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## Notice for the PhD Viva Voce Examination

Ms Greeshma Hanna Rajan, Registration Number: 2170166, PhD Scholar at the Department of English and Cultural Studies, School of Humanities and Performing Arts, CHRIST (Deemed to be University) will defend her PhD thesis at the public viva-voce examination on Monday, 18 May 2026 at 10.00 am in Room No. 044, Ground Floor, R&D Block, CHRIST (Deemed to be University), Bengaluru - 560029, Karnataka, India.

<b>Title of the Thesis</b>	:	<b>Reviewing Stardom in the New Wave Malayalam Cinema: An Intersectional Reading</b>
<b>Discipline</b>	:	<b>English Studies</b>
<b>External Examiner - I</b>	:	<b>Dr Joji John Panicker</b> Professor and Head Department of English CMS College Kottayam (Autonomous) Kottayam - 686001 Kerala
<b>External Examiner - II</b>	:	<b>Dr Swarnavel Eswaran Pillai</b> Professor Department of English C643 Wells Hall Michigan State University 619 Red Cedar Road East Lansing, MI 48824 United States of America
<b>Supervisor</b>	:	<b>Dr Arya Aiyappan</b> Associate Professor Department of English and Cultural Studies School of Humanities and Performing Arts CHRIST (Deemed to be University) Bengaluru - 560029 Karnataka

The members of the Research Advisory Committee of the Scholar, the faculty members of the Department and the School, interested experts and research scholars of all the branches of research are cordially invited to attend this open viva-voce examination.

**Place:** Bengaluru  
**Date:** 07 May 2026

**Registrar (Academics)**

## ABSTRACT

Traditionally, Malayalam cinema has built its star images around a super-glamour model of heroic masculinity, narrative invincibility, and a culturally mediated space between actor and audience. Canonical career patterns of Malayali stars like Mammooty and Mohanlal exemplify this paradigm, thereby shaping the general imagination of the Malayali cultural milieu and sustaining a decade-long conceptualisation of male identity and screen presence. However, since 2010, with the emergence of the Malayalam New Wave, the modalities of producing, disseminating, and understanding the concept of stardom have been significantly reconfigured in cinema. Even though the New Wave is traditionally recognised for redefining narrative and aesthetic conventions, this research project aims to address a gap in the current academic literature by examining how the movement has revolutionised the principle of stardom.

This change is examined in current research on the onscreen, offscreen, and mediated roles of stars: Fahadh Faasil, Suraj Venjaramoodu, Joju George, and Indrans, whose careers redefine star identity today. Expanding on C. S. Venkiteswaran's exposition of 2010 New Wave Malayalam cinema, specifically the shift from superstar-vehicled paradigms to small-scale budgets and shared narrative accounts, this study outlines the post-2010 era as a pivotal moment in the reconsideration of stardom. This thesis is enriched by Richard Dyer's star theory and Kimberlé Crenshaw's intersectionality theory, which together challenge the intersections of onscreen performance and offscreen self-presentation in media representations of contemporary star identities. These structures provide a conceptual basis for explaining how New Wave Malayalam cinema transforms the structural and semantic aspects of stardom in the current decade.

The research employs a multimodal discourse analytical approach to explore films, interviews, on-stage appearances, and social media narratives, framing stardom as a stratified phenomenon shaped by three interdependent fields. It examines how the stars' performances reflect evolving ideas of masculinity using R.W. Connell's masculinity framework. The offscreen dimension is investigated through Erving Goffman's dramaturgical model. Additionally, the study examines media representation by analysing the impact of social media and digital presence on star identity, utilising Stuart Hall's encoding-decoding model and psychological concepts such as framing and priming effects. The threefold analytical approach in this study highlights the development of stardom in the New Wave Malayalam cinema through multiple spheres rather than a single axis. The thesis identifies a pluralistic shift in stardom that reflects the cultural and cinematic changes of the New Wave. It offers a reconceptualisation of the evolving, multidimensional nature of stardom and masculinity in Malayalam cinema.

**Keywords:** Stardom, Malayalam cinema, New Wave, onscreen, offscreen

### **Publications:**

1. **Rajan, Greeshma Hanna.** "Rephrasing Memory: The Reconstruction of Bhima in M. T. Vasudevan Nair's *Bhima: Lone Warrior*." *Interstices of Space and Memory*, 1st ed., Routledge, 2025, pp. 277–282, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003606666-53>
2. **Rajan, Greeshma Hanna** and Aiyappan, Arya (2025), 'Stitching the threads of change: Malayalam actor Indrans as the multifaceted "tailor"', *Studies in Costume & Performance*, Special Issue: 'Costume and Character in Film and Television', 10:2, pp. 261–78. Intellect, [https://doi.org/10.1386/scp\\_00152\\_7](https://doi.org/10.1386/scp_00152_7)