma, 1995), *Om Shanti Om* (Farah Khan, 2007), *Luck by Chance* (Zoya Aktar, 2009), *Billu* (Priyadarshan, 2009), *I Hate Luv Storys* (Punit Malhotra, 2010), *Dirty Picture* (Milan Luthria, 2011), and *Fan* (Manish Sharma, 2016) are some of the notable Hindi films on cinema. Other than Hindi, *Vinnaihandi Varuvaaya* (Come across the skies, will you? Dir. Goutam Menon; 2010) and *Jigarthanda* (Cold Heart, Dir. Karthik Subbaraj; 2014) in Tamil, *Lucia* (Pawan Kumar; 2013) in Kannada and *Harishchandrachi Factory* (Paresh Mokashi; 2010) in Marathi also attracted attention both from the spectators and critics as well recently. *Harishchandrachi Factory*, just like *Celluloid*, is on the making of the first motion picture of India, *Raja Harishchandra* (1913) by Phalke. It is a perfect example of cinema historicizing itself.

Malayalam cinema witnessed a trend of cinema-within-cinema post 2000s. It begins with *Chathikkatha Chandu* (Chandu who never Deceivesⁱⁱⁱ, Dir. Rafi Mecartin; 2004) which exposed the techniques of creating horror in cinema. As a multi-starrer venture without any superstars, the movie was a surprising hit. Later, the superstar movies^{iv}, which upheld masculinity in the late 1990s and early 2000s, followed the same trend of film-within-film. Roshan Andrews' *Udayananu Tharam* (2005; The Real Star is Udayan), M. Mohanan's *Katha Parayumbol* (2007; While Narrating the Story), Renjith's *Thirakkatha* (2008; Screenplay), Jayaraj's *Nayika* (2011; Heroine) and Kamal's *Celluloid* (2013) were the critically acclaimed movies in this category. The titles of these movies refer to cinema as a subject in the form of star, story, screenplay, heroine, and celluloid. However, this was not the first time that Malayalam film industry produced films based on films. Films in the 1980s and 1990s too picturized cinema; however many were commercial failures.^v

Archiving Cinema through Cinema

Archives can be defined as a collection of historical documents or records providing information about a place, institution, or group of people where time is stored for the future consciously or unconsciously (Derrida, 1995; Gyanendra Pandey, 2014). Films are indeed archived as a source of different epistemological systems, which are different from other art forms, especially in terms of technology (Stam, 1992; Rodowick, 2007). Ravi Vasudevan notes the privileged place cinema had in the history of twentieth century offering a multitude of formats and critical indices of the magnified registers of time and event, human form and character, ideas of the mass and the intimate, of the political and the social (2010).^{vi}

There are two levels of archives in relation to cinema: One gives information about the medium of cinema; its production, distribution and reception while on the other hand, cinema also works as an archive in itself. The absence of archives is one of the major challenges faced by the film historians in the subcontinent, absence of materials related to cinema and the absence of cinema itself. This lack of resources and the inability or the negligence of government institutions is widely studied and critiqued by the academia (Vasudevan et al, 2013). Like history, the status of archives is also open to contestation and transformation (Pandey, 2014). Following historiography, how do we adopt the method of historiophoty^{vii}, i.e., history through visuals, in historicizing cinema?

Keeping this in mind, this paper analyzes those films which attempted to document the history of cinema in Malayalam: *Celluloid* (2013) *Thirakkatha* (2008; Screenplay), *Nayika* (2011; Heroine) and *Vellaripravinte Changathi* (White Dove's Friend; Dir. Akku Akbar, 2011).

Celluloid is the biopic of J. C. Daniel, who is considered as the pioneer of Malayalam cinema. The movie is based on the making of his first feature film *Vigathakumaran* 1928 (The Lost Child), and the story of *Vigathakumaran*'s heroine P. K. Rosy. Apparently *Vigathakumaran* is considered to be the first feature film (silent) in Malayalam. I will discuss this movie in detail later in the paper in relation to the construction of archives.

Thirakkatha is a tribute to the yesteryear actresses who had been graceful, popular figures in cinema during their younger age and enjoyed the patronage of the audience, but later got

completely disregarded by the industry, media and the audience alike. Ranjith, the director of the movie, has drawn inspiration from the life of many actresses but especially from the life of actress Srividya.^{viii} The romantic link-up between Srividya and co-actor Kamal Hasan became the crucial factor in formulating the story of *Thirakkatha* (Shreedhar, 2013).

Nayika, like *Thirakkatha*, was also publicized as a tribute to the actresses of the past. The movie tells the story of a popular heroine of old times, namely Gracy (Sharada). The movie disentangles the story behind the death, rather murder of a young actress, who was an adopted daughter of Gracy. Apparently, traces of the incidents that led to the suicide of actress Vijayashree in the 1970s, can be seen in the movie even though it is not mentioned anywhere in the movie as such. Such stories have also come in the 1980s itself, for example, *Lekhayude Maranam: Oru Flashback* (1983; The Death of Lekha: A Flashback) is loosely based on the real life incident of the death of actress Shobha, who committed suicide.

The last movie in this list is *Vellaripravinte Changathi*, which is based on the story of filmmaker Augustine Joseph who made a Malayalam film in 1966 but couldn't release it. Later he commits suicide due to the debts from the production of the film. In the film, years after the death of Joseph, his son (Indrajith) gets the original print of the film from Gemini Lab, Chennai, a place which recurs in the history of South Indian cinema. Later he goes on with releasing the film and tries to find the people who played the characters. These movies adopt a narrative style with flash-backs, where the story shifts between the present and the past.

The use of flash-backs is significant in the context where cinema historicizes itself. Flash-backs are usually used to picturize the story which happened in the past which is again a story within a story. Here, story within a story intertwines with the technique of cinema-within-cinema, fluctuating between the real and the fiction, it attempts to authenticate the plot. Even though, these are not historical films by the strict categorization of genres, they deal with the question of past in the present. When the validity of "history" itself is problematic, the epistemological questions on history and cinema deserve special attention.

The movies attempt a reel-real technique in narrating the story, and they thrive on the discourse of bringing back the lost history of Malayalam cinema. The discourse around movies, which

attempt to construct film history with the technique of cinema-within-cinema, centres on the theme of retrieving the history of cinema (Sreedhar and Abraham 2013). But as mentioned earlier, history is mostly written by the dominant, where others are marginalized or erased. Those documents necessarily do not save the marginalized from the acts of omission.

To foreground the interstices of archiving cinema through cinema, and its erasures, let me explain some instances with reference to the movie *Celluloid*.

Celluloid: An Archive of Erasure

Celluloid tells the story of J.C. Daniel's attempt to create the first motion picture in the Malayalam-speaking region. He travels widely to know about cinema and also to acquire the equipment required for the production of the movie. Getting female actors was a difficult task at that time in Kerala. Unavailability of actresses, both from Kerala and outside, made him to cast a Dalit Christian woman, Rosamma, to act in his movie. He collected money from different sources and finally made the movie called *Vigathakumaran* with a lot of hope and expectations. However, while screening *Vigathakumaran*, the upper caste members of the audience raised a ruckus over a lower caste girl playing the role of a Nair lady. They didn't allow Rosy to see her first movie and cast her away from Kerala. Years later, Chelangattu Gopalakrishnan, a journalist, who was interested in Daniel's life and cinema, found the poverty stricken family of Daniel. Gopalakrishnan's attempt to give Daniel his deserving recognition, and the flashbacks to the incidents in Daniel's life after *Vigathakumaran*, form the rest of the movie.

Archives are an important source of history, rather they form history. When cinema becomes an archive, it documents time. *Celluloid* was supposedly an attempt to discover the lost history of Malayalam film industry. Ironically, when *Celluloid* works as an archive, *Vigathakumaran*'s print is unarchived in the history of Malayalam cinema. It is destroyed forever in the name of caste, rather through the violence of caste.

Vigathakumaran's heroine, P K Rosy holds the distinction of being the first heroine and the first Dalit (Dalit is a self-assertive identity by the ex-untouchable castes of India, who are still the oppressed group) heroine of Malayalam cinema, whose presence is neglected by the industry. When the movie itself was not recognized by the Malayalam film industry for a long time, the

absence of Rosy in the history of Malayalam cinema is not at all surprising. As mentioned before, *Celluloid* was as an attempt to recreate this lost history by focusing on the production and reception of *Vigathakumaran* – the first feature film in Kerala and the life of Daniel, the director and the hero, and also Rosy, the heroine. As a biopic, the film concentrates on the life of Daniel, his struggles in making *Vigathakumaran*, whereas Rosy’s presence is pushed into the periphery. She is reduced to being a victim of caste violence and disappears from the screen forever, with a voice-over at the end of the film: “Rosy became the tragic heroine Malayalam cinema has ever seen”. K K Kochu (2013) writes that in popular discourse, the reason for *Vigathakumaran*’s failure is attributed to the presence of P K Rosy in the film. Malayalam cinema has accepted this as its fate and still follows the upper caste elite cultural norms by erasing the subaltern presence.

Unlike the other films, *Celluloid* brings up the issue of caste on screen but it has created the impression that the issue of caste existed in Kerala only in the past. As Jenny Rowena points out, the movie is structured with the “violent past-wonderful present” format (2013). By bringing P.K. Rosy again to the cinematic frame, the director tries to project the openness of Malayalee caste elites today in accepting her Dalit identity. Paradoxically, the role of P. K. Rosy, the first heroine of Malayalam cinema who was a Dalit woman, is played by an upper caste actress even in the 21st century (Rowena, 2013). It is with Rosy, that the history of Dalit heroines in Malayalam cinema begins as well as ends.

In *Celluloid*, Rosy, a Dalit woman, who is dark complexioned was transformed into a fair skinned Nair lady through make up. In the same director’s movie, *Nammal*, Bhavana (fair-skinned Nair) played the role of a street girl with a darkened make-up. There are many other examples of such make-overs because dark skin has been one of the important markers of the lower castes in many cinemas of India (Rowena, 2014). For instance, *Dirty Picture*, a Bollywood film inspired by the life of Silk Smitha, a South Indian actress noted for her erotic roles, was a blockbuster and got national acclaim. In her discussion of *Dirty Picture*, Rowena notes that the upper caste, fair body of Vidya Balan over the lower caste dark body of Smitha was found acceptable by the audience. However, such reading of caste in skin-tone markers reiterates the caste stereotypes and is problematic.

So, *Celluloid* naturalizes the dark skin/fair skin binary in terms of caste – Dalits as dark and upper castes as fair; a discourse which is discussed and debated in the contemporary times a great deal. A. S. Ajith Kumar problematizes the song “enundodi ambili chandam?” (Do I have the beauty of the moon?), which shows Rosy being anxious about her looks to act in the first film, a time which had never seen cinema, so the beauty constructions regarding cinema is quite absurd (2016). In fact, the film is clearly imagined from the present, from a savarna perspective which dictates the beauty of the first heroine. Moreover, in the beginning of the song, Rosy looks at herself in a broken mirror. It suggests a discourse on reflexivity; a distorted, broken reflection, perhaps. It is also reflective of a norm followed by Malayalam cinema in the case of Dalit-representation.

Surprisingly, even the first English book on women in Malayalam cinema wrongly accounts for the first heroine of Malayalam cinema.^{ix} When the film marginalizes Rosy’s presence by placing her out of time and space against Daniel as the aspiring modern Malayalee subject, the book misplaces and erases her presence in history. *Celluloid* is supposedly an emancipatory movie, which tries to picturise a casteless modern society by going back to its caste-ridden past. Through this going back to the past, the film attempts to elide over the caste-entrenched present Kerala, which is quite crucial in documenting the history of cinema as a socio-cultural institution. This will be clear in the next section where I discuss the development of Malayalam cinema from *Vigathakumaran* as revealed in the movie *Celluloid*.

Malayalam Cinema: From *Vigathakumaran* to *Celluloid*

Coming back to the problem of self-conscious archiving, the concept of time is significant. Erwin Panofsky defines cinema as an art that dynamizes space and spatializes time (Rodowick, 2007). While historicizing different temporalities and spatialities, cinema consciously creates an archive of itself. Here, time is constantly in flux and in the digital age, time is flexible, and at the same time, it is modulated. As pointed out before, by archiving, time is stored for the future. Here, the movie *Celluloid* goes back into the past and presents its picture from the contemporary scenario. It stores both the past and present for the future, thereby constructing an archive of cinema through cinema. The shifting of time in the movie - the initial stages of Malayalam

cinema in (1928), as the “past” and the superstar era of 2000s as the “present” - suggests the growth of Malayalam cinema as an industry.

Towards the climax of the movie, there is a scene which starts with a date on the screen – 26th January, 2000 and goes on to show the celebration of the movie *Narasimham* (2000; The Man-Lion) on its releasing day. The ecstatic fans celebrate the release with music and dance while the first print of the movie reaches the theatre for its premiere show. The camera focuses on the box which carries the print of the film and the celebrations that accompany it on its way to the theatre. Meanwhile, Daniel’s son passes through the theatre in a bus and looks at the celebration with a smile on his face, which can be read as a proud moment for him personally. The success of Malayalam cinema would have made him contemplate over his father’s attempt and also made him guilty for destroying the film’s print forever. In the climax, he makes a confession on the stage that as a child he played with the film rolls of *Vigathakumaran* and set it on fire which destroyed the last print of the movie.

All these suggest the development of Malayalam film industry from Daniel’s time, a period projected with caste violence; until the 21st century, a period which commemorates that “violent” past in the “wonderful” present. Ironically, this wonderful present is portrayed with the success of *Narasimham*, a movie which is known for its celebration of upper caste masculinity. As the highest grossing Malayalam movie ever at that time, *Narasimham* reiterated the Nair masculine identity as the ideal Malayalee identity through the character Induchoodan, played by Mohanlal. The recent incident of #PoMoneModi^x is inspired from the most popular dialogue of “nee po mone Dinesha” (you get lost, kid!) from the movie *Narasimham*, and this shows that even after sixteen years of its release, *Narasimham*, a film that underlines casteist patriarchy, still remains in the popular Malayalee consciousness.

In fact, the late 1990s and the early 2000s is quite crucial in the history of Malayalam cinema. It is during this time that cinema began its own documentation through the medium of cinema itself. This should be read along with the criticisms on Malayalam cinema for its upper caste aesthetics wrapped up in the narrative mode of realism, especially in the 1970s and 1980s, considered by many as the golden age of Malayalam cinema. It is quite interesting to note that the same period becomes the reference point of Malayalam cinema. Both these time periods

should be studied separately to analyze the concept of cinema within cinema which I will reserve for later.

Conclusion

As Deleuze notes, it is in the present that we make a memory, in order to make use of it in the future when the present will be past (52). Here, Malayalam cinema through the technique of cinema within cinema documents cinema in the present for the future but longs for the past where the presence of the present is suppressed. In fact, the existence of the present is recognized only through its relation with the past, more precisely, the golden past of Malayalam cinema.

The present political assertions by the marginalized groups, especially the Dalits and the minorities should be looked at carefully at this juncture. Ajith Kumar notes that movies like *Celluloid*, *Papilio Buddha* (2013)^{xi} and *Kammattipadam* (2016)^{xiii} might have come as responses to the criticisms on the invisibility of Dalit presence in Malayalam cinema. In effect, these movies recreated the stereotypes on Dalits, from the vantage point of a savarna liberal ideology.

The real conundrum is, is cinema within or is cinema outside? As in the case of the movie *Celluloid*, the story happened outside the “cinematic” but becomes cinematic, through another mode of cinematic reproduction that tries to make the reel and the real merge, in the cinematic, cinematically. These cinematic creations create new archives on cinema using the technique of cinema-within-cinema which is self-reflexive at the same time self-erasing. An erasure of Dalit presence, rather a recreation of Dalit stereotypes, is naturalized in this process of recreating cinema’s history. However, this history does not belong to them.

While creating new archives, Malayalam cinema perceives itself only in its lack (Lacan, 1991), the lack of Dalit presence . I argue that the self-conscious Malayalam cinema, transparent to itself, locates itself in the lost history of Malayalam cinema. This lost history is the history of *Vigathakumaran* and the history of caste violence that inscribes it. Hence the construction of archives on Malayalam cinema through cinema reproduces its caste spaces, which ensures the archival erasure of Dalit presence. Even though cinema within cinema works at the level of archiving the medium, it produces certain inevitable paradoxes where the impossibility of

reflecting the lack – something which is not there, in terms of absence as presence, becomes the foundation on which the identity of Malayalam cinema is imagined.

ⁱ I use both the terms, “cinema-within-cinema” and “film-within-film” interchangeably because in Malayalam language, the terms cinema and film are not differentiated at the conceptual level. Malayalam uses one word for both cinema and film, which is *chala-chithram* (motion-picture) but the word “cinema” is preferred everywhere.

ⁱⁱ When cinema takes itself as a narrative subject, it consciously or unconsciously generates a number of inevitable paradoxes. Films about films purport to take the viewer behind the scenes and behind the cameras, but by definition what appears on the screen is again taking place in front of a camera which is invisible to the audience. (Ames, 1997)

ⁱⁱⁱ Chandu or Chandu Chekavar is a warrior mentioned in the folk songs of Northern Kerala called *Vadakkan Pattukal*, who supposedly lived in the 16th century North Malabar, in South India. According to the Ballads, he is infamous for betraying his cousin, Aromal to death and the name “chathiyan” the one who betrays or deceives added to his name Chandu. *Chathikkatha Chandu*, or Chandu who never deceives refers to the hero of the movie, Chandu. The character of Chandu from the *Vadakkan Pattukal* became popular especially after the movie, *Oru Vadakkan Veeragatha*, written by M. T. Vasudevan Nair and directed by Hariharan. The movie reversed the villainous portrayal of Chandu to a heroic depiction where Mammooty (one of the superstars of Malayalam cinema) played the character of Chandu. Hence, the title *Chathikkatha Chandu* invokes both the ballads and the movie *Oru Vadakkan Veeragatha*. It also has a song where some of the old movie scenes were recreated.

^{iv} In the late 1990s and early 2000s, the superstars of Malayalam cinema, especially Mohanlal did a lot of super human characters. *Aaram Thamuran* (The Sixth Lord; Dir. Shaji Kailas, 1997), *Narasimham* (The Man-Lion; Dir. Shaji Kailas, 2000), *Ravana Prabhu* (The Lord Ravana; Dir. Ranjith, 2001), *Praja* (Citizen; Dir. Joshi, 2001) etc. are some of them. But in the later 2000, both Mohanlal and Mammooty appeared in the films on films (*Udayananu Tharam* (2005), *Kadha Parayumbol* (2007)). It is interesting to note that the director Ranjith who was famous for scripting the macho characters of Malayalam later did a movie like *Thirakkatha* which used the technique of “cinema within cinema”.

^v *Lekhayude Maranam: Oru Flashback* (The Death of Lekha: A Flashback; Dir. K.G. George, 1983), *Prem Nazirine Kanmanilla* (Prem Nazir is Missing; Dir. Lenin Rajendran, 1983), *Annakuty Kodambakkam Vilikkunnu* (Annakuty, Kodambakkam calls you; Dir. Jagathy Sreekumar, 1989), *No 20 Madras Mail* (Priyadarshan, 1990), *Maanathe Kottaram* (Castle in the Air; Dir. Sunil, 1995), *Azhakiya Ravanan* (Ravana, the Handsome; Dir. Kamal, 1996), *Sreekrishnapurathe Nakshthrathilakkam* (Sreekrishnapuram’s Twinkling Stars; Dir. Rajasenan, 1998), are some of the movies which portrayed cinema on screen. But all these movies except *No 20 Madras Mail* and *Azhakiya Ravanan* failed in the box office.

^{vi} Ravi Vasudevan examines the role of film history, especially in the context of South Asia, in his article, “In the Centrifuge of History” (2010)

^{vii} See Hayden White’s “Historiography and historiophoty” (*The American Historical Review*, Vol. 93, No. 5 (Dec. 1988), pp. 1193-1199) for an elaborate discussion of the term ‘historiophoty’.

^{viii} Srividya was a popular actress in the South Indian cinema, especially in Malayalam and Tamil.

^{ix} In the Meena Pillai edited *Women in Malayalam Cinema: Naturalising Gender Hierarchies* (New Delhi: Orient Blackswan, 2010), the introduction traces the history of women in Malayalam cinema. Rosy, accordingly, was an Anglo Indian lady who was not accepted by the Malayalee audience because she was a “woman” (16). The book misinforms and quietly erases Rosy’s Dalit Christian identity from the history of Malayalam cinema.

^x #PoMoneModi was a trending topic in twitter just before the legislative assembly elections in Kerala. It was a reaction against Prime Minister Naredra Modi's comparison of Kerala's tribal infant mortality rate with Somalia. Social media witnessed a rage from the Malayalees against this comparison with Somalia, one of the African countries with low Human Development Index whereas Kerala holds the highest position in HDI among the other Indian states. <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-news-india/pomonemodi-trends-across-india-as-kerala-twitterati-vent-ire-at-pm/> Even though it was a political strategy by Modi, unfortunately, the infant mortality rate among the tribal population in Kerala is very high in comparison with the state's average which was conveniently ignored by the same Malayalees.

^{xi} *Papilio Buddha* is a Malayalam film (2013) written and directed by Jayan K. Cheriyan. The film focuses on the atrocities committed against the Dalits, women and the environment.

^{xii} *Kammattipadam* is a 2016 Malayalam film directed by Rajeev Ravi. Even though the movie is celebrated for its subaltern presence, it is also widely criticized for its stereotypical representation of Dalits.

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Bio-note

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