

SECOND SEMESTER

UNIVERSITY OF CALICUT

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## **ENG2A04- READINGS ON KERALA**

### **2022 ADMISSION**

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## ENG2A04:READINGS ON KERALA

COURSE CODE : ENG2A04  
TITLE OF THE COURSE : READINGS ON KERALA  
SEMESTER IN WHICH COURSE IS TO BE TAUGHT: 2  
NO OF CREDITS : 4  
NO OF CONTACT HOURS :90(5HRS / WEEK)

### AIM OF THE COURSE:

This course aims to give an overview of Malayalam literature and provides a detailed understanding of the cultural and historical tradition of the society and the development of literary sensibility. The course also provides a detailed analysis of the evolution of Malayalam literature through various genres.

### COURSE OBJECTIVES:

- To enable the students to read and critically appreciate the different varieties of Kerala literature, writings and films
- To read and understand the diversity of Malayalam literature and understand its distinctions

### COURSE OUTCOME:

By the end of the course, the learner will be able to:

- develop critical understanding of literature of Kerala
- interrelate the cultural and historical tradition of the society and the development of literary sensibility
- Identify the diversity of literary endeavours and the cultural representations
- identify and apply the insights and values in everyday life as a Keralite
- critically analyse and interpret the present cultural production

### COURSE DESCRIPTION:

#### A. COURSE SUMMARY:

Module 1: Formation	15 hrs
Module 2: Evolution	22 hrs
Module 3: Stimulation	16 hrs
Module 4: Propagation	25 hrs
Evaluation	12 hrs
Total	90 hrs

## **B.COURSE DETAILS:**

### **Module 1: Formation**

1. "History" (Prose) excerpt from Malabar Manual – William Logan
2. "Tribal Tale of Kerala" (Prose) excerpt from Kerala Culture – Prof S Achutha Warriar
3. "Ghoshayatra" (Poem excerpt) – Kunchan Nambiar

### **Module 2: Evolution**

1. Excerpt from Indulekha (Novel) -O. Chandu Menon
2. Excerpt from "Atmopadeshathakam" (Poem) - Sree Narayana Guru
3. "Not an Alphabet in Sight" (Poem) – Poykayil Appachan
4. "Ayyankali: A Dalit Leader of Organic Protest" (Prose-excerpt) -  
M. Nisar, Meena Kandasamy
5. "Vakkom Moulavi: My Grandfather, the Rebel" (Prose) - Sabin Iqbal

### **Module 3: Stimulation**

1. "Daughter of Humanity" (Story) - Lalithambika Antharjanam
2. "Kuttippuram Paalam" (Poem) – Edasseri
3. "Christian Heritage" (Story) - Vaikom Muhammad Basheer

### **Module 4: Propagation**

1. "Myth and Literature" (Speech) -M T Vasudhevan Nair
2. "Rain at Heart" (Poem) – Sugathakumari
3. "Fifty years of Malayalam Cinema" (Prose) - VC Harris
4. "Malayalam's Ghazal" (Poem) – Jeet Thayil
5. "Agni" (Story) - Sithara A
6. "Pictures Drawn on Water" (poem) - K.Satchidanandan

## **MODULE 1: FORMATION**

### **CHAPTER 1: EARLY HISTORY OF MALABAR: WILLIAM LOGAN**

#### **About the Author:**

- Popularly known for **Malabar Manual**.
- Appointed as the collector of Malabar.
- Subjected the various aspects of the region to detailed study and research on land distribution, taxation, agrarian issues and immigration problems.

#### **About the Text**

- Journey of Vasco Da Gama to Kerala from European countries.
- Beginning of colonial mercantilism and subsequent colonisation.
- Vasco Da Gama started journey from Lisbon on the 25<sup>th</sup> March 1497.
- Gama's fleet consisted of three small vessels(boat) called San Raphael, San Gabriel, and the San Miguel.
- Kappad town was named Capocate.
- Nicholas Coelho, an expert Portuguese navigator and explorer.
- Route map of Gama's journey from Portugal to Calicut  
Canary island-Santiago-Santa Helena-Cape of Good Hope-Natal-Mozambique-Melinde-Calicut.
- Vasco Da Gama meeting with royal Zamorins.
- Gama asked the freedom to trade with the kingdom.
- Zamorins gave permission Portuguese to erect a factory on shore for trading purposes.
- Portuguese successfully established their trade with India in this way.
- Malabar Manual gives a lot of precise information about the region of Malabar of that time.
- The book tells about geography of Malabar, its flora and fauna, the inhabitants.

## **CHAPTER 2: TRIBALS OF KERALA:Prof. S ACHUTHA WARRIER**

### **About the Author:**

- A former professor of Malayalam.
- Wrote about Cultural History of Kerala-Keralasamaskaram.

### **About the Text:**

- It provides an overview of the tribal life and culture in Kerala.
- The general attitude towards Adivasis and their lives is inherited from colonial masters.
- The Europeans considered Adivasis as savages and uncivilised.
- Neolithic age weapons were found in the present-day districts of Kozhikode and Ernakulam.
- Largest Adivasi settlement is in Wayanad.
- Paniyar tribe is the most backward tribe among adivasis.
- Most of the tribes followed matrilineal tradition.
- Major divisions of humankind-Australoids and Dravidians.
- The Adivasi tribe of Kerala have striking similarities with tribes in Australia and Ceylon.
- The tribals of Kerala linguistically belong to Dravidian family.
- Kerala tribals have their own rituals.

## **CHAPTER 3:GHOSHAYATRA:KUNCHAN NAMBIYAR**

### **About the Author:**

- A popular Malayalam poet.
- One among the triumvirate of the great ancient Malayalam poets.
- A great satirist and also the inventor of the performing art of Ottan Thullal.

### **About the Text:**

- Ghoshayatra is an event from Vanaparvam of Mahabarata.
- Ghosha means a “pasture where cattle and their herds live together.

- The episode tells how Duryodhana, the wicked Kaurava king becomes unhappy when he hears the news that Pandavas are living happily with the blessings of sages and gods in the forest.
- The poem is full of wit and humour.
- It teaches the audience great moral lessons.
- It tells that virtue leads to happiness whereas vice lands us in misery and despair.
- The poem throws light on the cultural and social scenario of Kerala of those old days.
- Duryodhana stands for a local king in Kerala with an army of Nair soldiers who are anything but valiant.
- The poem entertains as well as enlightens the audience.

## **MODULE – 2: EVOLUTION**

### **CHAPTER 1: ATMOPADESASATAKAM: SREE NARAYANA GURU**

#### **About the Author**

- Sree Narayana Guru was born on August 22, 1856 at Chempazhanthi near Thiruvananthapuram.
- He started a Sanskrit school in Varkala and poor boys and orphans were given free education regardless of their caste Temples were built at different places – Thrissur, Kannur, Anchuthengu, Tellicherry, Calicut, and Mangalore.
- His famous words one caste, one religion and one God for man worked as a fresh waft in the socio-cultural realm of the then Kerala.
- In his renowned work Atmopadesa Satakam, which consists of one hundred verses of self-instruction, the Guru proposes his philosophy of egalitarianism.
- The present extract is the translation of Muni Narayana Prasad.

#### **About the Text**

- To attain the core reality, that is self-realization, it is beyond our ordinary knowledge. It requires all the five senses to be accompanied by repeated reading, chanting, prostrations and mastering scriptures.

- We can attain self-realization by attaining more knowledge from these holy books and scriptures.
- When we think about our mental and physical body, all these are various forms. It is like the sun that shines in the sky. And this realization could be attained only through intense search.
- The five basic elements such as fire, water, air, earth, space are inseparable elements from the ultimate reality. As the waves are inseparable from the ocean like that the five elements are also inseparable.
- Knowledge is something great. It cannot be broken. One should realise it and merge in it and remains as that itself.

## **CHAPTER 2: INDULEKHA: O. CHANDUMENON**

### **About the Author**

- O. Chandumenon was born on 9 January 1847. He was a writer, novelist and social reformer.
- *Indulekha* is a Malayalam novel written by O. Chandu Menon. Published in 1889. it was the first major novel in Malayalam language.
- The title *Indulekha*, refers to the main character in this novel, a beautiful, well-educated Nair lady of 18 years.

### **About the Text**

- The novel narrates the story of a Nair tharavad in Malabar. Through Indulekha and her relationship with Madhavan – the novels take us through the feudal system, polygamy, conflicts between tradition and modernity that existed during the later part of the 19th century.
- When her beau Madhavan goes against the wishes of her uncle, the latter decides to marry off Indulekha to a rich Namboodiripad. However, Indulekha rightly rebukes the pompous Namboodiripad, who in turn believes ‘English’ to be the culprit.
- In the beginning of the novel Madhavan is rebelling against the decision of Panchumenon, the Head of the family, regarding the education of Shinnan, a young boy in the family.
- Since Madhavan quarrels with his uncle Panchumenon, the uncle decides to marry Indulekha to a rich Namboodiripad in a form of sambandham. Complications arise and the hero and heroine are seen moving to Madras.



- The novel waxed eloquent on the importance of English education.

### **CHAPTER 3: AYYANKALI: M. NISAR AND MEENA KANDASAMY**

#### **About the Author**

- Ayyankali was born on August 28, 1863, to Maala and Ayyan at Venganoor, which is now in Thiruvananthapuram district.
- The caste discrimination he faced as a child turned him into a leader of an anti-caste movement and who later fought for basic rights including access to public spaces and entry to schools.
- He fought for the rights of Dalith people.
- Daliths were denied almost all rights at that time. Ayyankali proved that even a single man can resist the society at large and make the difference.
- The prescribed passage is taken from “**Ayyankali: A Dalit Leader of Organic Protest**” by M. Nisar and Meena Kandasamy. It tells about the establishment of Sadhu Jana Paripalana Sangham.

#### **About the Text**

- In the earlier period public sphere was formed in Kerala which was dominated by middle class of various castes.
- Dalits were denied of education.
- The middle class of Kerala utilised all the opportunities of colonial modernity and at the same time Dalits were deprived of all the human rights.
- Thus Ayyankali formed Sadhu Jana Paripalana Sangham (SJPS) in 1907.
- This organization was meant for all the depressed survile people (Sadhui Janam).
- The SJPS brought solidarity among the depressed castes.
- It was the ac tivities of SJPS that marked the beginning of modern Dalit consciousness in Kerala.
- Ayyankali was influenced by Sree Narayana Guru and Sadananda Swami to form the SJPS.



## **CHAPTER 4 : NO, NOT A SINGLE LETTER IS SEEN: POYKAYIL APPACHAN**

### **About the Author**

- Poykayil Appachan, also known as Kumara Gurudevan (1879-1939t), was a revolutionary Dalit leader and social reformer hailing from Eraviperur near Tiruvalla in central Travancore.
- The Prathyaksha Raksha Daiva Sabha (PRDS) movement he established encompassed all sections of Dalits across sub caste divisions.
- He was also a member of the Sadhu Jana Paripalana Sangham which social reformer and Dalit leader Ayyankali founded in 1907.
- The poem opens with the saying, No not a single letter is seen. It means that the poet says that he can find not even a single work of his race is seen in the history.
- There was no one to write the history of the poet's race because his race was the earliest inhabitants of this land. The absence of his race from the histories of the present time saddens the poet.
- The poet wants to write a story about how the earliest occupants came to be regarded in Kerala. He reveals that he is not ashamed to reveal openly the weaknesses of his race if any. His race has been called "the cursed progeny" by the mainstream society.
- The poet dismisses any sense of "shame" associated with the present condition of his race because he understands that shame is a product of the mainstream culture. He does not see any fault in openly narrating all the weaknesses of his race.
- The reference to divinity or "God" appears in the final stanza of the poem. The poet asks how God can allow the injustice of racism to continue.
- The question asked by the poet reflects the hopelessness felt by him on witnessing the reality of racism.

## **CHAPTER 5 : VAKKOM MOULAVI: MY GRANDFATHER, THE REBEL- SABIN IQBAL**

### **About the author**

- **Sabin Iqbal** is a well-established journalist and author of the critically acclaimed *The Cliffhangers*. He is also festival director and curator of the Mathrubhumi International Festival of Letters. “

## About the Text

- Vakkom Moulavi was a man of many facets. But eight decades after his death, he is remembered more, selectively though, as a religious reformer who led the Islamic renaissance in Kerala than as a fearless journalist who had strong convictions of nationalism and a visionary understanding of the power of journalism.
- In the essay "Vakkom Moulavi: My Grandfather, the Rebel", his grandson Sabin Iqbal, states that "Moulavi had a strong belief in the crucial role of the media in social reformation and in achieving and protecting civil rights and liberty."
- Iqbal was passing through Palayam, the centre of the city, He glanced to the other side as he passed the Martyrs' Column. whenever he is in this area of the city, he always does. A granite plaque depicting the front page of the Swadeshabhimani newspaper, which was seized by the then-king of Travancore in 1910, is located next to the statue of Swadeshabhimani K Ramakrishna Pillai.
- He added that the man depicted in the textbooks did not match the family legends and numerous childhood recollections he had heard. Numerous letters from him and his family claiming that Vakkom Moulavi was not the person in the pictures. the images were of an elderly man, but his grandfather passed away at the age of 58.
- In his book "Islamic Reform and Colonial Discourse on Modern India: Socio-political and Religious Thought of Vakkom Moulavi", Jose Abraham Says, "Vakkom Moulavi is known as the 'father' of the Muslim socio religious reform movement in Kerala.
- In 1905, he started a Malayalam newspaper named Swadeshabhimani (patriot) to educate people about their rights and responsibilities and campaign for a responsible government committed to public welfare in Travancore. He used his journals-two in Malayalam (Muslim in 1906 and Deepika in 031) and one in Arabic- Malayalam (al-Islam in 1918)-to motivate Muslims to pursue modern education and to bring them to the forefront of the nationalist movement.
- In order to empower the people of Travancore, Vakkom Moulavi founded Swadeshabhimani as a weekly in 1905. Swadeshabhimani was the first newspaper in Kerala to subscribe to the Reuters news agency.
- One of the goals of Swadeshabhimani was to not "conceal any public grievances out of fear of harm that may come to us." The first editor of Swadeshabhimani, was CP Govinda Pillai.

- He was looking for a young journalist who would adhere to his ideas without wavering, and he found that in Ramakrishna Pillai. Ramakrishna Pillai shared the same luck in matching up with the ideal colleague. Ramakrishna Pillai's integrity, patriotism, and
- political principles aligned with those of Maulavi Abdul Khadir, who had implicit faith in them.
- Later Swadeshabhimani, confiscated the press, and sent the editor into exile.
- He was not only a kind newspaper owner; he was also a fearless journalist, well-read, with felicity of language, moral honesty, and an intent to spend even his last penny for its cause. He was in debt when he passed away at the comparatively early age of 58.
- The essay concluded by describing what the author saw in Thiruvananthapuram that July afternoon when it was pouring hard. Near the monument of K. Ramakrishna Pillai, a granite plaque recognizing Swadeshabhimani had fallen from the wall.

### **MODULE 3: STIMULATION**

#### **CHAPTER 1 : THE KUTTIPPURAM BRIDGE: EDASSERI GOVINDAN NAIR**

##### **About the Author**

- **Edasseri Govindan** (23 December 1906 – 16 October 1974) was an Indian poet and playwright of Malayalam literature. Known as one of the major poets of Malayalam, Edasseri was a recipient of the Sahitya Akademi Award and the Kerala Sahitya Akademi Award for Poetry.

##### **About the Text**

- “The Kuttippuram Bridge” is a poem written by the eminent Malayalam poet and playwright Edasseri Govindan Nair, and translated to English by A J Thomas. Popularly known as Edasseri, he was concerned with the agrarian crisis and the problems faced by the common man.
- The poem was originally published in the *Mathrubhumi* weekly in 1954, and was later included in his collection of poems *Karutha Chettichikal* (1955).
- The poem, which was written in the wake of the construction of a bridge across the River Nila, is an expression of the poet's anxiety and uncertainty about the process of

modernisation that is slowly invading the rural world around the poet. The bridge here symbolizes modernity.

- The poet is nostalgic about a pre-industrialized agrarian past when everyone was living in tune with the nature, around the banks of Nila/Perar. However, as urbanization encroached upon the villages, people are alienated from nature. This idea can be seen in the lines describing the past in which the poet used to play *poothankol* whereas at present the poet stands still with his eyes fixed on the river below.
- In the first few stanzas of the poem, the poet tells us the construction of the bridge, and the proud feeling he has upon the human achievement.
- In the fourth stanza, he expresses the fear he has about the riverbank that it may be washed away. In the subsequent stanzas, he reminisces his childhood, of growing up in the riverbank, the playmate, i.e., the river. He worries that all that constituted the village life, the river, the *kavu*, the pipal tree, songs of the ploughman, everything will be destroyed by the advances of urbanization. In the last few stanzas of the poem, the poet warns the results of urbanization and how it is going to affect the life of the people.
- He recollects his sweet memories associated with the river. He played and prayed on those shores. He points out the rapid change by stating that he used to see birds like kingfisher and sparrow flying above him, once the new bridge is built, he feels that he is levelled up with the height they used to fly. He admits the fact that these developments are a threat to *Gramalakshmi* (rural beauty).
- The author claims that river Perar was his playmate from childhood. Poet believes that it is time to bid the funeral rites to the river. He imparts the ruinous nostalgic memories associated with paddy fields, groves with houses, trees, festivals, elegant lamps, the songs of ploughman and pipal trees.
- He lists the irony of the modern society in which strangers are neighbors and neighbors are strangers. He doubts that even humans will slowly absorb this mechanic nature and we may forget even to play, laugh and cry.

## **CHAPTER 2 : DAUGHTER OF HUMANITY - LALITHAMBIKA ANTHARJANAM**

### **About the Author**

- **Lalithambika Antharjanam** (March 30, 1909 – February 6, 1987) was an Indian author and social reformer best known for her literary works in Malayalam language.
- She was influenced by the Indian independence movement and social reform movements among the Nambuthiri community and her writing reflects a sensitivity to the women's role in society, in the family and as an individual.
- Her published oeuvre consists of short stories, poems, children's literature, and a novel, *Agnisakshi (Fire, My Witness)* which won the Kendra Sahitya Akademi Award and Kerala Sahitya Akademi Award in 1977.
- Her autobiography *Atmakathaykku Oru Amukham (An Introduction to Autobiography)* is also considered a significant work in Malayalam literature. Her other works include *Adyathe Kathakal (First Stories)*, *Takarna Talamura (Ruined Generation)*, *Kilivatililoode (Through the Pigeon Hole)*, *Kodunkattil Ninnu (From a Whirlwind)*, *Moodupadathil (Behind the Veil)*, *Agni Pushpangal (Flowers of Fire)* and *Sita Mutal Satyavati Vare (From Sita to Satyavati)*.
- She was also a social reformer who exposed the pitiable plight of Namboothiri women who were denied every right.

### **About the Text**

- The story Daughter of Humanity by Lalithambika Antharjanam tells the story of an illam that was ruined by its own generosity. Written after the state government had enacted the land reforms in 1959, it portrays what happened to a Namboothiri illam.
- Kunhathol Amma is a representative character. She is very pious, generous and compassionate. Helping the poor is considered to be her primary duty. Kunhathol has helped all sorts of people. When Govindankutty and his family are in trouble after his father's death, it is Kunhathol Amma who comes to their rescue. It is she who has made him what he is.
- Even after the ruin of the illam as a result of the reforms, its generosity continues. When there is no money to feed the poor, the land is sold to continue the practice. Then they resort to loans. After that, parts of the house are sold to maintain the custom. Finally, the illam itself is sold.
- When Govindankutty was very busy, a woman who looked like an odd creature came



to see him. Enveloped in a mundu, with an old palm-leaf umbrella, she looked like a character from an eighteenth-century story book. A little seven-year-old boy clung to her knees. Then Govindankutty realised that it was Kunhathol Amma, the great mother who made him what he is today. She requested him to admit her grandson to a school so that he would get at least a meal every day. Her illam having ruined, she was struggling even for a meal. Govindankutty felt very sad; he thought he was a sinner.

- In the beginning of the story, we see a very busy government officer, who doesn't have enough time for self and tightened with schedule of government works and meetings. He was suffering from heavy headache and he doesn't have food and didn't bath that day. He doesn't have time to spend with the child that was born after a long wait.
- The secretary comes and informs that there is a lady waiting for him and she wished to meet him last so she could meet in private. The secretary says even the women didn't have anything even water from morning.
- The woman enters and the leader sees her indifferently. The woman was in an attire of 80th century. She covered herself with a dhoti , an umbrella and dangling earring. Behind her was a boy of six or seven holding the woman. The leader was speechless and trying to recollect something, gets up and nears her and enquires her that where she from is and what does she want? And then when the woman raises her head, the dhoti slips down.
- He finally recognized her. There was a vague silence that looked like meeting of a mother and her son after a very long gap. Now he recalls his childhood, in a small village where he was playing and enjoying like any other kid. His father passed away and his relatives moved away. He was with his mother, whose only intention is to give him good education and better life. He was not lucky enough to have his mother's presence to witness all his success.
- Kunjathalamal was his only refugee after his mother's death. She fed him, and treated him the way she treated her own son. The horn sound brings back him to conscious and the secretaries were peeping in and both remained silent and at a moment their eyes met up and Kunjathalamal utters words of pardon for disturbing him and says she is very much happy for him and says Unni is bedridden for more than eight years and the family is totally destroyed.
- Also, she has a daughter who is unmarried. And people said me to meet Govindankutty and he could solve all his problems. Now Govindankutty asks sorry and states that we

are the reason for your present condition. We were very conscious about the food we received during our hunger but never paid attention to the hands that served us.

- Even after all this you don't show any anger or don't even curse us, that is your love Kunjathalamal. I have a request to you, be the same mother who you are, be the mother this motherless Govindankutty. And after bursting out all feelings and tears out, he calls his secretary and asks to get ready the car and to make a seat for Kunjathalamal, and finally says he is the Son of Daughter of Man.

### **CHAPTER 3: CHRISTIAN HERITAGE: VAIKKOM MUHAMMED BASHEER**

#### **About the Author**

- **Vaikom Muhammad Basheer** (19 or 21 January 1908 – 5 July 1994), popularly referred to as **Bey pore Sulthan**, was a writer of Malayalam literature. He was a writer, humanist, freedom fighter, novelist and short story writer, noted for his path-breaking, down-to-earth style of writing that made him equally popular among literary critics as well as the common man.
- His notable works include *Balyakalasakhi*, *Shabdangal*, *Pathummayude Aadu*, *Ntuppuppakkoranendarnnu*, *Mathilukal*, *Janmadinam* and *Anargha Nimisham* and the translations of his works into other languages have earned him worldwide acclaim.
- The Government of India awarded him the fourth highest civilian honour of the Padma Shri in 1982. He was also a recipient of the Sahitya Academy Fellowship, Kerala Sahitya Academy Fellowship, and the Kerala State Film Award for Best Story. He was a recipient of the Vallathol Award in 1993.

#### **About the Text**

- The story "Christian Heritage" talks about an unexpected guest who visits Basheer's house just to see him in person. Kochu Thommi, a rugged peasant and ardent reader of the narrator, came to see him in person.
- Basheer, in his typical humorous way, projects this visit as a pan-religious one; a Christian has come to visit a Muslim. But deep down "Christian Heritage" also upholds his staunch faith in universal love and humanity.
- Kochu Thommi was a Christian from Changanassery. He was settled in Malabar for the past nine years. He was a brown skinned man with sinewy body. His hard work had made the skin of his palms rough. He wore a half sleeve shirt, a dhoti and had a



towel on his shoulders. He was an industrious labourer. He might not have shaved in a month. His wife was no more. He had nine children – four sons and five daughters. He was an avid reader of the narrator and wanted to meet him in person.

- Christian Heritage by Vaikom Muhammed Basheer is a story that upholds his philosophy of life. The interactions between the author and the guest in the story highlight value of humanity and universal love. With his unique style, subtle humour and specialised use of common language, Basheer narrated the stories of downtrodden and the marginalised sections of the society. The story begins with the visit by Kochu Thommi to Basheer.
- A Christian farmer from Changanassery, Thommi is an ardent reader of Basheer. He is settled in Malabar for the past nine years. A widower, he has nine children. He was hospitalized for one month. On discharge from hospital, he comes to meet Basheer in person. Basheer feels so proud that a Christian has come to visit a Muslim. They talk for a long time about black pepper, coffee and rubber, even after dinner.
- On Basheer's suggestion, Thommi spends the night there on a mat, with the book Christian Heritage in India by Sri John Ochanthuruth as a pillow. Basheer also gives him ten rupees for his expenses, but the latter has left two hundred-rupee notes in the book.
- Basheer projects this visit as a pan - religious one. The story brings out Basheer's philosophy of life. Basheer is full of love and sympathy for the man. Besides underlining the value of humanity and universal love, Basheer also questions society's prejudices against common people like peasants

## **MODUE 4: PROPAGATION**

### **CHAPTER 1: MYTH AND LITERATURE- MT VASUDEVAN NAIR**

#### **About the Author**

- Madath Thekkepaattu Vasudevan Nair (born 15 July 1933), popularly known as MT, is an Indian author, screenplay writer and film director. He is a prolific and versatile writer in modern Malayalam literature, and is one of the masters of post-Independence Indian literature.

#### **About the Text**

- Literature has always been affected by the history, geography, myths and the provincial wisdom of the places of its origin. The influence of various regions in India could be observed in Ramayanam and Mahabharata.
- Aithiyamala is an eight volume book which is compilation of regional legends. The genesis of Kerala itself is linked to a myth. In order to absolve himself of the sins committing Kshatriya murders Parasuraman donated all his ancestral property to Kasyapa muni. When the muni reminded him that he doesn't have an inch of land as his own.
- Parasuraman hurled his axe into the sea standing on mount Gokarna. So Parasuraman is a part of pan- Indian mythology. But this particular story is very regional.
- Keralolpathi is an important book on Kerala history considers this story credible. As per the book the societal structure, caste structure, temporal arrangements, customs and practices in Kerala are all mandated by Parasuraman. Kerala is a coastal area and the sea has been a constant area present in its historical turnabouts, we have very few sea related legends featuring in the realm of our fiction.
- Our sea has witnessed many struggles and battles, the Arabs, the Portuguese, the Dutch, the French and the English have come to this nation through the coastal areas of Kerala. Sea is a major character in the popular novel Chemmeen written by Thakazhi Sivasankara Pilla. Aryans, the fishing community of Alappuzha coast adore the sea Kadalamma, the sea goddess. Sea is also considered as a maternal figure.
- When Thakazhi wrote in his novel, many criticised him severely for upholding superstitions. Another criticism raised was that his common theme of class struggle was forgotten when he authored a love story.

- C Rajagopalachari wrote the review of the English translation of Chemmeen in Swarajya : what harm could come out if the women of a remote locating continue being chaste believing in an old legend.
- Myths and legends never exerted visible influence on the early fiction of our language. There is a belief that Thunchath Ezuthachan, father of Malayalam language is the reincarnation of an ethereal spirit. He was born into a marginalised section of the society. He became well versed in vedas and Upanishads and wrote the finest poetry.
- Our modernist literature makes use of regional folktales in their hands acquire the status of parable and allegories.
- In India there is no distinction between history and myths in several regions. Creative artists seek the continuation of culture and civilization.

## **CHAPTER 2: RAIN AT NIGHT- SUGATHAKUMARI**

### **About the Author**

- Sugathakumari (22 January 1934 – 23 December 2020) was an Indian poet and activist, who was at the forefront of environmental and feminist movements in Kerala, South India. Her parents were the poet and freedom fighter Bodheswaran and V. K. Karthiyayini Amma, a Sanskrit scholar. She was the founder secretary of the Prakrithi Samrakshana Samithi, an organisation for the protection of nature.

### **About the Text**

- Sugathakumari's s Rathrimazha is translated into English by H. Hridayakumari under the title Rain at night. She is Sugathakumari's sister.
- In the first stanza, the poet compares the rain to a mad young woman who acts differently. According to the poet, the rain explores all the characteristics of a young mad woman who weeps, laughs, whims and mutters alternatively.
- The speaker also portrays the exotic feeling when raindrops touch the speaker through the open window. Then she makes a comparison between the moonlight and the rain drops. She points out that even though moonlight has made her happy and thrilled with joy, she prefers the raindrops that witnessed her love life and slowly lulled her to sleep.
- The poet feels rain as her best companion even in the late evening of her life. She recalls rain as a witness to her grief on the sick bed. She recognizes the welcomed presence of rain during her sleepless nights.

- By the end of the poem, the poet acknowledges her change where she forgets her emotions and remains frozen like a stone.

### **CHAPTER 3:FIFTY YEARS OF MALAYALAM CINEMA - Dr V C HARRIS**

#### **About the Author**

- Harris was born in Mahé in 1958.
- He worked as lecturer of English at Farook College, Calicut, and later as Director of the School of Letters at the Mahatma Gandhi University, Kerala.
- He was an active member of Odesssa, a film freternity foundation.
- V C Harris was a fine-tuned actor and was praised for his solo performances.

#### **About the Text**

- The essay, “Fifty Years of Malayalam Cinema”, V.C. Harris traces the history of fifty years of Malayalam Cinema.
- It begins with Neelakkuyil (1954) and ends with Paadam Onnu: Oru Vilapam (2003).
- 1940s and 1950s, issues like caste inequality, class consciousness, nationalism and progress influenced the artistic productions. There was optimism, and enthusiasm.
- All this was found in Neelakkuyil (1954). It is a landmark film that has successfully fused several ingredients for the first time. It had a local story, caste inequality, progress, a modern secular subject, fine music, folk music, many excellent actors and technicians.
- The optimism of the 1950’s gave way to a growing sense of discontent and disillusionment of post-independent India in the 1960s.
- However, Chemmeen (1965) by Ramu Kariat reinforced the message given in Neelakkuyil.
- 1970s saw the emergence of the new cinema by Adoor Gopalakrishnan, G. Aravindan and John Abraham.
- It was dubbed as ‘art cinema’. Swayamvaram (Adoor, 1972) is the first film in this group.
- National Emergency and Modernism marked the Malayalam movies of 70s and 80s.
- The last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century brought in several social and political issues such as Globalisation, religious fundamentalism, and social issues of women, Dalits and Adivasis.
- There was also a greater degree of commercialisation. At the same time, there is a greater variety in the kinds of cinema produced.

- The representation of the minorities has been problematic in general. It is in this context that films like *Padam Onnu: Oru Vilapam* is to be seen. Secularism, as a social agenda, is still a difficult issue in India.

## CHAPTER 4: MALAYALAM'S GHAZAL – JEET THAYYIL

### About the Author

- Jeet Thayil (born 1959) is an Indian poet, novelist, librettist and musician.
- He is the author of several poetry collections, including *These Errors Are Correct* (2008), which won the Sahitya Akademi Award.
- His first novel, *Necropolis*, (2012), won the DSC Prize for South Asian Literature, and was shortlisted for the 2012 Man Booker Prize and The Hindu Literary Prize. His father is writer and editor Jacob Sony George, and the family moved with his work.
- Jeet was raised in Mumbai until age 8, then moved to Hong Kong, and returned to Mumbai at age 18 where he graduated.

### About the Text

- “*Malayalam’s Ghazal*” is taken from the *collected poems (2015)* published by Aleph Book Company.
- This poem claims numerous languages as belonging to Indian poetry. He invokes his mother tongue, Malayalam, using an Urdu/Arabic poetic form, written in eloquent English.
- Malayalam always welcome visitors. Malayalam got a high position among other languages. The poet appreciates the ancestors, scholars and linguists for this. His father used to read the translated work of Charles Baudlaire, a French poet and essayist.
- The reason that writing a ghazal called ‘Malayalam’s Ghazal’ is an extremely political act in India is because the ghazal, according to the urduwhallahs, belongs to Urdu. And one of the rules is that one mustn’t write a ghazal in any other language than Urdu.
- Write a ghazal in English first is something verboten, and something like indefensible. And then to write a ghazal with the word Malayalam in the title, that’s compounding it.
- The poet is explaining through the poem that, each language has its own identity and depth.
- He asks the readers to open the windows to the fresh air of their mother tongue.



## **CHAPTER 5: AGNI: SITHARA S**

### **About The Author:**

- Is a Malayalam short story writer and translator.
- She has won Kendra Sahithya Academy golden jubilee award and also Kerala Sahithya Academy Award for her short stories.
- She is the recipient of Katha award.
- Her short stories identify, in a subtle and unique way, women's roles as unequal to those of men.
- Her characters are individuals bent on deciding their destinies for themselves.
- Her heroines search for their genuine individualities.

### **About the Text**

- AGNI presents sexuality and man-woman relationships from a new perspective.
- It is the story of a rape- survivor who declines either to be persecuted or to be destroyed with disappointment or disrespect.
- Waiting for assistance from no one, she resolves to penalize the wrongdoers on her own and finds an extraordinary way of vengeance which certifies the reader.
- The story is a critique of the suppression and commodification of the female body.
- The protagonist, Priya does not allow herself to be emotionally and fervently withered after being gang raped.
- She exercises the right to speak bluntly about her experience in sex and puts the belligerents to shame by denoting their incapability to please her sexuality.
- The story is recounted from a feminist perspective with a strong denunciation of the organisations of authority and law that collude to vanquish women.
- It highlights the fault lines in a society where women victims are deprived of dignity and justice.
- The title indicates different meanings of fire – the fire of covetousness in Sanjeev and fire of revenge in Priya.

## **CHAPTER 6: PICTURES DRAWN ON WATER: K. SATCHIDANANDAN**

### **About the Author**

- Is a bilingual poet, critic, playwright, editor, translator, fiction writer and travel writer.
- Hailed as a pioneer of modern Indian poetry, he is perhaps the most widely translated and anthologised contemporary Indian poets.
- He has published sixty collections of poetry of which twenty three are in Malayalam.
- His poems have been translated into nineteen Indian international Languages.
- He has also published several books of plays, criticism, translations of world poetry, travelogues and scholarly papers.
- To him freedom means freedom to oppose.
- He has written extensively about the dangers of the rise of hindutva ideology and globalization.
- Women, environment and the marginalized are the abiding concerns of his poetry.

### **About The Text**

- ‘Pictures Drawn on Water’ is a poem written in the wake of the great flood in Kerala in 2018.
- This poem is written in four parts; each devoted to different phases of the deluge.
- The poet most exquisitely establishes a parallel between the coming of flood waters and an encroacher who comes into the house, eats, has a ciesta and then forces the residents to leave.
- This analogy reflects how what is expected to be another normal monsoon turned into a fierce deluge all of a sudden and wreaked havoc in the state.
- The next short section becomes a comment on the courage and resilience shown by the people in the face of a tragedy.
- Hope shines like the sun over all miseries, the poet would like us to believe.
- The final part, ‘slush’ is a fine piece of ecological poetry.
- The poet subtly suggests we lost something which now resides in the memory of slush left behind by water.
- The poem is translated from Malayalam by the poet.



