

CHRIST
UNIVERSITY
BENGALURU, INDIA

Declared as Deemed to be University under Section 3 of UGC Act 1956

Articulations

2016 - 17

Editors

Dr Vagishwari S.P.
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DEPARTMENT OF
INTERNATIONAL STUDIES AND HISTORY



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Articulations is an initiative by the Department of International Studies and History, Christ University, Bengaluru, Karnataka. This publication contains research articles by students of the department.

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PREFACE

History is being rethought as a discourse through which meaning is created rather than discovered. The emphasis is on the cultural process of knowledge creation and organisation, rather than seeing knowledge as a kind of discoverable. It is this approach that has guided the efforts of the faculty and students in bringing a magazine which has research based articles by the undergraduate students of the department of International Studies and History.

The main orientation of these writings is to explore the various trajectories of History and its links with diverse areas such cinema, art, urbanization, politics, education and gender.

This initiative has been possible due to the support and commitment of the management and authorities to all of our academic engagements. We are deeply indebted to the institution for this unwavering trust in our academic effort.

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Nag River's Rich History Drown in Silt

M. Kalyani, 2 HEP

Nagpur is the winter capital and the second greenest city in India. Nagpur city is blessed with many natural and man-made lakes with Ambazari Lake being the largest lake. Nag river of Nagpur originates from this lake. India is bountiful with vast and varying topography which includes lot of water bodies, Lakes and rivers are extensively used for domestic purpose now days. It is high time to realize that these sources of water which should be conserved and maintained for a long life. Many great civilizations of the world have flourished on the banks of the rivers. Nagpur is named after the famous Nag River. Nag River is known for providing the etymology for the name Nagpur. Nag River originates from Ambazari Lake and joins the Pilli River before pouring into the Kanhan River.[1] There are many speculations regarding the name of the Nag River: How Nag River got its name? The River probably derives its name (Nag, a cobra) from its sinuous course, and in turn gives a name to the Nagpur city. Historians' record link Nag River with the Nag dynasty. "There used to be three communities-Suryavansh, Chandravansh and Nagvansh. Probably the name of river as Nag River and city's as Nagpur was named following Nagvansh people''. But still authentic source to trace the origin of how Nag River was named is not there.

There are many contradictions regarding Nag River to be called as 'River' because Nagpur city has experienced very fast urbanisation during the past 50 years which has changed the Nag River into a Nag Nullah (a thin dirty stream of water). In past Nag River flowed throughout the year, ensuring plentiful groundwater throughout the narrow but fertile Nag river basin. The Nag River now is an open sewer with drains releasing untreated water directly into the river. All the sewage wastes from the residents are taken to the two prominent

rivers of the city: a) Pilli River b)Nag River, which degrades the quality of the river. There are many measures taken by NMC (Nagpur Municipal Corporation) but it has miserably failed due to inadequate infrastructure to collect and treat the entire sewage generated from the city. Civic bodies are not in a position to develop adequate environment infrastructure for protection of environment resulting in increased pressure of environment degradation due to discharge of sewage in Nag River. Parts of Nag River are grossly polluted and river water is unfit for any use. There are many tributaries of Nag River which flows in prominent parts of Nagpur like R.T.O (Regional Transport Office), Ramdaspeth and Sitabuldi etc. That is one of the reasons why residential sewage is dumped in Nag River. As this river crosses the city which has population about 50 lakh, which makes river extremely polluted as it passes through each area. The river looks like 'sewage drain' than a river. This is an alarming situation as the water is used for irrigating land on both the Banks of the river. And what they grow with this polluted water is indirectly taken as food by common people. So, the people who pollute the river indirectly bear the price for the same. Many diseases are spread through the intake of food grown with this water. NMC (Nagpur Municipal Corporation) is extensively working to make nag a pollution free river. The local body sought funds of Rs, 1,476.96 crore for Nag River Pollution Abatement Project. Presently the proposal is under appraisal at IIT Roorkee, Haridwar for final approval as suggested by Ministry of Environment and Forest (MOEF), Government of India. NMC submitted detailed project report for restoration of Nag and its tributaries in Nagpur city to National River Conservation Directorate (NRCD) and it was sent to IIT Roorkee for technical scrutiny. The IIT Roorkee suggested some changes in the DPR (Detailed Project Report). Then the general body of NMC came up with the solutions to the suggestions given by IIT Roorkee, but still this proposal is pending and work on proposition is in process.[2] Print plays a major role in covering the current topic. Times of India covered the problem of Nag River extensively. It also came up with

campaigns like Save Nag Rive-my city, my river campaign and under it pressurized the NMC to take up cleaning of Nag River in 2013. But still, they couldn't come up with a permanent solution as total rejuvenation of these rivers could not be achieved as still sewage water continues to be released in the river. Then NMC came up with STP's (Sewage Treatment Plants) in the prominent Places of Nagpur where there was more pollution in the areas of Shankar Nagar and Reshimbagh on Nag River. A private company was appointed to construct this plants and an estimated cost of each STP (Sewage Treatment Plant) was Rest 425crore. Many significant political leaders also worked towards the idea of pollution free Nag River. Avinash Pande a MPfrom Maharashtra also worked extensively towards the cleaning of the Nag River. His term in Parliament ended on 4th July, 2016. He gave a special mention to the recommendation of 'Demand for immediate execution of the projects to clean up the Nag River in Maharashtra on 4th March, 2015. The condition of river is so poor that Nag River lost its heritage status in the year 2000. In the year 2013, there was a boom in awareness for rejuvenation and restoration of Nag River.[3] Due to increase in population, there is a consistent rise in the level of sewage in the Nag River. Its ecosystem is extremely polluted by urban waste pollution from Nagpur. It is now even hard to believe that it was a neat and clean river once because the tributaries of the Nag River are so dirty that it has got the name Nag Nullah (Nalla) in the present day. All metabolic, physiological activities influenced by such polluted waste and hence it is very important to study physio-chemical characteristics of water and think ways to reduce pollution. An extensive study of water of Nag River was done by the 'Investigation of Water Quality Parameters of Nag River in Nagpur Region, Maharashtra', through which various characteristics of water was judged which proved that the water was highly polluted. The colour of water was light brown/greenish as water is contaminated, having continuous disposal of sewage including domestic activities. The water is not recommended for drinking purpose because the level of DO (Dissolved Oxygen) in it

was very low. So, under this study also it is proved that the water of Nag River was contaminated and is very dangerous.[4] Another effort by the EcoCity Foundation, a branch of the Virbhadra Natural History Society, has prepared a draft report for the Nagpur region as part of the National Biodiversity Strategic Action Plan commissioned by the Ministry of Environment and Forest.Its initiative is to save the water bodies of the Nagpur and specially Nag River because of its significance. Even they stated that the pollution in Nag River increased so much that the nitrate levels in the river increased above its permissible levels. The age of the Nag River is estimated to be more than 500years old as official records mention, Gond king Bakht Buland Shah establishing the city near the rivers bank. Some of the temples were also built near the river which provides that it was a clean river in ancient time but now the temple stands near a dirty nullah/nala which stinks with the sewage water flowing in it. The river which was so clean that it attracted a variety of birds that would feed on guppy fish by the birds that would crowd the river. Now, the river has so drastically changed from a clean water body to a dirty water stream that if this river is not preserved then the next generation would have to find Nag River in only history books. All the aspects which affects the urban watershed is generallyman-made features such as population increase, concrete encroachment of lands, population pressure on existing resourced, garbage dump in river which increased river pollution etc. Turning of rivers into nallahas (heavily polluted streams) is affecting the watershed at micro-level, which indeed affects he water quality available. Nag River watershed is one such dynamic urban watershed, which has undergone a dramatic change in last few decades. The cities grow with the migration of population from rural surroundings in search of fulfilling their food and other domestic needs, resulting major stress on the infrastructure. Hence their settlement and water supply in urban area is always one of the major concerns to the local civic authorities. Also, due to growing pressures and the complexities involved, little attention is paid to the aspects of nature. Removal of silt from the

riverbed, clearing garbage, shrubs from the banks, correcting the gradient, widening the riverbed helped in reviving the rivers to some extent. However, total rejuvenation of these rivers could not be achieved as sewage water continues to be released in them.[5] This all is happening despite experts and the NMC agreeing to the fact that only solution to ensure total rejuvenation of rivers was to tap sewage water, treat and then release it in water bodies. At the present day situation when we see, we can't even recognize by looking at these nahallas that these were some time clean river but still we know that there was Nag River. We know that from our ancestors and by studying in books. There are many books which mention Nag water stream as neat and as in the book written by Vasant Moon, 'Growing up untouchable in India-A Dalit Autobiography' writes about B.R. Ambedkar crossing from an iron bridge near Nag River in Dhantoli. So,in this book also he has proudly written it to be a river. In his book "Nagpur Affairs'', T.S. Shejwalkar has mentioned how the dynasty of Bhonsale were related with Nag River and how Raghuji Bhonsale two would also bathe at his confluence. So, this proves that Nag was a river which now has turned into a sewage water stream. Now, though Nag River pollution is a big threat to environment but still lot of efforts have been taken to make the river cleaner and sewage free. The NMC contribution so far to make Nag River clean has been successful as it has also received accolades from the Delhi-based charitable institute the Skotch Development Foundation and the Foundation has decided to honour the NMC with an award. The award was given to NMC on 3rd September, 2013 in Delhi on the occasion of Skotch Summit. When BJP government came therewere many hopes from the new government but shockingly what the new BJP led government has done is to scrap the entire River Regulation Zone Policy itself which has been working in coordination with Maharashtra Pollution Control Board, Environment Department, Water Resource Department, and Urban Development Department etc. Since the past 15years, The River Regulation Policy of 2000 was cancelled and now Maharashtra Pollution Control Board(MPCB) was

free to give permission for establishment of industries in rivers regulation zone which would adversely affect the water bodies because all industrial was waste will be discharged in the river degrading the quality of water in the river.[6]

The entire episode was black mark for Maharashtra, its rivers and people. Nagpur certainly has some of the most polluted rivers in the country. The Maharashtra Pollution Control Board (MPCB) has been ineffective in controlling industrial or domestic pollution from reaching river and this has devastated not only ecosystems and river dependent livelihoods, but also the health and wellbeing of people residing in the downstream. Some of the actions taken up by the Government such as to cancel the River Regulation Policy have certainly affected the water bodies in the Nagpur city which has significant water bodies such as Nag River. Definitely there is a long way in terms of cleaner Nag River and people may have to wait for long time to see Nag River as river and not as a Nallah. There are efforts taken by many organisations, associations and NGO's in the cleaning of Nag River, but how successful they are; only time will tell.

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Ramadevi: Shower in the Drought of Odisha

Sudeshna Priyadarshini*, *2 HEP

Ramadevi Choudhury was married off at fifteen in a family of zamindars in 1914. She was the daughter of Gopal Ballav Das and niece of Rajiv Kishore Das who were deputy collectors and granddaughter of Nanda Kishore Das, a superintendent. Nevertheless, she chose to give up all her comforts and to go against administrative institution that her family members were a part of.

Her husband Gopabandhu Choudhury was a man of supreme conscience and intellect. They led a bountiful life until one and a half months when tragedy struck their family hard as her father died followed by the death of her father-in-law. Consequently, on all the burden of the family falling on Gopabandhu's shoulder he went to Calcutta to study law in 1916 and then took up a job as a deputy collector in Cuttack in 1917 at the cost of his studies. In the second decade of the twentieth century, coastal belt of Odisha was badly hit by floods which increased the price of rice and other essential commodities. All crops were destroyed, cattle were starving to death and people were affected with malaria, smallpox and cholera. Gopanbandhu, who was now transferred to Jajpur, was sent to access the situation and he gave a report revealing the minutest details of the flood which was highly objectionable to the British officials. Doubting the intensions of the officials he resigned from his post in 1921 with the full support of his wife at a time when holding a government post was a matter of great prestige in Odisha. His doubts were proven true in 1926 when Hammond opposing the revolution to provide relief to the peasants of the districts of Puri and Cuttack said that trouble in Orissa was not widespread, and there was not famine or general failure of crops.[1] He then went to attend the Congress sessions and change dawned upon Ramadevi who accompanied him.

Utkala Sammilani was the most prominent political organisation in Orissa between 1903 and 1920. As Gopanbandhu Das put it, "The sole objective of the Utkala Sammilani so far had been to unify Orissa. For the last seventeen years all the resolutions had been passed for achieving this goal. As a result, the Sammilani had little relevance to the common man."[2] However with the emergence of Gandhiji in Indian politics the situation changed in 1920 and Gopabandhu felt, "Orissa could aspire to achieve unification only through national independence."[3] The importance of Gandhi's visit to the province on the eve of Non-Cooperation Movement cannot be neglected. Many of the urban intelligentia had remained 'aloof from the movement and condemned it'.[4] Gandhiji was struck by the poverty of the province and wrote, "I was prepared to see skeleton in Orissa but not to the extend I did. I had seen terrible pictures but the reality was too terrible."[5] He addressed various mettings to mobilise the support of Oriya women. Oriya women felt that never before so much importance had been given to them and it was for the first time that a political leader that too a great leader like Mahatma Gandhi treated them at par with men and thought them worthy of contributing something substantial for the nation.[6] Ramadevi along with many other women attended one such address at the market complex of Binobihari in Cuttack. Deeply inspired by his speech, Ramadevi donated all her jewellery to contribute to the freedom struggle. She took to wearing hand-woven khadi sarees as was preached by the Mahatma and encouraged servants and members of her family to do the same. She withdrew her children from the English school and arranged a tutor for them at home only.[7]

She observed fast from 6 to 13 April which was celebrated as a national week following the Jalianwala Bagh tragedy. She attended the annual session of Indian National Congress at Gaya along with Padmavati Devi and Hiramani Devi and organised various meetings and possessions, picketing of liquour and foreign cloth shop.[8] This drastic change in the 'bahu' of the zamindari family created an

awakening in the women of the neighbouring villages. Many women moved by her example participated in the movement either directly or indirectly.

Staying in Alakashrama in 1928 was a turning point in Ramadevi's life. She stayed in that thatched ashram foregoing all the luxuries and owning up a life of hardships. She went about one village to another preaching Gandhian philosophy, encouraging women to be members of the Congress and to take initiative in cleaning up the villages, distributing medicines and attending the sick and suffering, exposing the hollowness of the superstitions that guided most of their activities.

Her husband was arrested in April 1930 in relation to Salt Satyagraha movement. Following which she along with Malati Devi sparked off a revolution and led women volunteers to Inchuri and started making salt in the sea beach. Even children ran off with handful of salt leaving the policemen on duty helpless.[9] For the first time in the history of Orissa women in such large numbers had broken the shackles that tied them to their homes and roamed in the streets defying the laws and surging the wave of nationalism in Orissa. The people who participated in procession hummed nationalist songs and blew conch shells.[10] Balasore, the main centre of Inchuri, became the hub for sale of illegally manufactured salt. Police tried all possible ways to curb the agitation but all in vain. The Government admitted that the campaign had been pushed more energetically in Balasore than in Bihar.[11] The Superintendent of Police of Puri mentions male as well as female volunteers moving in procession, armed with 'daggers and lathis with the obstensible object of exhibiting themselves as fighting men'.[12] She along with Malati Devi went to Shrijang village which the agitation had not started then and was successful in gathering about fifteen hundred families. But the fear of police in the common people proved to be a hurdle in the progress of the movement. Bus drivers refused them transportation. They were denied shelter by the villagers but Ramadevi had the support of Rani Bhagyavati Devi, the Queen of Paradeep, who made arrangements for boats to carry women

volunteers though the Magistrate on special duty at Kunjang had earlier instructed boatmen to do otherwise. Ramadevi was arrested and sentenced to six months imprisonment for leading batches of women volunteers in picketing foreign cloth shops at various places. She was released only to be arrested again in November 1930 for violating Government orders and was sent to Bhagalpur Jail for two years.[13]A veteran of the period of Salt Satyagraha, she soon emerged as a political worker and vehemently opposed untouchability.[14] Akhil Bharatiya Harijan Seva Sangh was set up by Mahatma Gandhi in 1932 and Ramadevi took the lead of its provincial quarter in Orissa and raised the slogan to treat the harijans as their own sons and daughters. She taught the harijans to live a life of dignity, educated them and their children, cleaned the public toilets with them, and discouraged them from eating flesh of dead cows. Such was her aura that in this quest of hers she was joined by many women belonging to upper classes too.

She carried on her work devotedly even when her husband was imprisoned in January 1932 but she completely broke down in May 1934 when her mother died. Nevertheless she emotionally revived when Gandhiji told her that patriots have no time to waste on themselves and gave her the responsibility to educate the Oriya women and make them employable. She selected the ashram at flood-affected Bari in Cuttack as her place to stay and carried forward this work. She practised what she preached. In 1942, her daughter Annapurna Chaudhury married to Sarad Chandra Maharana who belonged to low caste. She also helped another Brahmin boy to marry a harijan girl in Bari breaking the caste rigidity and thus setting an example.

When the whole nation was burning with the curse of communalism Orissa remained greatly untouched by it because of the resounding calls against it by Ramadevi and Gopabandhu that reverberated in the core of the society. Ramadevi brought a new dimension to the social awakening in Orissa in 1952 when she gave a push to the Bhoodan

movement (land-gift movement) of Vinoba Bhabe where she urged the rich aristocrats to voluntarily give some acres of land to the impoverished landless farmers. Meanwhile the calls of 'sampati daan', 'buddhi daan', 'jeevan daan' also emerged. In 1958, she took the lead of establishing 'shanti sena' or peace army as was proposed by Gandhiji and set up 'Shanti Samanweya Samiti' in Orissa. She was greatly involved in distributing relief materials to the people badly affected by the cyclone and floods of 1967 in the areas of Cuttack, Puri and Balasore and in the eight districts hit by the drought of 1968. In 1971, with 29 other workers she went to Dinapur in West Bengal to help grieving Bangadeshi refugees.

The prominent leaders of Orissa decided to publish and circulate pamplets during the time of National Emergency and Ramadevi became a signatory of the same. She also conducted a peaceful protest against the emergency on Gandhi Jayanti. As a consequence, the ashram in Cuttack where she stayed was kept under strict vigilance of police.

Smt. Ramadevi Chaudhuri was conferred with Jamnalal Bajaj Award for development and Welfare of Women and Children in 1981. She died in 1985 and died with her the story of a lifetime of struggle and what remains with us is her autobiography, a college named after her (but still unknown to most localites who she was) and the mention of her in just a handful of books. Gandhiji once observed, “I have had the priviledge of mixing with tens of thousands of India's women. I have seen them at work. But nowhere have I seen anything quite like Ramadevi and her little band have been found to do so gracefully and so naturally. They have never needed or claimed any special privileges.”[15] She, *like many other women freedom fighters*, has been forgotten in history but unlike the most others was an epitome of transformation from being an ordinary girl of upper-end of the society to being the ‘Maa’ as referred to by the people of Orissa.

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[1]*Pg 62, Colonial State, Agrarian Transition and Popular Protests in Orissa (1921- 1947) by Susanta Kumae Bag, Primus Books Publication*

[2,3]*Pg 61, (5)-Pg 62, (9),(10)- Pg 71, Resisting Domination-Peasants, Tribals and the National Movement in Orissa 1920-50 by Biswamoy Pati, Monohar Publications and Distributors.*

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Asoka's Dhamma Policy

Lakshmi Karlekar, 2 HEP

The Mauryan Emperor Asoka who is considered as one of the greatest kings in ancient India formed Dhamma policy which is a set of edicts. The Prakrit word Dhamma is derived from the Sanskrit word Dharma. Asoka's Dhamma being wide in its scope primarily concentrates on ethical social conduct and it also includes animal kingdom which embraces benevolence. The word dharma appears in Rig-Veda as a sense of custom or law. Later the word emerging from the earlier form Dharman is being seen in late Vedic texts called as Dharma sutras. This text was compiled in the sixth century BC which considers dharma as a fixed law. As Asoka was a noble follower of the Buddhist religion, the context of Dhamma is seen here again where Dhamma in Buddhist tradition stands for Buddha's doctrine or teaching. The Dhamma edicts are classified into two types. The first set of inscriptions depicts the king as a staunch follower of Buddhism where references were also made to the Samgha (Buddhist Church). The second set of inscriptions basically known as major and minor edicts which have been inscribed on pillars and on rocks. There is a total set of XIV Rock Edicts.

The early life of Asoka being rough and also he ascending the throne amidst conflicts when the Mauryan Imperial Empire had transformed into a complex one having diverse cultures, social and political patterns and beliefs. The Brahamanas supremacy which prevailed during this period could not be suppressed but at the same time Asoka wanted his empire to survive for which he brought about some common patterns of behaviour for the smooth functioning during his reign. This has been the major cause for the emergence of edicts where its principles are based on morality, tolerance of all religions which led to a harmonious living.

Major Rock Edict I – It gives an insight where animal sacrifices and people gathering during festivities are prohibited. During the issue of this edict only three animals were slaughtered, two peacocks and one deer, but even the deer not regularly and that in future even these animals would not be killed. Asoka, it will be noticed, does not impose any restrictions on others which does not put upon himself. The samajas were prohibited from feeding slaughtered animals to the large crowds assembled during religious functions. Asoka approved samajas of various kinds. Some were of semi-religious, threatrical and other shows like representations of aerial chariots, of elephants, of agniskandhas. All the prohibitions of the First Rock Edict had therefore no other object in view than to minimise the destruction of animal life. Asoka also preached about compassion one must have towards animals.

Major Rock Edict II – It gives importance to social welfare such as medical treatment for humans and animals, construction of wells, roads etc. It also focussed on the development of ecology by planting more trees.

The Second Pillar-Edict contains this striking and comprehensive statement of the emperor on Dharma : "To practice morality is meritorious ; but what does morality include ? It includes few sins, many virtuous deeds, compassion, liberality, truthfulness and purity. The gift of spiritual insight (cakku –dana) also has been bestowed by me in many ways."

Major Rock Edict III – Throws light on respect given to Brahmans, Shramanas and to one's parents. Third Rock Edict, "Meritorious (sadhu) is obedience to mother and father. Liberality (danam) to friends, acquaintances, and relatives, to Brahamanas and Shramanas is meritorious. Abstention from killing animals is meritorious. Moderation in expenditure and moderation in possessions are meritorious. Emphasis is laid on qualities of mind (bhava suddhi)."

Major Rock Edict IV- It shows that due to the policy of Dhamma, there was disrespect shown towards the Shramanas and Brahmans, violence, unruly behaviour to friends, relatives and others has been stopped. It was also seen to it that killing of animals was stopped extensively. The detail account of the royal hunt which was banned is given in Megasthenes book Indica.

Major Rock Edict V – In the 12th year of Asoka's reign and for the first time the appointment of Dharmamahamantras was done. Reference to the appointment of these special officers is given in the edict. Their duty was basically to look after the interests of all subjects and religions. Thus he spread the message of Dharma. There is also a mention that the Mauryans often ate fish.

In the Rock Edict V "Fish are inviolable and must not be sold, on the three Caturmasis and on the Tisya full-moon during three days, (viz.) the fourteenth, the fifteenth and the first tithi and invariably on every fast day. And during these same days also no other classes of animals which are in the elephant-park (naga-vana) and in the preserves of the fisherman (kaivarta-bhoga), must be killed.

Major Rock Edict VI – It throws light on the instruction given by the king to the Dharmamahamantras. They had the liberty to bring in their reports and placed it before the king at any point of time. Efficient and speedy administration and smooth trade was seen in various parts of the empire. The Mahamatras were of morality and were incharge of controlling women the inspectors of cowpens and other classes of officials.

Major Rock Edict VII –Asoka believing in unity in his empire, laid importance on tolerance amongst all sects.

In the Seventh Rock-Edict : " But even one who practices great liberality but does not possess self- control, purity of mind, gratitude

and firm devotion, is very mean. King Devanampriya Priyadarsin desires that all sects may reside everywhere. For all these desire both self-control and purity of mind. But men possess various desires and various passions. Either they will fulfil the whole or they will fulfil only a portion of their duties. Now this progress of morality among men has been promoted by me only in two ways, viz. By moral restrictions (Dhamma-niyama) and conversion (nijhati). But among these two, those moral restrictions are of little consequence; by conversion, however is promoted more considerably." Citation- Age of Nandas and Mauryas.

Major Rock Edict VIII – Asoka undertook Dhammayatras to see that the policies implemented were helping the people to maintain a stabilised empire. In this way the king came in contact with his subjects. The previous practices of the emperor going on hunting expeditions were terminated by Asoka.

Major Rock Edict IX – During Asoka's period, elaborate ceremonies were performed by wives and mothers at times such as birth, illness, marriage and before going on a journey. In this rock edict Asoka emphasises that people should practice Dhamma rather than doing these holy rituals which were of no significance.

Major Rock Edict X – One must always lead a simple life and not by achieving fame, name or glory. Instead one must have moral uprightness and should adopt the principles of Dhamma policy.

Major Rock Edict XI- It further explains that animals must not be slaughtered or killed; instead compassion must be shown towards them. It also has a mention of the proper treatment that has to be given for the serfs.

Major Rock Edict XII- It depicts the fear which was instilled in the mindset of the Emperor when there was disharmony and intolerance

among various religious sects.King Devanampriya Priyadarsin is honouring all sects (pashandas) both ascetics and householders: both with gifts and with honours of various kinds he is honouring them. But Devanampriya does not value either gifts or honours so highly as this that a promotion of the essentials of all sects (saravrddhi) should take place.

Major Rock Edict XIII- It is given utmost importance which emphasizes on territorial conquests by Dhamma instead of war. This rock edict was carved after the Kalinga war. The adoption of the policy of Dhamma changed the outlook of conquests.

Major Rock Edict XIV- According to Asoka, he had a vast empire and he always felt that more rock edicts have to be installed. This was because he felt that people should be aware of certain disciplines and they should act accordingly. Hence this rock edict tells the significance of having messages engraved on these edicts.

Fourteen Rock – Edicts: " My dominions are wide, and much has been written, and I shall cause still more to be written. And some of this has been stated again and again because of the charm of certain topics and in order that men should act accordingly".

There is a close link between Buddha's teaching and the Dharma of Asoka. It is seen that in Buddha's teaching emphasizes is given to nibbana or liberation from the cycle of birth and rebirth. This concept in the monastic religion was vividly practiced. Asoka's Dharma is a reverse of it and it is more peripheral in nature. Asoka says that one must keep their world desires intact and laid stress on moral path of svaga meaning heaven than leading a monastic life of nibbana. Asoka probably drew on the ethics for the laity that Buddha on occasion preached but this does not detract from his own originality. Asoka aimed to tell people that there were all answerable to the call of compassion.

Asoka' policy of Dhamma has been a subject of controversy and debate amongst scholars where few famous scholars such as Ramesh Chandra Majumdar and Romila Thapar have given their opinions. Ramesh Chandra Majumdar's opinion is that Dhamma is a belief system which emerges from various religious faiths. He believed that the Asoka's royal family and himself turning to being vegetarians by giving a ban on conducting animal sacrifices which showed in favour of Buddhism . Yet this was one of the major causes which led to the decline of Mauryan Empire has the Brahaminical class emerged to be powerful. Apart from this another reason for decline was that Asoka's emphasis on ahimsa(non violence) which made military might crippling down to seating idle than waging wars. Romila Thapar praises Asoka's Dhamma of essential humanity. The intellectual says that it is not Anti- Brahaminical in nature as the Brahamanas and Shramanas belonged to Dhamma. There is also a mention of being a friendly ruler with the South Indian kingdoms such as the Cholas and the Pandyas. But Sri Lanka was considered as an ally. Asoka laid importance on tolerance as there were diverse groups of farmers, hunters, pastoral nomads, Greeks, Kambhojas, Bhojas etc. These people having different traditions had to set an ethical principle of tolerance.

It is noticed that Asoka's Dhamma concentrated on dhaya meaning compassion, Dana meaning charity, sathyam meaning truthfulness, suchita meaning purity, sadhuta meaning saintliness and samyama meaning self control. The Dharma of Asoka, " It was a practical code of social ethics and had little to do with religion or theology as such and the emperor showed in many ways that he attached the greatest importance to the practice of the virtues he commended to his subjects. He lays stress on sila (conduct); points out how easy it is to fall into evil ways and how difficult it is, particularly for the highly placed, to be always well-behaved. He deprecates evil passions like fierceness, cruelty, anger, pride, envy and warns all against being led

to commit evil deeds by the force of such passions. He praises dharmadana (the gift of morality) as the highest of gifts."

Asoka's letter to the Sangha (the Calcutta- Bairat inscription or Bhabru edict as it is called) commending seven scriptural passages to them, far from asserting royal authority, is couched in the most respectful terms and ends with the statement: " I desire, sirs, that many groups of monks and many nuns may repeatedly listen to these expositions of Dhamma and may reflect on them. In the same way both laymen and laywomen should act. For the following purpose, Sirs, am I causing this, to be written in order that they may know my intention."

Surely this expression of opinion on the part of the great king, coming from him at the conclusion of his study of Dhamma, with the aid of the Sangha and the reflection that followed upon it, would have been received with all the respect it merited; but this hardly an instance of the use of authority of any kind, royal or ecclesiastical. The edict on Sanghabheda can with better justice be regarded as use of royal authority, for in the sense that it orders the civil servants to see within their respective jurisdiction.

Thus, Asoka is considered as a great monarch whose reign is one of the "rare and lightning epochs" in the entire world history.

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A Tale of Defiance – Battle of Stalingrad

Rajoli Siddharth , 2 HEP

The year 2016 marks the 73rd Anniversary of Battle of Stalingrad (present day Volgograd). This battle was not an ordinary battle; it was due to the battle that USSR achieved recognition and supremacy for their defiant efforts in the battle of Stalingrad. The reason I have chosen the topic is because of the weak data provided in the textbooks of History in High Schools. This isn't sufficient evidence for a social science student to believe, there were many aspects ignored which will be mentioned in my research paper. Mentioning the Battle directly without any hindsight of the past wouldn't be convincing.

Military and political changes in Russia before World War II

During the rule of the Russian Empire the Russians lost a Naval Battle against the Empire of Japan in 1906, Demoralizing many Russians. Followed by World War I, where six and a half million Russians were deployed with only five million weapons. Which meant, over a million and a half Russians were unarmed (Susan Wise Bauer-History for the classical child, 4TH part Modern world). World War 1 was a disaster for the Russians. The Romanov Family was detested by the people of Russia, which finally led to Czar Nicholas abdicating the throne in 1917.

Alexander Kerensky was sworn in by the Provincial government, soon after the Bolshevik revolution, Alexander Kerensky fled the nation, and Vladimir Lenin came to power. On 17th July 1918, the Romanov family was executed, this action caused a civil war in the Russia, the fight between "White Army (people loyal to the royal family) and the Red army" (people fighting with the Bolshevik party). The war ended with the victory of the Red army. Vladimir Lenin died

of a Stroke in 1924. Joseph Stalin was appointed the leader of the communist party of Russia.

Stalin changed Russia in two major ways

- Russia was changed to Union of Soviet Republic - Stalin forced Countries which lay on the borders of Russia to join the Soviet Union or had to face aggression
- Stalin deported millions of Russians, ethnic groups and political prisoners to Siberia, where they were forced to work in factories

Before the outbreak of World War II, Stalin and Hitler were in very good terms, since both the nations followed communism, they were allied.

1939-1941: Nazi Blitzkrieg

Nazi Germany captured Czechoslovakia, next target was Poland. Hitler agreed to divide the invasion of Poland into the eastern and western halves. The western half would be annexed by Germany while the Eastern half would be occupied by the Soviets, Poland was captured very easily. Nazi Germany was Gaining more territories during the Blitzkrieg they captured Yugoslavia, Austria, Holland, Belgium, France, Finland and Luxembourg

1941- Operation Barbarossa

July 22 1941, over 3 million Axis troops and 3,500 tanks invaded the Soviet Union. It is known as the biggest military operation till date. Molotov, the Soviet foreign minister called the German ambassador in Moscow, and the first words were “Do you think we deserved this?” (History channel, UK)

Invasion of USSR was planned a year ago, they realized the Soviet army was weak after they were beaten by Finland. Hitler mentioned breaking the door of Soviet Union would result in collapse of the whole nation.

Operation Barbarossa had three major objectives

- Capturing the Baltic states and Leningrad in the north
- Moscow in the Centre.
- Economic resources of Ukraine and Southern Russia in the South

Axis troops marched 50 miles a day, and almost reached the gates of Moscow, as they did, Russians who failed in the Baltic and Leningrad fought with greater numbers and were able to hold the enemy at the gates of Moscow. Although the Luftwaffe (German Air force) attempted to bomb the city multiple times, due to the signs of winter, Luftwaffe could no longer have air supremacy in Moscow. Reinforcements from Siberia were sent to Moscow, martial law was declared in city of Moscow. November 1941, Moscow was minus 12 degrees Celsius, taking full advantage to their situation Soviet Union launches the Ski- troops against the freezing German forces near the city. Germans failed in achieving supremacy in Moscow, even after operating the Panzer Regiments (German tanks) By December 1941, the temperature of Moscow was below minus 37 degrees Celsius, Germans were unable to attack, by 5th December, USSR counterattack. On the 16th of December, the German offensive in Moscow is not at a complete halt.

5th April 1942. Adolf Hitler issues directive no.41 outlining his plans for the coming summer offensive in Russia. The main offensive is directed to seize the Russian oilfields in the Caucasus; a secondary thrust is to capture Stalingrad and protect the flank of the main advance (Sorted History Series – David Martinez)

Battle of Stalingrad

(Blog reports from Rajoli Siddharth's (author) blog- Wars, battles and shots fired across the globe, Topic- A tale of defiance- Battle of Stalingrad. Blogger.com)

Hitler was persistent to capture Stalingrad for two main reasons 1) city of Stalingrad took the name of the Soviet leader Joseph Stalin who Hitler 2) the most important reason was that Germany realized they did not have enough fuel to fight their war in Europe, for that they had to cross Stalingrad and enter the enormous mountain ranges of Caucasus. This had enough fuel for the Fatherland to fight much longer.

The first attempt made by the Red army to relieve Stalingrad was through Kotelnikov The Red army soldiers were ferried across the Volga successfully into Stalingrad to face the Germans.

At first, the Luftwaffe Bombed the city of Stalingrad, but Stalingrad was blessed with efficient engineering and city planning, Buildings were damaged, but they never fell to the ground, many described Stalingrad as "A maze of partly destroyed buildings", these building, in the later stages of the battle was a boon for the Red army,

Adolf Hitler gave the task of capturing the city of Stalingrad to the 6th army, commanded by Friedrich Paulus, who assured Hitler that Stalingrad would be captured by the end of September 1942. Gen. Paulus's prediction turned out to be incorrect. Germans turned to tanks attacks, making the situations far worse for the Germans, Axis Tanks were unable to manoeuvre through the ruins of Stalingrad, making them sitting ducks for the Russian Bazookas (lent on lease from the US) and PTRD -41's (Anti-Tank rifles), The German Tanks had another flaw, they couldn't gun down Russian sitting atop, because their guns lacked the elevation. The Germans were hit by another unexpected enemy. "The Rats" which would make its way into tanks destroyed the electrical wires covered by fabric insulation

which attracted rodents. When the tank assault failed in Stalingrad, The task fell into the hands of highly trained Grenadiers of the 6th army, who relied fully on close quarter combat, which they kept repeating so often that it came to be called the "Rat fighting"

How did the weak Red army face a strong German army?

Russian commanders knew that the red army couldn't stand up to German attacks in the open, instead they had to find a way to even the odds, Damaged buildings were fortified and connected by a maze through the rubble, the Red army sheltered from German army firepower in basements converted into bunkers ,Troops on both sides realized that the bombed out city was Ideal for Infantrymen's most dreaded opponents there're known as "snipers", The huge rubble and wreckage made Stalingrad the ideal playground for the snipers, there were unlimited places where sniper could hide, the Red army soldiers always were in advantageous situation, due to their Mosin Nagant sniper rifles which was way easier to operate compared to the German Mauser K98 sniper rifle , not just the weapon, but Russia had a better sniper unit ,most of the Soviets were from wilderness near the Urals and Caucasus, and hunting was the only way of survival. One among the exceptional snipers was a soldier named Vasily Zaytsev, Who killed a wolf when he was aged 6, displayed exemplary marksmanship during the Battle. He was responsible in establishing a sniper school inside a factory with 28 students, these students were responsible in the killing of 3000 Axis soldiers.

By the end of 1942 both sides faced shortage of medicine , healthcare issues due to the bombing of Stalingrad, sewers were open , due to the large amount of neglected corpses the water became contaminated. Soviet doctors came out with a vaccines fighting Typhus and many other diseases, these vaccines were a closely guarded secret of World War II. Meanwhile the German soldiers were dropping dead without getting injured. German doctors came to a

conclusion it was because of starvation, due to this, the German army was given a better diet consisting of more volumes of meat and fat, even after the provision of a high fat diet many still dropped dead. This day this disease is known as the "Re-feeding Syndrome", which wasn't known back then.

1943

From out of the frozen wastes around Stalingrad, was about to be unleashed. The red army launched a colossal counter attack against the 6th German Army, the Artillery pounded the German positions and thousands of Infantrymen were supported by Tanks and Cavalry, The German Army was surprised Hitler was too. "How could they", that's all was in the minds of the Germans whist the counterattack was taking place, it took a few days for the 6th army to be cut off.

Joseph Stalin praised the soldiers and turned to Vasily Chuikov, and together launched operation URANUS. One million Red army soldiers were to counterattack the Germans. It was the last time a cavalry regiment was used. 90,000 Red army soldiers were killed but took the Germans by complete surprise.

January 31, 1943 Field Marshall Friedrich Paulus of the 6th army against Hitler's orders surrendered. Out of the 90,000 prisoners only 6000 ever made it home

The Soviets lost horribly in 1906 in a Naval battle against a weak Japanese Navy, and again in world war 1, even though they knew, they were going to fail, they never gave up, they weren't showing fear nor were acting defeated, even after losing Kharkov(Industrial heart of the Soviet Russia), Leningrad, Minsk, Kiev, any army would have lost their morale, But the Red army fought with courage and were determined, they knew it was the last city for the Germans to capture and The first to Defend for the Soviets

Over 1.7 million were killed in the battle of Stalingrad, giving the status "bloodiest battle fought in the Eastern front".

Our school textbooks only mentioned Red army won because of the winter, but failed to explain the fuel shortages, Snipers, Rat infestation and the determination of Red army, the textbooks also tried to hint give a hint to the student, that “Hitler took an Irrational decision”. Hitler made the right choice because there was no choice, but if Stalingrad had fallen, history would have been different

According to many movies such as “Enemy at gates”, “Stalingrad” and Games such as “Call of Duty 2” have portrayed the drafting of young men into the army and have shown the difficulties faced by the Red army troops while crossing the Volga, unlike other wars or battles this one changed to fate of Soviet Russia

Cinema and Politics: Influence of Malayalam Film Personalities on Kerala Elections 2016

Irfan Ahmed Nazir, 4 HEP

Every film industry had a significant influence over the political sphere of a society. The dynamics of cinema is often associated with the political realities of the society that each film industry represents. Malayalam film industry, based in the southern Indian state of Kerala, is not an exemption to this phenomenon. Since the post-independent period, Malayalam theatre and then cinema emerged as a popular medium of communication, that had strong links with the political and cultural mobilization in the state of Kerala.

Malayalam cinema also witnessed the emergence of well-acclaimed film stars, who won the hearts of millions within and outside the state. However, in most circumstances, these charismatic film stars miserably failed to build a successful political career, which makes Kerala unique in comparison to its neighbouring states of Tamil Nadu, and Andhra Pradesh, where film personalities attained key political positions. The following pages of this research paper will shed light on the everlasting affection between the Malayalam film industry and Kerala's political scenario, as well as the vigorous friction between the two when it comes to electoral politics, with special reference to the general elections held to the fourteenth Kerala legislative assembly on 16 May 2016.

Historical Context

In every society, the institution of cinema has a compact relationship with the social and political life. This strong bond between them can reach to an extreme, where the line between reality and illusion is completely blurred. The visual appeal created by cinema shapes a mystical manifestation in the minds of people, which often generates

a tendency to give a divine outlook to popular film stars. People consider film stars as someone who made a great impact on their lives, although work is to merely portray the characters in movies using their acting skills.

Many film stars in the contemporary Indian history have tried to exploit their cultural charisma to acquire political power. They often enter electoral battles as campaigners or as candidates. Film stars in north India usually joined an existing political party; sometimes political parties have encouraged film stars to join their party and/or contest in elections in order to gain popular support. The most notable example is Amitabh Bachchan's electoral victory in 1984 from Allahabad parliamentary constituency as a Congress (Indira) candidate. Film stars like Rajesh Khanna, Vinod Khanna, Raj Babbar, Shatrugan Sinha, Dharmendra, Jayaprada, Hema Malini, and Kirron Kher have also contested in the tickets of prominent political parties.

In south India, the charm and appeal of the film stars was at its core. People consider film stars to be reincarnation of god. They were even willing to sacrifice their lives for these actors. This was the key for many film stars in south India to make a successful political career without depending on any prominent political parties – they were able to make their own political parties and create significant influence in electoral politics. The entry of leading Tamil film actor M.G. Ramachandran, popularly known as 'MGR', in the political scene of Tamil Nadu marked the beginning of 'cine-politics' in south India. MGR, who was a close aide and star-campaigner for *Dravida Munnetra Kazhakam* (DMK), created his own party, named *All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhakam* (AIADMK) in 1972, due to the rivalry between him and DMK leader M. Karunanidhi. AIADMK defeated DMK in the subsequent assembly election held in 1977, and MGR was sworn in as the chief minister of Tamil Nadu – the position that he held till his death in 1987. He was the first film actor in India to become the chief minister of a state. The incumbent chief minister of Tamil Nadu and AIADMK supremo J. Jayalalithaa is also from a

film background. Prominent Telugu film actor N. T. Rama Rao, also known as 'NTR', had no political past unlike MGR. However, he was able to gather the support of the masses, when he launched a new party in 1982, named, *Telugu Desam Party* (TDP), which stood to safeguard the pride of Andhra Pradesh. TDP swept the Andhra Pradesh assembly polls held the next year, and NTR was elected as the chief minister of Andhra Pradesh. AIADMK and TDP still remain prominent regional parties, that have a significant influence in Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh respectively. These two states also witnessed many film stars entering politics following the footsteps of MGR and NTR – some experienced electoral successes and some faced major setbacks. In Karnataka, leading film star Rajkumar was regarded as a cultural icon among the people. Although he didn't join electoral politics like MGR and NTR, and also constantly rejected the offers from various political parties, he still had a strong influence over the political and social domains of the state of Karnataka.

Incidents in the three southern states of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, and Karnataka, however, did not occur in the fourth – Kerala. Malayalam cinema, especially after the 1970s, has given way to the emergence of stardom. There are outstanding actors from Prem Nazir to Mammooty and Mohanlal. These film stars have a strong fan base among the Keralites because of their exceptional performances on screen. But what makes the Malayalam film industry distinct from other south Indian film industries is its inability to convert the cultural charisma of film stars into political influence. This is mainly due to the two broad reasons: (a) existence of the Left in Kerala, and (b) the development-oriented ideas of Keralities.

1. Existence of Left in Kerala

The Left movement does not only have a strong influence on the socio-economic and political aspects of Kerala; but in the cultural arena too. The Left Front, under veteran leaders like E.M.S. Nambootiripad, was able to significantly influence Kerala's cultural

space from the 1950s, which was usually dominated by film personalities in other South Indian states. Since the communists already had a strong presence in Kerala's cultural as well as political space, the influence of Malayalam film stars in Kerala's political sphere using their cultural charisma can be hindered effortlessly. This is also the main reason why communists have been able to survive in Kerala, even during the times they faced major electoral defeats.

The communists had a predominant influence on Malayalam theatre and cinema. Their presence in the cultural space created a new and progressive approach in the field of art and entertainment, breaking feudal and aristocratic traditions. The left-leaning theatre group Kerala People's Art Club (KPAC), which was established in Kayamkulam in the early-1950s, became instrumental in propagating left ideas through its melodramatic plays and *Kathaprasangams* (an art form that combines story-telling with singing). KPAC's second drama *Ningalenne Communistakki* (You Made Me a Communist, 1952), written by Thoppil Bhasi, was a revolutionary play in the history of Malayalam theatre, which was a hit among Keralites and placed KPAC as the front-runner in the people's theatre movement in Kerala. It can be noted that many of the leading playwrights and lyricists of KPAC had a prominent presence in the Malayalam film industry. Notable singers like KPAC Sulochana and K.S. George, and actors like K.P. Ummer, Sankaradi, Adoor Bhavani, Oduvil Unnikrishnan, KPAC Lalitha, and Sai Kumar started their career through KPAC.

If *Neelakuyil* (The Blue Cuckoo, 1954), an evergreen Malayalam movie jointly directed by P. Bhaskaranand Ramu Kariat, and the subsequent Malayalam films in the next two decades are taken into consideration, most of them are associated with the 'socialist realism'. The influence of the left and its ideas started diminishing from the scripts of Malayalam movies by the 1970s due to the rapid shifts in demographic and economic conditions, and the emergence of parallel cinema in Kerala. However, left-wing oriented subjects

still remain one of the predominant themes in Malayalam cinema even in the present-day scenario – Venu Nagavalli's *Lal Salaam* (Red Salute, 1990), I.V. Sasi's *Rakthasakshikal Zindabad* (Long Live the Martyrs, 1998), and Priyanandan's *Neythukaran* (The Weaver, 2002) are the most prominent ones. There are movies with a satirical take on Kerala politics as a whole, like Sathyan Anthikkad's *Sandesham* (The Message, 1991); and movies that pose sharp criticism to the Left.

2. Development-oriented ideas of Keralities

The emergence of cine-politics in the states of Tamil Nadu, and Andhra Pradesh is mainly because of the cultural and linguistic sentiments in those states. For instance, MGR was 'hero-worshipped' because he was in the forefront to propagate the ideas of Dravida movement; NTR expanded his popular backing when he strongly voiced his support for the honour and self-respect of the Telugu speaking community, after Rajiv Gandhi chastised Andhra chief minister T. Anjaiah at the Hyderabad airport in 1982. However, Kerala has always criticized the cine-politics that has existed in its neighbouring states and has been more progressive in its political thinking. Keralites highly appreciated the acting abilities of the film stars, but never idolized them. One reason for this could be the strong left-leaning cultural setting in the state, as mentioned above. They also paid attention to the development agenda, and preferred career-politicians over professional-actors to lead the administration.

If the electoral history of the state till 2014 is closely examined, there were many actors who actively campaigned for various political parties during election; but there were no instance of a film personality winning an election in Kerala – except for notable director Ramu Kariat, well-known for his film *Chemmeen* (The Shrimps, 1965), who won as a left-backed independent candidate from Nattika constituency in Thrissur District during the Kerala Assembly Elections held in 1965. Prem Nazir, who is regarded as the evergreen hero of Malayalam cinema, joined the Indian National Congress

(INC) in 1980s aspiring to make electoral fortunes, but never contested in any elections. Film-maker Lenin Rajendran contested in CPI(M)'s ticket against former diplomat K.R. Narayanan (who later became the President of India) from Ottapalam parliamentary constituency twice in 1989 and 1991. In both instances, Rajendran faced defeat as the politically conscious people of Kerala preferred an intellectual than a film director as their representative. Renowned cine-actor Murali, and notable lyricist O.N.V. Kurup also contested in elections for theLeft Front in the 1990s to the Lok Sabha – both received a thumb down from the Kerala voters. This made most film actors reluctant to join electoral politics and were often confined to their profession.

Recent Developments

Kerala witnessed a shift in its approach towards the people from the film background contesting in elections during the general elections of the sixteenth Lok Sabha in 2014.

The CPI(M) leadership surprised everyone by fielding and backing ace film actor and comedian, Innocent, as an independent candidate in the Chalakudy parliamentary constituency against Congress stalwart P.C. Chacko. Innocent, who has organizational experience as the president of Association of Malayalam Movie Artists (AMMA), has acted in more than five-hundred films. His campaign rallies attracted people from all walks of life, as they were eager to hear him cracking jokes.His key rival, P.C. Chacko, had rich experience in parliamentary politics, and a strong-hold in the INC. He even managed to swap the Thrissur parliamentary constituency seat – from where Chacko won in the last election – with his party colleague K.P. Dhanapalan to ensure a comfortable victory.

But when the results were declared on 16 May, 2014, Innocent had a smile on his face. He defeated P.C. Chacko by a margin of 13,884 votes, marking a new chapter in the history of Kerala's electoral

politics. He was the first film actor from Kerala to be elected to the lower house of the Indian parliament, and also became a hit on national media for his tremendous victory against an iconic Congress leader. After accepting the defeat, Chacko said, "His [Innocent's] personal charisma did the trick".

Kerala Assembly Elections 2016

Startled by the massive victory of a film star in the Lok Sabha elections 2014, all the three major political alliances in Kerala started considering the names of prominent film stars as a candidate for crucial constituencies for the Kerala legislative assembly elections 2016.

The CPI(M)-led opposition Left Democratic Front (LDF) took the lead in testing their fortune once again by fielding left-leaning film personalities in the elections. By the end of March 2016, the CPI(M) leadership decided to field notable Malayalam actress KPAC Lalitha as their candidate for Wadakkanchery assembly constituency in Thrissur district. Lalitha, who is strongly associated with the left movement in Kerala through KPAC, initially welcomed the party's decision wholeheartedly, but later backed out stating health issues – it could also be because of the resentment among some local party-workers against fielding a film star in the constituency. However, KPAC Lalitha actively campaigned for the LDF candidates across the state. Lalitha, and her colleague Innocent – two respectable faces of Malayalam film industry –were portrayed in the LDF election advertisements highlighting the drawbacks of the liquor policy of the Congress-led United Democratic Front (UDF) government.

CPI(M)'s state committee also took the decision to replace P.K. Gurudasan, a two-time MLA from Kollam assembly constituency, with notable cine actor M. Mukesh, who is well known for his character roles in Malayalam cinema. There was a strong pressure from a faction of local leadership to give one more chance to Gurudasan, who was also the excise minister under the LDF

government headed by V.S. Achuthanandan – the state leadership was able to tackle the situation and finalized Mukesh's candidature. Mukesh, hailing from a communist family, also holds the legacy of his father O. Madhavan, a renowned theatre artist and communist beside, which adds to his credit.

Prominent film actor K.B. Ganesh Kumar was nominated by the LDF as its candidate for Pathanapuram assembly constituency in Kollam district. Sitting MLA of Pathanapuram constituency since 2001 and minister in UDF governments headed by A.K. Anthony and Oommen Chandy, Ganesh Kumar is the son of veteran politician and former minister R. Balakrishna Pillai. LDF backed Ganesh Kumar's candidacy after his party, Kerala Congress (B) broke away from the UDF. Ganesh Kumar's hat-trick victory in the elections was obviously not because of his fame as a film actor, but his family's political background.

The Congress-led ruling UDF also considered the names of film personalities in various constituencies, but only finalized one. The Congress party named popular actor and comedian, P.V. Jagadeesh Kumar, as their candidate in Pathanapuram constituency against their former aide Ganesh Kumar. Pathanapuram constituency became the focal point, when the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) decided to choose Bheeman Reghu, who is popularly known for his roles as a villain in Malayalam cinema, as their candidate. All the three actors aggressively contested against each other to woo voters. During the final days of campaigning, the star war in Pathanapuram constituency reached its peak and even led to a sharp divide within the Malayalam cine-association AMMA. Jagadeesh came out in protest against superstar Mohanlal and ace director Priyadarsan for joining Ganesh Kumar's election rally. Popular comedian Salim Kumar tendered his resignation from AMMA arguing that Mohanlal's move was a violation of AMMA's rule of conduct. The AMMA president and Lok Sabha MP Innocent, LDF candidate of Kollam constituency Mukesh,

and other actors came in defense of Mohanlal stating that AMMA has not barred its members from campaigning in elections.

Surprisingly, the BJP leadership nominated prominent actor Suresh Gopi, who was the presumptive candidate of the BJP in the state, to Rajya Sabha ahead of the assembly election, in an attempt to persuade voters. The BJP also fielded filmmaker Rajasenan as their candidate for Aruvikkara assembly constituency in Thiruvananthapuram district. Like LDF and UDF, BJP also had film personalities campaigning for their party throughout the election, most notably, Suresh Gopi, Kaviyoor Ponnamma, and Major Ravi.

Election Results and Aftermath

The results of the general election held to the fourteenth Kerala legislative assembly was declared on 19 May 2016, and the history repeated again – the electoral wave was in favour of the CPI(M)-led opposition LDF, unseating the Congress-led UDF government. LDF-backed film personalities, Mukesh and Ganesh Kumar, emerged victorious.

1. Kollam Assembly Constituency

M. Mukesh defeated his nearest UDF rival Sooraj Ravi by a margin of 17,611 votes. He was able to increase the margin compared to 2011 election, where Gurudasan secured a margin of 8540 votes. But, as shown in Table 1, the LDF vote share in the Kollam constituency, i.e. 49.2%, is less compared to the average LDF vote share of 50.7% in the Kollam district. This clearly indicates that the increase in vote share has nothing to do with Mukesh's personal charm as a film actor; it was due to the strong LDF wave across the district due to the tremendous efforts of the party workers – the Left Front managed to win all eleven seats in Kollam district, many of them with a huge margin. Sooraj Ravi, who is the son of Congress leader Thoppil Ravi and the nominee of KPCC President V.M. Sudheeran, lacked the

support of various factions in the Congress party, adding a feather to Mukesh's electoral triumph.

2. Pathanapuram Assembly Constituency

In a triangular contest between the film stars, K.B. Ganesh Kumar won in the Pathanapuram constituency for the fourth consecutive term, defeating Jagadeesh by a margin of 24,562 votes. This is the highest margin of votes secured by Ganesh Kumar when compared to the previous three elections – 9931, 11,814, and 20,402 votes in 2001, 2006, and 2011 elections respectively. The consistent increase in vote share denotes the increasing popularity of Ganesh Kumar as an MLA among the people of Pathanapuram. This is also the reason why Jagadeesh, despite being a well-known actor, comedian, and television host, was not able to create any impact as he was an outsider for the people of Pathanapuram compared to Ganesh Kumar, who served as their MLA for the last fifteen years. The LDF wave in the district must have also influenced the increase in margin as shown in Table 1. The BJP candidate, Bheeman Reghu was only able to secure 11,700 votes, which is relatively less compared to the votes of other BJP candidates in the district.

3. Aruvikkara Assembly Constituency

Film maker Rajasenan had made no impact on the election as the candidate for the BJP. He only managed to get 20,294 votes – a shortage of 13,851 votes secured by veteran BJP leader O. Rajagopal in the Aruvikkara by-election held in the previous year.

Conclusion

This paper has tried to examine whether Malayalam film personalities had an influence on Kerala assembly elections held on 16 May 2016 or not. Although Kerala has sent two people from film background to the fourteenth state legislative assembly (i.e. main reason being the strong LDF wave in Kollam district as mentioned above),their

representation is very minimal – it is merely 1:70.Innocent's victory in the 2014 general election, just created a short-term trend among the political parties to field film personalities in crucial constituencies to test their fortunes, most probably because of the fear of defeat.Therefore, it can be concluded within the limits of this research paper that Malayalam film personalities makingsignificant inroads into Kerala's electoral politics is a distant reality. The people of Kerala are conscious in their political thinking and generally focussed on developemetalist ideas. Despite there are links between the Malayalam film industry and Kerala's political scenario, Kerala still holds the unique nature of differing the charm and appeal of the 'dream-weavers' from the political realities of society.

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