

**Representation of Ideal Womanhood in the movies : ‘Teacher’ and ‘Jaya Jaya Jaya Jaya He’****Renjith V.¹**Research Scholar
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meghaprakash013@gmail.com**Abstract:**

Malayalam cinema is leading the way and raising the bar by showcasing all that is wrong with our society today. The Malayalam films ‘Teacher’ and ‘Jaya JayaJayaJaya He’ are striking strong blow against misogynies, which has otherwise been celebrated unapologetically in Malayalam cinema for decades. Such interventions are shaking the grounds of patriarchal morality to lay the foundations of an alternative value system and holds the idea of ideal womanhood against the male dominated society.

Keywords: IdealWomanhood, Patriarchy, Women empowerment.

The primary focus of nations all over the world has been on the idea of women’s empowerment within the more general context of gender equality. It is now commonly acknowledged and understood that if we do not simultaneously focus on gender equality, economic and social development cannot be realized in its truest sense. There are no nations, even on a worldwide scale, where women have the same rights as males.

Common throughout India, and despite numerous state-level initiatives, many states have displayed extremely poor performance on the traditional indices. While the remainder of the nation has struggled with gender inequality. Kerala has deviated from the norm in terms of the advancement of women. Similarly, women in Kerala score higher than women in the rest of the nation in terms of literacy, life expectancy, and mean age at marriage. As a result, Kerala women historically had it better than most Indian states, which were dreadfully underdeveloped. In contemporary India, the status of women presents a confusing picture. Women in the current era have made great strides in comparison to earlier generations, but there is still a long way to go.

A few of the films today are striking a strong blow against misogynies, which has otherwise been celebrated unapologetically in Malayalam cinema for decades. Such interventions are shaking the grounds of patriarchal morality to lay the foundations of an alternative value system. While film industries like Bollywood still bank on misogyny and sexist ‘jokes’ for their humor quotient, Malayalam cinema is leading the way and raising the bar by showcasing all that is wrong with our society today.

“The Teacher” is one such Malayalam language film that talks about sexual assault, consent, power struggles, and a woman’s right in society. Devika’s journey through all of this is covered by the director Vivek, who takes us through the dark alleys of general mindsets that always expect women to be the ones to adapt, reshape, and move on. Released on December 2nd, 2022, the film stars Amala Paul, Maala Parvathi, Manju Pillai, Hakkim Shah, and Chemban Vinod Jose. The film unraveled societal stereotypes, from the idea that “abuse will not get justice in front of the police” to “once a criminal, always a criminal.” The teacher joins the general population who think that castration anxiety is the only cure for those who objectify women as she sets out to exact revenge on the boys who sexually assaulted her. Devika’s decision to accept the kid of the rapist is depicted as being unaffected by cultural conventions, which demonstrates Devika’s own determination. At its conclusion, the film takes a bold move away from the tales of motherhood’s deification in our society. It never strays from the task at hand.

In addition, the film presents several “interesting” concepts regarding “strong-willed” or “empowered” wom-

en. While Kalyani, a politician who defends human rights, is introduced on screen. It appeared exactly the same as how overly masculine characters are introduced on television today. On the big screen, smoking and drinking by women has been exaggerated as “boldness” or indications of emancipation. Sadly, no, it is not. It is a misguided masculine perspective on women, though. Every year, smoking contributes to almost 5.4 million fatalities, and these deaths are not gender-specific. Ajitha, a former naxalite activist, and KR Gowriamma, two revolutionaries, appeared to be insulted by the way the role was portrayed.

There is much more to being a woman of substance than adopting a wide-chested posture, speaking aloud in public, and smoking cigars. The idea that “women will only be safe with males who are sexually or romantically involved with their own sex” was imposed once again with the appearance of Chemban Vinod Jose in the movie as a gay guy. These type of movies just serve to normalize the physical and emotional suffering one goes through since the trauma of a rape is much more than just the desire for retribution. To sum up, to quote Martin Scorsese, Violence is not the answer. Isn't that one of the first lessons to be taught at school by a 'teacher'?

“Jay Jay Jaya Hey” narrates the story of Jaya (Darshana Rajendran), who learns to defend herself from domestic violence and takes her life into her own hands. The film explores various issues, like the importance of education and financial independence for women, gender inequality at home, and how daughters are still not valued. The film consistently sticks to its message: it always makes fun of abuse and abusers, never the victims. Darshana Rajendran plays the titular character Jayabharathi, whose parents seem to indulge her while being unduly strict with her brother (played by Anand Manmadhan as a grown-up). Though supposedly spoiling her, she never actually experiences freedom and hence the film provides an example of the gas lighting that real women experience in relation to routine events. From an early age until she is an adult, Jaya is bullied, disrespected, denied her agency, and told that she is loved and respected as well as free to make decisions by the same people closest to her. After high school, she attends a college of her parents' choice, and later marries (Basil Joseph), living in the same house as his mother (Kudassanad Kanakam) and sister (Sheethal Zackaria). In small-town Kerala, Jaya is merely another lady travelling the same path as everyone else.

Both the first time a man (lover) punches her and the second time husband strikes her, the men's quick actions stun her. They're plausible, just like her responses. The second shocking development occurs when she finally takes action; and this time, the shock is different since it is laced with hyperbole and purposefully ludicrous. These moments rank among Jaya Jaya Jaya Jaya Hey's most powerful plot, and the slow, steady cadence of the narrative before them only serves to increase their impact.

Every ambitious girl today dreams of getting a college degree. She is prevented from enrolling in that degree programme because to the intervention of a nasty uncle. These scenes in the movie may be the most realistic ones since they show the notion that women's education might be put on wait because they are to be married off and that family frequently interfere with and ruin a girl's ideal profession. But when Jaya, a regular lady without financial resources, family support, or educational credentials, signs the divorce petition, it serves as a wake-up call for society to recognize that “happily ever afters” aren't always real. When respect is no longer being provided in a relationship, it is crucial to end it. The film finishes with a crucial message: women need equality, justice, and independence as their three fundamental needs in a relationship.

The film is a wake-up call to society (the so-called protector of individual freedom and liberty) in general, regarding the way it thinks and deals with the social standing of women. Rajesh is a complete package of toxicity. Every slap is followed by a namesake apology, a trip to the movies, and a meal at a restaurant where the food is of his choice. Even the choice of food, choice of education, choice of choosing partner, choice of pregnancy, everything is denied as per the system of society. As Nalini Jameela in her autobiography named ‘The autobiography of a sex worker’ tells that the easiest way to trap women in the institution of marriage is making her pregnant. Rajesh in a way a try to make her to be confined in this so so-called institution of marriage by considering pregnancy as a tool rather than her choice. This can be considered as a trauma that all the women in our society is going to face. Even her choice of conceiving a baby is diverted in a way to fulfill man's need that is intended to control her. As a blow against the so called masculine ego and the masculine organ, the scene which make uses of the image of cashew nut can be taken in a point of view that masculine sex organ is just a organ, nor it can control a female, neither it can't do anything with the consent and choice of a female. This kind of sexually connotated images in the present scenario is a blow against the male chauvinistic society which always want women to be under the rule to man. The heroine defends these kind of notions with her will power, and proves that woman in all sense is equal to men. The movie makes us realise that the majority of society is still regressive, as it still defines a good woman as one who is “tolerant, a good cook, and cultured.” The movie has discussed relevant social issues on a regular basis by demolishing all the stereotypical concepts existing in our society. In Indian family dramas, the courts have frequently appeared, and Jaya Jaya Jaya Jaya Hey is no exception. The final scene takes place in a courtroom where Manju Pillai's portrayal of the Judge makes fun of Rajesh for realizing why

the divorce was filed. The movie seeks to make us understand why domestic violence and intimate partner violence shouldn't be accepted as the norm and restores hope in society.

One of the film's main plots involves pregnancy, which is depicted as a man's decision rather than the woman who is pregnant. By providing audience members with suggestions about how pregnancy frequently causes pain and disruption in life when it's not the woman's choice, this has been handled seriously. Jaya was forced to realize that Rajesh's intention to keep her in their marriage resulted in an abortion, which astonished her. Jaya delivers a powerful message to the audience, informing them that a woman's body and her personal choices are none of other people's business, and that no one has the right to violate them. Pregnancy is typically the main focus of Malayalam movies, therefore this is unique.

This is unusual in Malayalam movies, where pregnancy is often the man's choice— which is again normalized through marital rape and sexual abuse. This movie has some flashes of the much-acclaimed movie *Great Indian Kitchen* of a woman rebelling against regressive minds and patriarchy. But the similarity ends there. A woman does not have to be docile, demure, lucky, etc. to have an identity. And particularly this movie raises a pertinent question, does every abused woman have it in her to fight back?

And in these regards, movies like these, remind us, over and over again, about the necessity of gender equality in all the sense. And as Emerson once said: "To be yourself in a world that is constantly trying to make you something else is the greatest accomplishment." These films today are striking a strong blow against misogynies, which has otherwise been celebrated unapologetically in Malayalam cinema for decades. Such interventions are shaking the grounds of patriarchal morality to lay the foundations of an alternative value system One of the most important aspects of cinematic vision is how women are portrayed.

However, this does not imply that women and their issues are given top priority; rather, they are used to boost the success of films. The major tools used for this are a woman's outward appearance and acceptance of concerns specific to women. Female identities in Malayalam films are constrained to the stereotypical gendered concept of womanhood, where their identities are defined by their acts while being constrained by gendered identities like mother, wife, and sister. The patriarchal depictions of women in terms of marriage, family, and motherhood are challenged in these films. However, the chance to demonstrate actual freedom appears to be a fiction.

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