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Editorial

“Star Research Reach,” a multi-disciplinary, peer reviewed international journal publishes the latest research and review articles. The journal possesses an International Standard Serial Number, ISSN 0975-5101. Journal offers opportunity to the research scholars, faculty members and students to publish their research articles.

This issue deals with articles from Commerce, Home Science, English, History and Economics. This is a platform for researchers to publish the articles and create awareness among people regarding findings in the various fields.

Let me express my sincere gratitude to our management and staff for the sustaining support and motivation rendered to us. We are indeed grateful to our Principal, Dr.Sr.Shemi George, who had extended support in publishing this journal. Our appreciation also goes to all authors for the timely submission of articles. The peer reviews had helped in maintaining the quality of each article. Above all let me thank God Almighty for the overflowing blessings showered upon us.

Dr.Lizmitha Godwin (Editor)

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ARBITRAGE OPPORTUNITIES IN INDIAN EQUITY FUTURES: AN EXAMINATION OF SPOT PARITY THEOREM

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ABSTRACT

The mispricing in futures market often leads to market volatility and contributes to market inefficiency. The arbitrage process in futures market helps to normalise the overbought and oversold positions and thereby helps to maintain market efficiency. Since the arbitrage opportunities in the Indian equity futures market was limited, the present study has employed spot parity theorem to examine the arbitrage opportunities in futures market and found that the use of appropriate strategies would fetch reasonable profits to arbitrageurs.

Key Words: Arbitrage; Futures; Derivatives; Stock futures;

ARBITRAGE OPPORTUNITIES: AN OVERVIEW

The function of arbitrage is useful in derivative market as it helps to align the price of both spot and futures market respectively and thereby promotes an efficient market. When the Futures price is greater than its expected future spot price, futures contract is overvalued. The arbitrageurs make use of this opportunity to lock in price simultaneously in both markets and earn profits by going short in futures market and long in spot market. In case of the undervalued futures price, that is spot price is greater than futures price, arbitrageurs go for long in futures market and short in spot market thereby reaping the profit, which will have its societal impact by correcting the mispricing the values of overbought and oversold positions [8](Wahab & Lashgari, 1993) .

In light of these facts, this paper attempts to find out arbitrage opportunities for fourteen companies trading in NSE stock futures. Out of various stock exchanges having its operation in India, National Stock Exchange serves to be one of the best stock exchanges trading in derivatives. For the estimation of arbitrage opportunities, spot parity theorem has been adopted and the period of study was from 1st January 2020 to 30th June 2023. The studies in arbitrage in futures market

state the existence of arbitrage opportunities available for investors[3](Carter, 1989), [7](Mohamad & Hassan, 2000), [5](Fung & Joseph, 2002), [6] (Misra et al., 2006), [2](N. Aggarwal, 2015), [4](Chuhdary & Ismail, 2019), [1] (G. Aggarwal & Aggarwal, 2020). However, the studies with regard to profitability of arbitrage in Individual stock futures is rare. The area of arbitrage opportunities in terms of stock futures are less explored. The possible reason behind this might be the use of wide variety of models and use of different products of futures market. Therefore, this paper attempts to find out arbitrage opportunities for fourteen companies trading in NSE stock futures from 1st January 2020 to 30th June 2023. The objective of the study based on which the analysis of research data carried out is to examine arbitrage opportunities of Indian equity futures traded in National Stock Exchange based on near month futures data.

METHOD: APPLICATION OF SPOT PARITY THEOREM IN EQUITY FUTURES

The study is descriptive and analytical in nature and it considers data of near month closing price and underlying value of fourteen individual securities from 1st January 2020 to 30th June 2023. The fourteen companies have been selected on the basis of their existence in the list of stock futures from the beginning of listing stock futures in NSE India.

For the purpose of study, the simple spot parity theorem was employed to identify the mispricing between actual futures price and expected futures price. The spot parity theorem explains the expected futures price as follows:

$$F_t = S(1 + r)^t$$

Where, 'F' refers to the futures price, 'S' refers to the spot price, 'r' refers to risk free return and 't' refers to number of periods to contract maturity. For the purpose of study, the risk-free rate of return was assumed to be 5 per cent with continuous compounding.

After the computation of theoretical futures price, comparisons were made by subtracting the theoretical futures price from the actual futures price. If arbitrage profits are significant and greater than zero, it shows that, futures price is very high in comparison with spot price and an arbitrageur can make super normal profits through making advantage of such a position. In the particular case, the arbitrageur should short the individual futures, purchase the same instrument

from the spot market and borrow from risk free market. This will enable him to make advantage of arbitrage profits.

If the arbitrage profits are significant and less than zero, it indicates that the futures price is too low in comparison with spot price and an arbitrageur can make super normal profits through making advantage of such a position by going long in individual stock futures and selling the same in spot market and lending in the risk- free market [6] (Misra et al., 2006).

The data used for the study includes near month futures price and theoretical futures price, the results of analysis on the basis of spot parity theorem is displayed in the following Table 1.

Table 1
Arbitrage Profits and Number of Contracts Traded

Company	Number of Contracts	Arbitrage Profits Per Contract (In ₹)			
		Mean	Maximum	Minimum	Standard Deviation
BPCL	100-1000	-1.34775	1.259743	-5.80943	2.669415
	1001-5000	-0.97609	1.638363	-42.0152	2.444822
	5001-10000	-1.74397	1.652118	-18.5228	3.2026
	>10000	-2.04302	1.045846	-17.535	3.642305
CIPLA	100-1000	-0.31872	2.939716	-2.65882	2.376048
	1001-5000	-1.00427	248.9455	-11.8616	11.28005
	5001-10000	-1.70994	191.4235	-10.8984	12.0571
	>10000	-1.96428	2.780981	-9.64962	2.43281
HDFC	1001-5000	-3.33565	5.798125	-9.40309	3.972133
	5001-10000	-3.40822	11.19763	-46.7892	7.31435
	>10000	-9.22953	12.547	-523.288	39.09657
DRREDDY	100-1000	1.04022	41.78611	-264.134	31.08449
	1001-5000	-25.1846	24.98772	-780.978	106.772

	5001-10000	-23.2423	381.7221	-783.028	103.2827
	>10000	-19.9703	14.63208	-777.978	82.81555
GRASIM	100-1000	-0.57175	4.346202	-6.24627	4.357326
	1001-5000	-1.66254	75.88032	-37.0683	5.8785
	5001-10000	-3.52275	4.489258	-10.7149	3.040765
	>10000	-2.82523	3.774414	-6.56703	2.217327
HINDALCO	1001-5000	-0.36701	2.205457	-2.65502	0.622564
	5001-10000	-0.76177	2.376359	-8.80036	1.072773
	>10000	-1.58436	10.57998	-50.87	4.160436
HINDUNLVR	1001-5000	-3.8086	33.70767	-27.5906	7.368051
	5001-10000	-6.08943	11.10003	-26.7637	6.732006
	10000-50000	-5.85168	197.1271	-28.3785	18.96596
	>50000	-23.337	-3.04202	-33.6305	11.22412
INFY	100-1000	4.246531	10.17581	-7.77365	8.499809
	1001-5000	-0.9657	13.11119	-11.6489	7.356257
	5001-10000	-2.19767	6.521309	-11.5711	3.101139
	>10000	-2.23763	331.6616	-25.3484	21.60532
ITC	100-1000	1.045992	4.535705	-7.78305	3.990524
	1001-5000	-0.34053	2.904754	-4.55708	1.295611
	5001-10000	-0.62055	1.940165	-6.77942	1.234053
	>10000	-1.18783	1.940776	-56.676	3.269287
M&M	1001-5000	-1.27604	142.0729	-20.6697	7.692581
	5001-10000	-2.39207	5.985053	-20.6447	3.252965
	>10000	-2.45705	3.216727	-18.7166	3.231744
RELIANCE	10000-50000	-3.1354	169.1736	-16.4835	8.264356
	50001-100000	-6.0167	5.007197	-17.7947	4.903142

	>100000	-3.88578	4.618946	-7.9478	3.982235
SBIN	5000-10000	-0.86009	0.906007	-4.63781	0.967416
	10001-50000	-0.87424	12.26207	-10.8731	1.49616
	50001-100000	-0.653	1.749318	-7.71083	1.597011
	>100000	0.013323	0.566117	-0.61092	0.452047
TATAMOTORS	100-1000	-0.27659	0.027703	-0.528	0.180603
	1001-5000	-0.15364	1.587192	-1.39823	0.963067
	5001-10000	-0.3132	1.965231	-3.44282	0.708048
	>10000	-0.7246	1.985593	-52.0285	2.282671
TATASTEEL	1001-5000	-0.37837	4.143708	-4.64972	1.760849
	5001-10000	-0.7653	1.061453	-11.8711	1.835425
	10000-50000	-2.93391	11.53173	-55.1313	8.046321
	>50000	-1.9765	2.816595	-5.85087	2.482308

Source: Computed secondary data

The results of the study reveal that, there is differences between actual futures price and theoretical futures price.

The analysis of arbitrage profits from Table 1 indicates that, there are arbitrage opportunities present in Individual futures contracts in the sample period based on spot parity theorem. The result of arbitrage profits based on spot parity theorem are as follows:

Table 1 shows that, there is mispricing among actual futures price and theoretical futures price based on spot parity theorem. The mean arbitrage profits of companies in the sample period reveal that, no company has got positive mean arbitrage profits for all ranges of contracts. However, with closer examination, companies, INFY, ITC, DRREDDY and SBIN has got small but, positive mean arbitrage profits for its contracts indicating that, futures price is very high in comparison with spot price and an arbitrage can make super normal profits through making advantage of such a position in those contracts. An interesting observation about the positive mean arbitrage profit is that all the above-mentioned companies except SBIN has got its positive mean

profits for the range 100 to 1000 contracts. The company SBIN has got its mean profits of ₹ 0.013323 per contracts above 100000. In the particular case, the arbitrage should short the individual futures, purchase the same instrument from the spot market and borrow from risk free market. In this position, INFY has got the highest average arbitrage profit as consistent to the whole period with ₹ 4.24 per contracts is achieved for 100-1000 range of contracts.

IMPLICATIONS

For all other companies arbitrage profits in averages are significant, but less than zero, indicating that futures price is too low in comparison with spot price and an arbitrage can make super normal profits through making advantage of such a position by going long in individual stock futures and selling the same in spot market and lending in the risk- free market. The mean arbitrage profit less than zero is at maximum for HINDUNLVR and DRREDDY company and DRREDDY has got the highest arbitrage profit among all companies including INFY. Average arbitrage profits are comparatively less in case of companies of ITC, CIPLA and HINDALCO in sample period. The minimum average profit achieved was ₹ 0.0133 for SBIN company which is almost same as that of the whole period. While comparing the maximum arbitrage profits, CIPLA has got the highest arbitrage profit ₹ 248.9455 for contracts more than 1001-5000 contracts and TATAMOTORS got the lowest arbitrage profits in 100-1001 contracts ₹ -0.528 per contract. The standard deviation of arbitrage profits was found lowest for TATAMOTORS, SBIN and highest for DRREDDY. Thus, the analysis of arbitrage opportunities from Table 4.12 based on spot parity theorem indicates that, there are arbitrage opportunities present in Individual futures contracts.

Based on the results, Indian equity futures market found to be appropriate for performing arbitrage by adopting adequate strategies. The results of spot parity theorem reaffirms the presence of arbitrage opportunities in equity futures market consistent to the results of (Misra et al., 2006).

CONCLUSION

The use of appropriate strategies may significantly contribute to gain arbitrage opportunities in Indian equity futures market which in turn will affect the economy as a whole and its impacts will give way to multiple dimensions of society. The limited number of research in the area of arbitrage opportunities of stock futures encouraged the attempt to find out arbitrage opportunities for fourteen companies trading in NSE stock futures using spot parity theorem and found that

among the fourteen companies considered under study all companies contribute significantly towards arbitrage profits and appropriate strategies can be used to reap the benefits out of individual stock futures mispricing. Findings of the study can be used for the market participants including producers, traders and investors and can earn significant profits with the adequate trading strategy accordingly to correct the mispricing and ensure market efficiency of Indian Equity futures.

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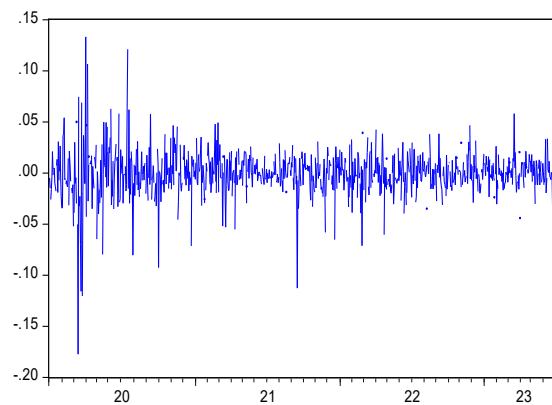
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APPENDICES

A.1 Graphs of Daily Spot and Future Returns of Individual Stocks

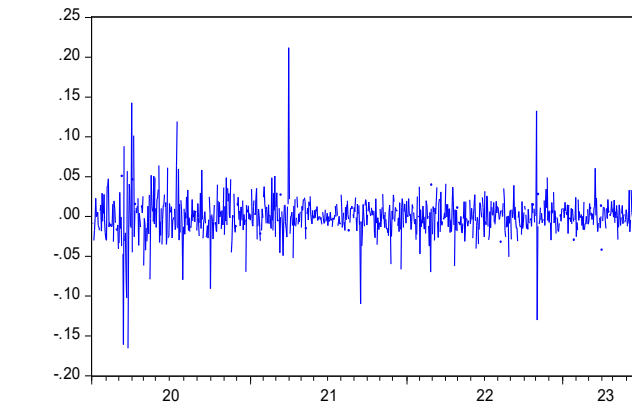
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Figure_2

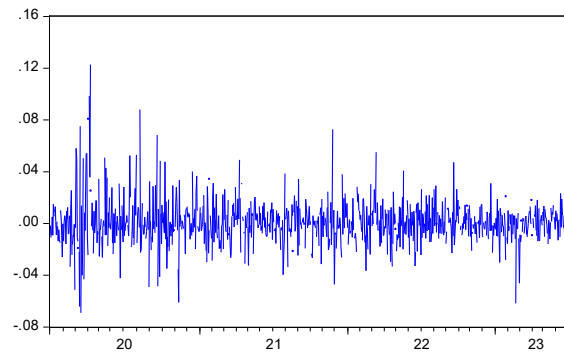
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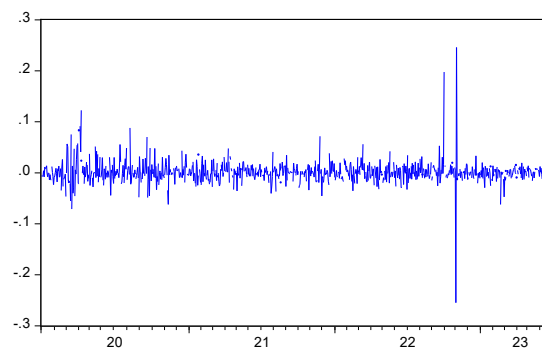
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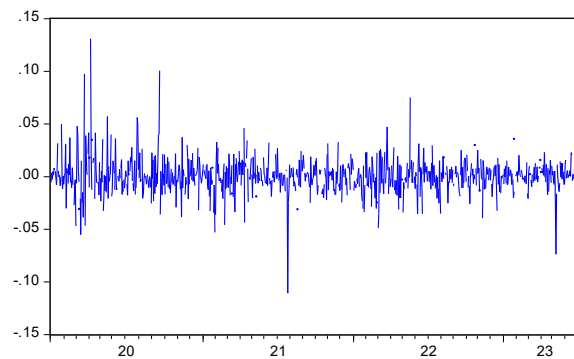
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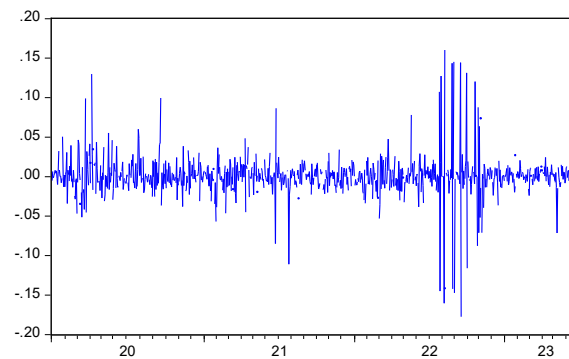
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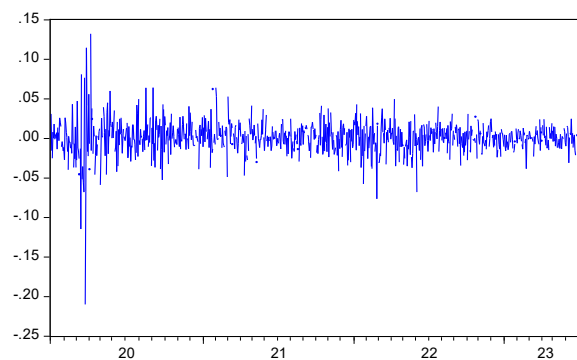
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DRREDDY

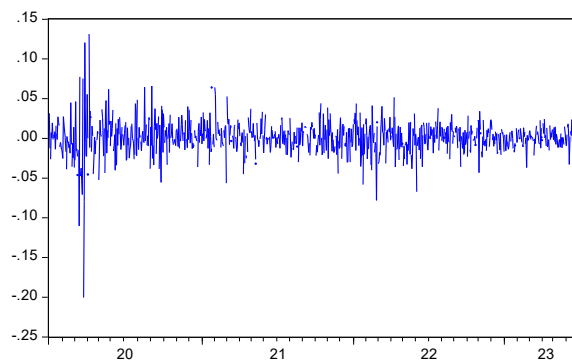
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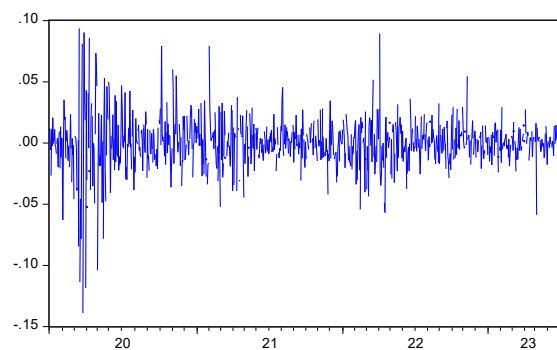
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GRASIM

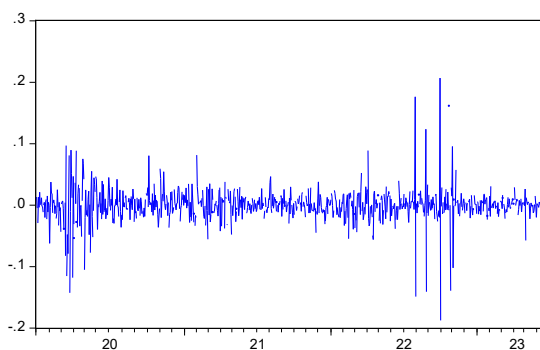
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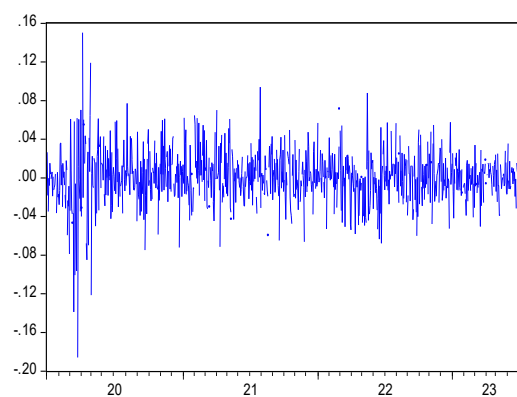
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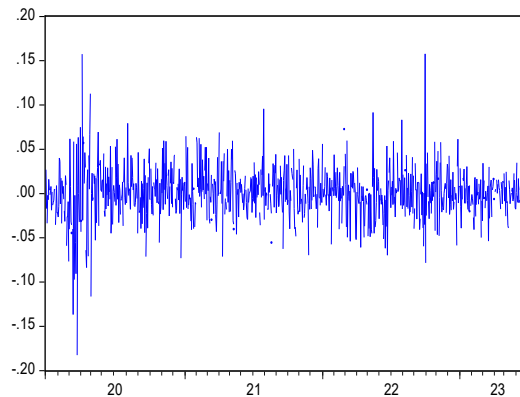
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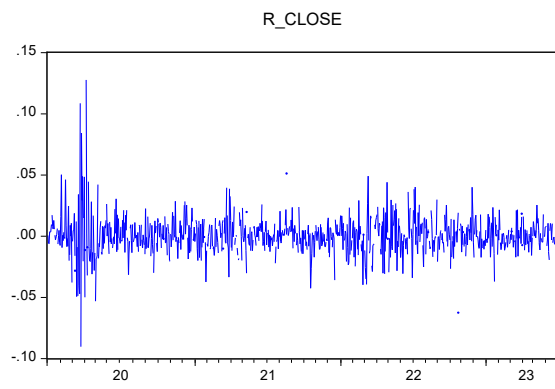
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R_SPOT

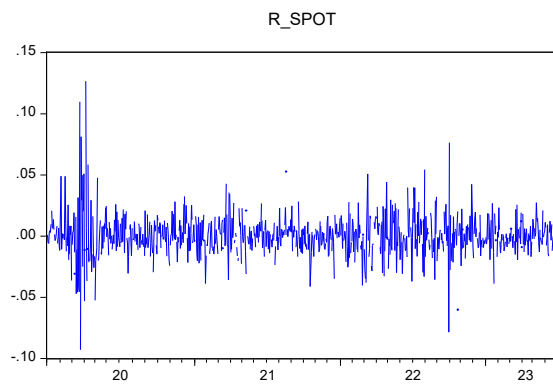


HINDALCO

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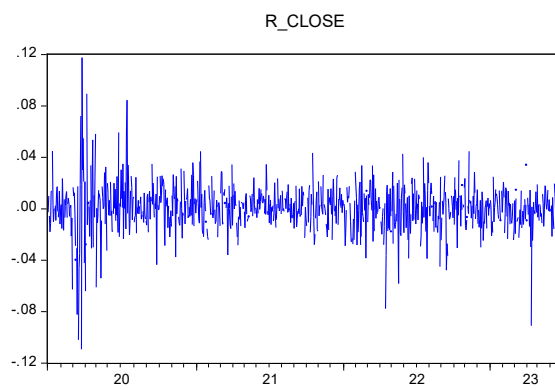


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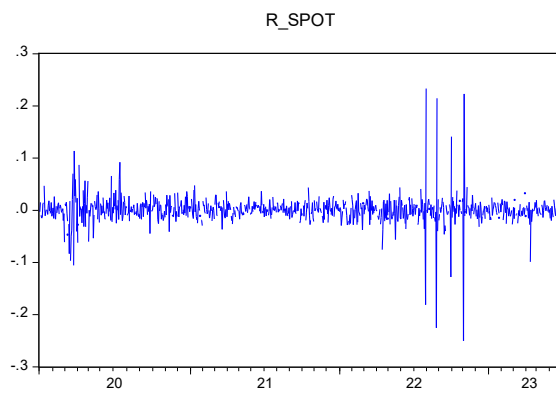


HINDUNLVR

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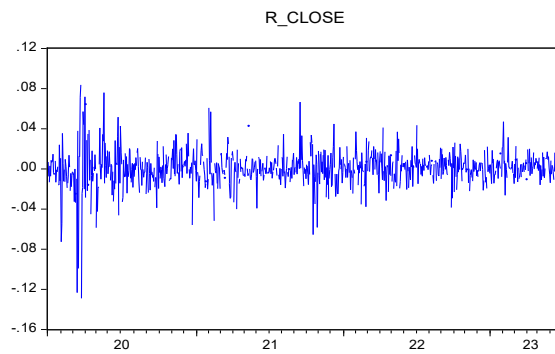


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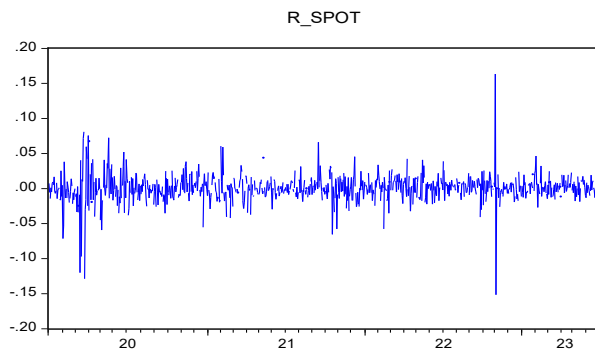


INFY

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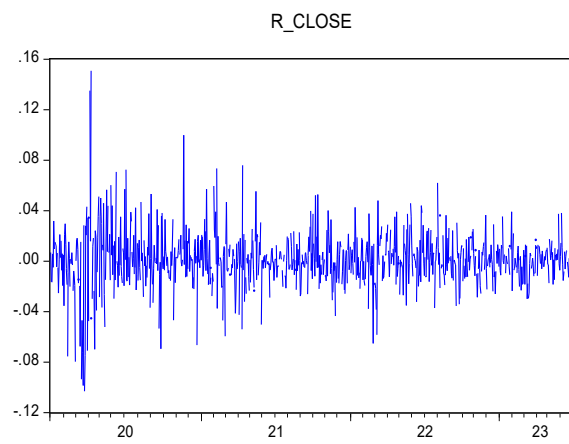


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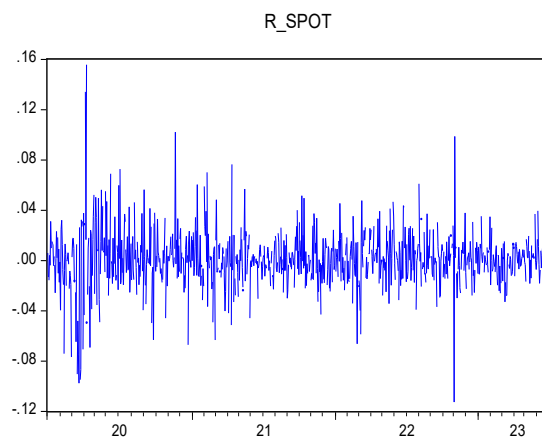


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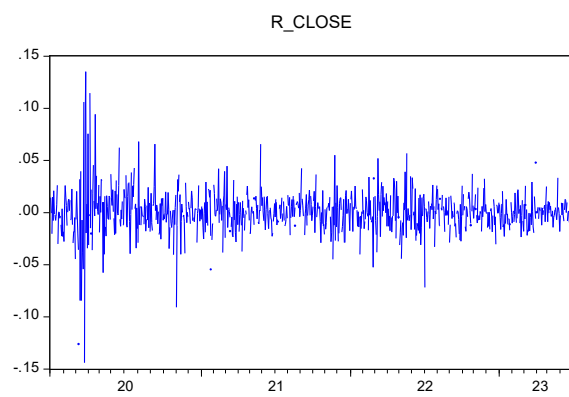


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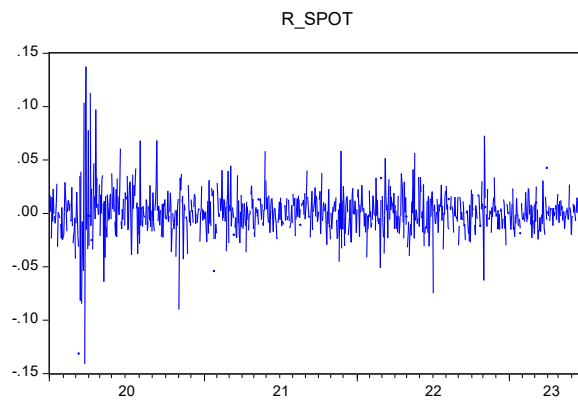


M&M

Figure_21

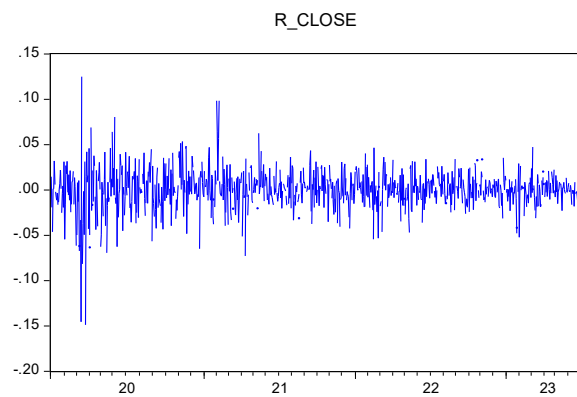


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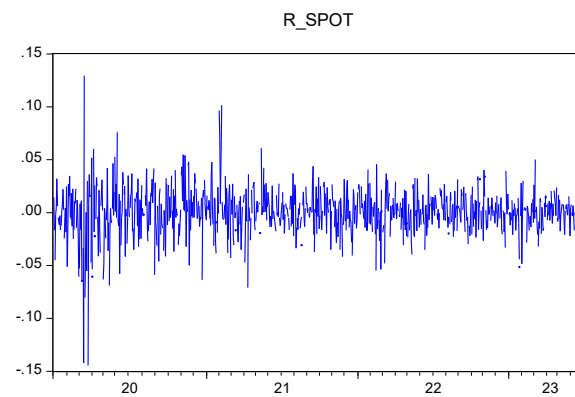


RELIANCE

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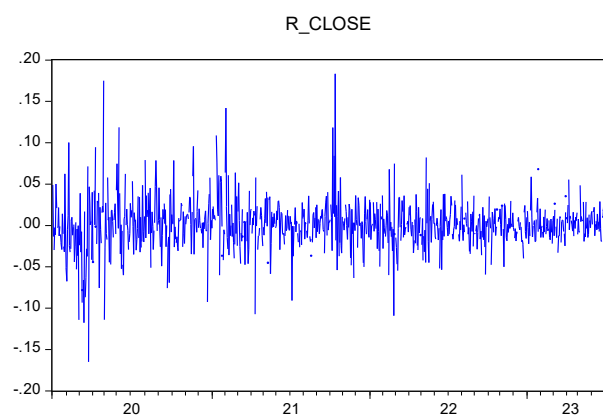


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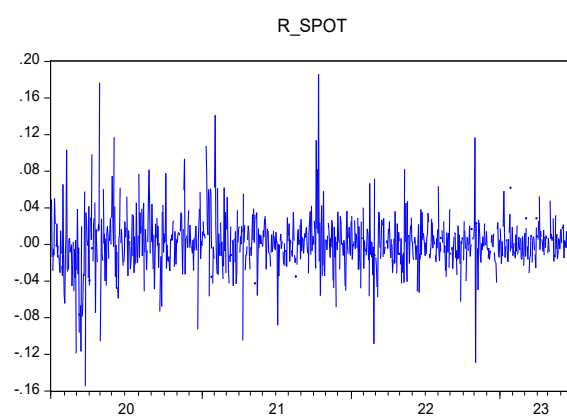


SBIN

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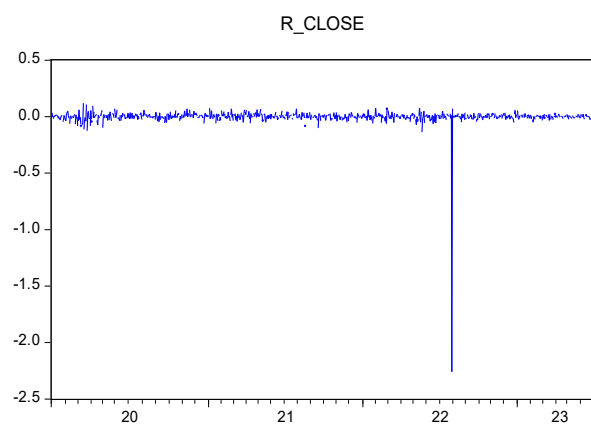


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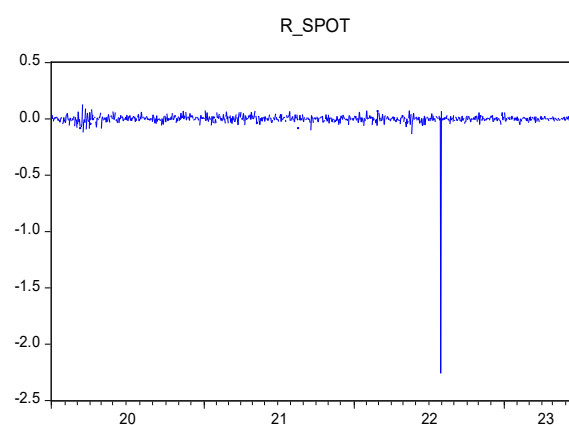


TATAMOTORS

Figure_27



Figure_28



TATASTEEL

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN JOB COMPONENTS AND SELF PERFORMANCE AMONG FEMALE HEALTH WORKERS IN REPRODUCTIVE AND CHILD HEALTH PROGRAMME

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ABSTRACT

Reproductive and Child Health (RCH) programme aims at combating and reducing the mortality rates of mothers, infants, and children, particularly in rural areas, where the Female Health Workers (FHWs) play a very important role in the delivery of health services. This study investigates the relationship between job components of the RCH Programme and the performance levels of FHWs. A sample of 100 FHWs was selected using proportionate stratified random sampling from Thiruvananthapuram District, Kerala. A comprehensive questionnaire was used to collect personal profiles and socio-economic backgrounds of the respondents. Job responsibility statements under four key components - General, Maternal Health, Child Health, and Adolescent Health - were evaluated for reliability and validity. A 5-point Job Performance Scale was developed to assess the FHWs' performance, categorizing them into low, moderate, and high performers. The findings revealed that most FHWs were moderate performers. Additionally, significant differences in performance levels were observed across the four components of the RCH Programme.

Key words: Reproductive and Child Health, Female Health Workers, Job responsibility, Performance Assessment

INTRODUCTION

The World Health Organisation (WHO) defines reproductive health as a state of complete well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity, in all matters relating to the reproductive system and its functions and processes (Park, 2021). Women's good health at any age or stage brings stability to the family and helps to promote the wealth of the home and the country. Reproductive health problems are the leading causes of women's ill health and death worldwide,

with younger women being particularly affected. Health in reproduction is therefore crucial for the well-being of families and communities. Many health problems that affect women of reproductive age begin in childhood and adolescence.

The Reproductive and Child Health (RCH) Programme places special emphasis on client-oriented, need-based, high-quality, integrated services for beneficiaries. The programme prioritizes a target-free approach based on community needs, participatory planning, and client satisfaction. The provision of good quality service is the crux of the RCH Programme (National Institute of Health and Family Welfare, 2003). Female Health Workers (FWWs) play a vital role in delivering health services, especially in Reproductive and Child Health Services.

In Kerala, FWWs, also known as Junior Public Health Nurses (JPHNs), are expected to provide comprehensive primary health care to the community. Their responsibilities encompass promotive, preventive, and curative services, both at the institutional and field levels. Institutionally, they operate from sub-centers, while their field activities cover specified populations or geographic areas, typically ranging from 3,000 to 8,000 people, depending on population density and terrain. The area assigned to a male and female worker constitutes a "sub-center area," with both operating from the sub-center situated in the service delivery area (Government of Kerala, 2003).

AIM OF THE STUDY

To investigate the relationship between the job components of the Reproductive and Child Health Programme and the self-assessed performance levels of Female Health Workers in Thiruvananthapuram District, Kerala.

H0- There is no significant relationship between the job components of the Reproductive and Child Health Programme and the self-assessed performance levels of Female Health Workers in Thiruvananthapuram District, Kerala.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was conducted in Thiruvananthapuram District, the capital of Kerala. The sample included 100 FWWs who were working under the Health Services Department, Government of Kerala, selected using a proportionate stratified random sampling method. The four Components

of Reproductive and Child Health Programme namely General Health, Maternal Health, Child Health, and Adolescent Health were identified and statements and questions were suitably identified to formulate a questionnaire, which was one of the tools for data collection, especially the personal factors and the socio economic background of the FHWs. Additionally, a Job Performance Scale was also developed by the investigator, which was utilized to assess the performance of these workers.

Development of Research Instruments

Identification and Selection of the Components of RCH Programme

Following the Manual of the Government of Kerala detailing the job responsibilities of FHWs in Health Services, extensive literature review, and consultation with thirty experts, four components of the RCH Programme were identified: General, Maternal Health, Child Health, and Adolescent Health. Subsequently, a list comprising 133 job items was compiled, reflecting the responsibilities of FHWs under these four components. Additional items were incorporated through the nominal group technique, resulting in a final inventory of 136 statements.

Relevance Rating and Selection of Items for Components of RCH Programme

The list was assessed for relevance by two groups: an expert category and a worker category, each comprising thirty members. The expert category included 5 each of Medical Officers, Health Inspectors, Health Supervisors, Lady Health Supervisors and Lady Health Inspectors, 3 Nursing Tutors and one each of a Mass Media Officers and a District Public Health Nurse of Thiruvananthapuram District of the Kerala State Health Services Department. While the worker category consisted of thirty Female Health Workers. Using a five-point continuum, both groups rated the relevance of the items, leading to the elimination of items rated as not relevant by both experts and workers.

Subsequently, elimination was based on the agreement between the relevance ratings of the experts and the workers. This agreement was determined by conducting a 't' test of significance of relevance rating scores

Consequently, all such items were removed based on the inference drawn from the 't' test results. Following the elimination of 73 items from the list, the final tool comprised 63 job items

which were arranged under the four components of RCH Programme such as General (12 items), Maternal Health (21 items), Child Health (21 items) and Adolescent Health (9 items). Then the continuum was adjusted to 'excellent', 'good', 'moderate', 'poor', and 'very poor' in the final tool.

Establishment of the Reliability and Validity of the Final Tool

Reliability

The reliability of the final tool, consisting of 63 job items under the four components of the RCH Programme, was assessed using the Spearman Brown split-half method using the formula

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Reliability of the whole test} &= \frac{2 \times \text{Reliability of the half list}}{1 + \text{Reliability of the half list}} \\ &= \frac{2 \times 0.925}{1 + 0.925} = 0.961 \end{aligned}$$

The reliability coefficient of the half test was found to be 0.925, resulting in a reliability coefficient of the full test of 0.961, indicating high reliability.

Validity

Validity was established through the internal consistency method. Each item score was correlated with the section total score, with values ranging from 0.262 to 0.992 across the components. Furthermore, correlations between section scores and the grand total score ranged from 0.636 to 0.916. Additionally, correlations between each item score and the grand total score ranged from 0.262 to 0.739. These analyses demonstrated high internal consistency within each section and across the entire tool, indicating strong validity (Table 1).

Table 1**Correlation of RCH Components with the Total Performance Score of FHWs**

Components	General	Maternal Health	Child Health	Adolescent Health	Grand Total
General	1.00				
Maternal Health	0.741**	1.00			
Child health	0.690**	0.852**	1.00		
Adolescent Health	0.686**	0.727**	0.805**	1.00	
Grand Total	0.884**	0.906**	0.908**	0.859**	1.00

*denotes significance at 0.05 level

**denotes significance at 0.01 level.

Thus all these correlations point to the fact that the tool is internally consistent, which implies that the tool is a valid instrument for assessing the performance level of the respondents.

Development of a Self rating Job Performance Scale for FHWs

On the basis of the total performance score (total performance score was obtained by summing up the self rating scores of each FHW in the job performance scale), the FHW were divided into three categories namely low performers, moderate performers and high performers. The classification was based on the distribution of samples under the Normal Probability Curve. For this purpose, the mean and standard deviation of the total performance scores of the FHWs were calculated and then the following categories were formed:

Low performers – Those getting a value less than mean – 1 standard deviation

Moderate Performers – Those getting values between mean – 1 standard deviation and mean + 1 standard deviation.

High Performers – Those getting a value greater than mean + 1 standard deviation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Socio economic Profile of FHWs

FHW is the most important functionary in the RCH Programme at the grass root level. An understanding of the socio economic profile of a sample is highly essential to get a general picture of the sample and also to find out how these characteristics influence their job performance. Variables like age, religion, marital status, place of residence, educational qualification, type of family and total family income (monthly) etc. have been made use of in drawing a socio economic profile of this grass root functionary

The data reveals that the majority of selected FHWs aged 31-40 years (44%), with 43% aged 41-50 years. A significant majority (88%) of them were married. In terms of education, 44% completed XIIth standard with a Diploma in Public Health Nursing, and 42% completed Xth standard with a Diploma in Public Health Nursing. Income-wise, the majority (45%) had a monthly family income of Rs. 25,000 and above.

Job Performance of FHWs

The distribution of FHWs based on low, moderate and high category in their job performance based on self rating performance scale is shown in Fig.1.

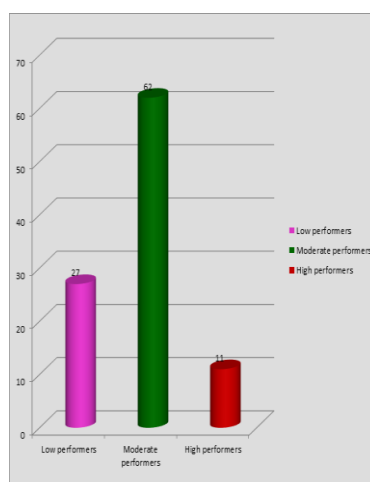


Fig. 1: Job performance levels of FHWs

It was observed that 62% of the FHWs are moderate performers, 27% are low performers, and 11% are high performers. A study by Kawakatsu et al. (2012) on factors influencing the performance of Community Health Workers (CHWs) in Kenya revealed that approximately 60% of CHWs were active (good performers). Buabeng et al. (2023) reported that providing an enabling environment and motivation could positively affect health workers' job performance.

Relationship Between Components of the RCH Programme and Self-Rated Job Performance of FHWs

Here an attempt has been made to find out whether the FHWs belonging to three performance levels namely low, moderate and high differed significantly among themselves with regard to their performance at the four components namely General, Maternal Health, Child Health and Adolescent Health of RCH Programme.

The One Way ANOVA has been performed using the performance scores of the FHWs at the three different levels. As each component contained a different number of statements, the average scores of these components were used for performing the analysis.

This study investigated whether FHWs at three performance levels (low, moderate, high) differ significantly in their performance across four components of the RCH Programme (General, Maternal Health, Child Health, and Adolescent Health). One-Way ANOVA was performed using the average performance scores of FHWs at the three job performance levels across the different programme components and the results are given in Table 2.

Table 2**Job Performance Levels (self rating) x components of RCH Programme**

Variables		Sum of squares	df	Mean Square	F Ratio	Significance
General	Between Groups	12.732	2	6.366	48.337**	0.000
	Within Groups	12.775	97	0.132		
	Total	25.507	99			
Maternal Health	Between Groups	17.747	2	8.873	204.660**	0.000
	Within Groups	4.206	97	0.043		
	Total	21.952	99			
Child Health	Between Groups	16.023	2	8.011	198.013**	0.000
	Within Groups	3.925	97	0.040		
	Total	9.947	99			
Adolescent Health	Between Groups	16.036	2	8.018	65.821**	0.000
	Within Groups	11.816	97	0.122		
	Total	27.852	99			

** Significance at 0.01 level

From the Table it may be noted that in the case of all the four components the F values turned out to be significant at 1% level thereby indicating that the groups at three different performance levels (low, moderate and high) significantly differed among themselves with regard to their performance in the four components of the RCH Programme.

Having noticed that there were significant differences, the next step was to find out the direction and significance of the difference among the means of the groups at the three levels of performance with respect to their scores relating to the components of the RCH Programme. The mean values were scrutinized to find out the direction of difference of the performance and Scheffe's test was carried out to find out the significance of the differences among the three different performance groups and it is shown in Table 3.

Table 3**Comparison groups (self rating) x components of RCH Programme**

Variables	Groups	Means	SD	Comparison Groups	Mean difference	Significance
General	Low	3.824	0.259	1&2	0.6261	0.000**
	Moderate	4.450	0.425	2&3	0.5497	0.000**
	High	5.000	0.000	1&3	1.1759	0.000**
Maternal Health	Low	3.917	0.169	1&2	0.9169	0.000**
	Moderate	4.834	0.237	2&3	0.1659	0.051*
	High	5.000	0.000	1&3	1.0828	0.000**
Child Health	Low	3.968	0.178	1&2	0.8704	0.000**
	Moderate	4.838	0.225	2&3	0.1612	0.050*
	High	5.000	0.000	1&3	1.0317	0.000**
Adolescent Health	Low	3.888	0.301	1&2	0.8422	0.000**
	Moderate	4.731	0.393	2&3	0.2688	0.060
	High	5.000	0.000	1&3	1.1111	0.000**

Group 1 – Low Performers, Group 2 – Moderate Performers, Group 3 – High Performers

* Significant at 0.05 level **Significant at 0.01 level.

An observation of the mean values shows that all the four components were in descending order in which the three groups appeared as high performers, moderate performers and low performers. When the mean values were tested for the significance of their differences using Scheffe's test, the results showed that except the comparison between the moderate performers and high performers with regard to the Adolescent Health component, all the other comparisons turned out to be significant. However, in this case also even though not significant, the trend noticed was the same with regard to the position of the three groups at the three different levels of performance in all other comparisons.

While observing the mean values, regarding the General component, the high performers held the highest position with a mean value 5.00 followed by moderate (4.45) and low performers (3.82). Regarding the Maternal Health component the same trend was noticed. High performers held the highest position with a mean value 5.00 followed by moderate (4.83) and low performers

(3.92). Regarding the mean values of the Child Health component, the high performers held the highest position with a mean value 5.00 followed by moderate (4.84) and low performers (3.97). The mean values showed the same trend in the Adolescent Health component also. The high performers held the highest position (5.00) followed by moderate (4.73) and low performers (3.89).

CONCLUSION

The study findings indicate that the majority of health workers demonstrated moderate performance levels. Statistically significant differences were observed in the performance levels of Female Health Workers across the four components of the Reproductive and Child Health Programme, namely General Health, Maternal Health, Child Health, and Adolescent Health. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected in favour of the alternative hypothesis. High performance in these components was found to be associated with superior knowledge, favourable attitudes, and enhanced communication and technical skills among frontline health workers. Notably, high-performing health workers executed their duties more effectively across all components of the Reproductive and Child Health Programme compared to their moderate and low-performing counterparts.

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ECHOES OF ORALITY: THE ROLE OF PROVERBS, FOLKTALES, AND STORYTELLING IN CHINUA ACHEBE'S *THINGS FALL APART* IN SHAPING CULTURAL IDENTITY AND COLONIAL IMPACT

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ABSTRACT

Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* stands as a seminal text that intricately weaves Igbo oral traditions—proverbs, folktales, and storytelling—into its narrative framework, thereby preserving indigenous epistemologies and contesting colonial historiography. Rooted in the structuralist paradigm, the novel's use of proverbs mirrors Claude Lévi-Strauss's assertion that myth and oral literature serve as fundamental cognitive structures, encoding societal norms and reinforcing communal identity. Proverbs in *Things Fall Apart* function not merely as linguistic embellishments but as repositories of Igbo wisdom, shaping social discourse and reinforcing traditional authority. Similarly, the novel's folktales, exemplified by the tortoise parable, transmit cultural ethics and reflect Vladimir Propp's morphological approach, wherein archetypal patterns underpin oral narratives.

Achebe's strategic deployment of oral storytelling structures also challenges Eurocentric literary hegemony, positioning orality as a sophisticated narrative form rather than an antiquated mode of communication. Walter J. Ong's orality-literacy theory is particularly pertinent in assessing how Achebe's narrative straddles the intersection of oral and written traditions, ensuring that the Igbo voice resonates within the Western literary canon. From a postcolonial perspective, Achebe's novel enacts a counter-discursive strategy against imperialist narratives, aligning with Edward Said's cultural resistance theory and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's decolonization of language. The text subverts colonial epistemologies by validating indigenous knowledge systems and reinstating African historiography.

This paper critically examines *Things Fall Apart* through the dual lenses of structuralism and postcolonial theory, arguing that Achebe's preservation of oral traditions within a written form

constitutes both an act of cultural recuperation and a resistance to epistemic erasure. By foregrounding the narrative's oral aesthetics, the study highlights how Achebe not only reconstructs a lost world but also ensures its endurance against the eroding forces of colonial modernity.

Key words: Orality and Literacy, Postcolonial Resistance, Igbo Cultural Identity, Structuralist Narratology, Decolonial Aesthetics

INTRODUCTION

Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* stands as a monumental work in African literature, seamlessly blending oral traditions with the written word to preserve and represent Igbo culture. Achebe, responding to colonial misrepresentations of Africa, employs proverbs, folktales, and storytelling to construct an authentic Igbo worldview. His integration of orality serves not only as a literary device but also as an act of cultural preservation, positioning his work within the broader discourse of postcolonial resistance and structuralist narrative theory. As Walter J. Ong asserts, "Orality is not merely a mode of communication but a worldview, shaping thought processes and cultural transmission" (Orality and Literacy 8). Achebe's novel captures this essence, embedding Igbo oral traditions into a Western literary framework, thereby challenging colonial narratives and asserting African agency.

Achebe's use of proverbs exemplifies the significance of oral tradition in Igbo society. As he famously states, "Proverbs are the palm oil with which words are eaten" (*Things Fall Apart* 7), signifying their role in lubricating conversation and imparting wisdom. These proverbs encapsulate communal values, reinforcing the Igbo worldview through rhythmic and symbolic expressions. Literary structuralists like Claude Lévi-Strauss argue that myth and oral narratives function as "the fundamental structures of human thought" (Structural Anthropology 210). Achebe's proverbs, therefore, act as cognitive tools, structuring the world of *Things Fall Apart* and shaping the moral landscape of its characters.

Similarly, Achebe's use of folktales serves as a conduit for transmitting cultural values across generations. The story of the tortoise and the birds, told by Ekwefi to Ezinma, is a striking example: "There is no story that is not true" (*Things Fall Apart* 99). This folktale, centred on greed and deception, echoes Igbo ethical principles and reinforces the communal ethos. As Ngũgĩ wa

Thiong'o argues in *Decolonising the Mind*, African storytelling is a means of resisting colonial erasure, preserving indigenous wisdom through collective memory. Achebe's folktales, therefore, function as acts of decolonization, resisting the written dominance of colonial literature.

Moreover, the oral storytelling structure of *Things Fall Apart* mirrors Igbo oral traditions, with its episodic narratives, direct speeches, and rhetorical devices. This aligns with Vladimir Propp's *Morphology of the Folktale*, which identifies recurring narrative patterns in oral traditions. Achebe's storytelling technique not only mimics Igbo oral traditions but also serves as a counter-narrative to colonial historiography, demonstrating that African societies possessed sophisticated narrative traditions long before European intervention.

From a postcolonial perspective, Achebe's novel disrupts colonial epistemologies, challenging the Eurocentric notion that written literature is superior to oral traditions. As Edward Said notes in *Culture and Imperialism*, "Every empire tells itself and the world that it is unlike all other empires, that its mission is not to plunder but to educate and liberate" (10). Achebe counters this imperial narrative by demonstrating that Igbo society had a rich intellectual and moral tradition prior to European incursion. His use of oral forms within a written text serves as an assertion of cultural identity and autonomy, reclaiming African history from the distortions of colonial discourse.

Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* is not merely a novel; it is an archive of Igbo oral culture, woven into a narrative that resists colonial erasure. By analysing Achebe's use of proverbs, folktales, and storytelling through the perspectives of structuralism and postcolonial theory, this paper explores how Achebe preserves, reconstructs, and reclaims Igbo identity within the written literary canon. His novel remains a powerful testament to the resilience of African oral traditions and their continued relevance in contemporary discourse.

PROVERBS AS CULTURAL MEMORY AND STRUCTURAL PATTERNS

Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* presents proverbs as more than linguistic embellishments; they are the essential framework of Igbo communication, encapsulating cultural values, ethics, and social structures. Through their use, Igbo society conveys wisdom, regulates behaviour, and preserves collective memory. Anthropological and structuralist perspectives offer

insights into the functions of proverbs in oral traditions. Claude Lévi-Strauss argues that myths and oral expressions serve as “structures of thought” that encode fundamental cultural truths (210). Proverbs, functioning within this paradigm, act as epistemological tools that reinforce binary oppositions, such as tradition versus change and individual versus community, shaping Igbo worldview and social order.

One prominent example is the proverb, “A child cannot pay for its mother’s milk” (67). This saying encapsulates the Igbo principle of communal indebtedness and the recognition of lineage as a foundational element of identity. It reflects the deep-seated belief that individuals exist within an interconnected social matrix, where obligations to family and ancestors transcend material repayment. This idea resonates with Marcel Mauss’s theory of the gift, which asserts that social exchanges are imbued with moral and spiritual significance, extending beyond mere reciprocity (Mauss 65).

Another significant proverb in the novel states, “If a child washes his hands, he can eat with kings” (8). This illustrates the Igbo emphasis on meritocracy and personal effort in achieving social mobility. Unlike rigidly stratified societies, Igbo culture permits upward movement based on individual achievements, aligning with Pierre Bourdieu’s notion of social capital, where cultural knowledge and adaptability determine one’s societal position (Bourdieu 18). The proverb reinforces the structuralist notion that language encodes cultural beliefs, reflecting an inherent tension between personal ambition and communal expectations.

These proverbs serve as cognitive and ethical markers, guiding Igbo individuals in their interactions and decisions. By embedding proverbs within the narrative, Achebe not only authenticates the Igbo oral tradition but also highlights the tension between traditional wisdom and the forces of colonial change. Proverbs in *Things Fall Apart* are thus both cultural artifacts and structural mechanisms, providing continuity in an era of disruption.

FOLKTALES AS ETHICAL AND STRUCTURAL BLUEPRINTS

Folktales in Chinua Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart* serve as ethical frameworks and structural blueprints that reinforce the Igbo worldview. Achebe employs oral traditions to preserve indigenous knowledge and demonstrate their integral role in shaping societal values. By embedding folktales within the novel’s narrative, he not only portrays the Igbo community’s moral

compass but also illustrates its unique narrative patterns, aligning with Vladimir Propp's structuralist approach to folktales.

Vladimir Propp, in *Morphology of the Folktale*, identifies recurring narrative structures in oral traditions, particularly the segmentation of stories into specific functions such as departure, deception, and consequence. Achebe replicates these structural elements, integrating them into the storytelling traditions of the Igbo people. By doing so, he aligns with Propp's observation that folktales follow a predictable sequence that serves both an entertainment and didactic function within a given culture.

A notable example is the tale of the tortoise and the birds (99-101), recounted by Ekwefi to her daughter, Ezinma. The tortoise, embodying cunning and deceit, tricks the birds into sharing their feathers with him, allowing him to attend a feast in the sky. However, his deception is eventually exposed, and the birds retaliate by stripping him of his borrowed feathers, leading to his fall and ultimate injury. The story embodies Igbo moral philosophy, emphasizing the virtues of wisdom and caution while condemning dishonesty and greed. Structurally, this aligns with Propp's "hero's journey," wherein the protagonist undergoes a departure, engages in deceptive behaviour, and suffers the inevitable consequences of his actions.

Achebe further underscores the fluidity and truth inherent in oral traditions through his characters' reflections on storytelling. As noted in the novel, "There is no story that is not true... The world has no end, and what is good among one people is an abomination with others" (99). This passage highlights the subjectivity of cultural truths and the role of folktales in transmitting generational wisdom. Such a perspective resonates with Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's argument in *Decolonising the Mind*, where he asserts that oral storytelling serves as a repository of indigenous knowledge and a form of resistance against the erasure imposed by colonial languages. By incorporating traditional Igbo stories into the novel's framework, Achebe actively engages in cultural preservation and counters the hegemonic narratives that have historically marginalized African oral traditions.

The folktales in *Things Fall Apart* are not mere interludes but essential elements that shape the novel's thematic and structural coherence. They reflect the moral fabric of Igbo society while aligning with broader theoretical frameworks in folklore studies. Achebe's use of these tales

validates the significance of oral traditions, reinforcing the cultural resilience of the Igbo people against colonial disruptions.

STORYTELLING AS A DECOLONIAL NARRATIVE STRATEGY

Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* employs oral storytelling techniques that reflect the Igbo oral tradition, serving as a decolonial narrative strategy that counters Western literary hegemony. Through direct speech, repetition, proverbs, and digressions, Achebe reclaims indigenous storytelling methods, reinforcing the community's historical and cultural identity. Walter J. Ong, in *Orality and Literacy*, states that: "Oral cultures produce highly organized narrative structures that facilitate memory and transmission." (37)

Achebe's narrative structure mirrors this characteristic, particularly in scenes where Igbo elders recount history, transmitting cultural knowledge across generations. This cyclical narrative style embodies the Igbo perception of time and history, ensuring that ancestral wisdom remains a vital force within the community. Achebe constructs Umuofia as a speaking community, where orality dictates law, custom, and identity. The proverb: "The clan was like a lizard; if it lost its tail, it soon grew another." (87) illustrates the resilience of the Igbo people despite external disruptions, such as colonialism. This communal voice aligns with Homi Bhabha's concept of the "third space" in *The Location of Culture*, wherein oral traditions carve out a liminal zone between colonizer and colonized. Bhabha asserts that: "The third space is a space of hybridity, where the meaning and symbols of culture are re-negotiated." (56)

Achebe's emphasis on Igbo oral traditions challenges Western epistemic authority by embedding indigenous epistemologies within the novel's form and content. By privileging oral storytelling, *Things Fall Apart* subverts Eurocentric literary norms, reaffirming the validity of non-Western modes of knowledge production.

Through oral storytelling, Achebe constructs a decolonial counter-narrative that resists Western literary domination. His strategic use of direct speech, repetition, and proverbs authenticates the Igbo oral tradition within a written framework. As Ong suggests, oral cultures sustain collective memory and identity through structured narrative techniques, which Achebe masterfully employs. Additionally, Bhabha's "third space" highlights the subversive potential of orality in reshaping colonial discourse. In this way, *Things Fall Apart* emerges as a literary act of

decolonization, asserting the endurance of Igbo culture against the homogenizing force of colonial modernity.

THE CLASH OF ORALITY AND LITERACY

Achebe's novel also highlights the imposition of colonial literacy as a tool of domination. The arrival of missionaries marks a rupture in Igbo orality, symbolized in the destruction of cultural institutions. Edward Said in *Culture and Imperialism* argues: "Colonial narratives function by erasing local histories and imposing a singular, dominant discourse." (10) This is evident in the silencing of oral tradition in Okonkwo's downfall, as his son Nwoye embraces literacy and Christianity: "Nwoye's mind had been poisoned, and he had joined the Christians." (152)

The shift from oral knowledge to written scripture signals the disintegration of Igbo cultural sovereignty, reinforcing Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's theory that language is central to cultural decolonization. In *Decolonising the Mind*, Ngũgĩ argues: "Language, any language, has a dual character: it is both a means of communication and a carrier of culture." (13)

By replacing Igbo oral traditions with colonial literacy, the missionaries effectively dismantle indigenous epistemologies, positioning Western modes of knowledge as superior. Achebe critiques this epistemic violence by demonstrating how the erasure of orality contributes to the broader colonial project of cultural subjugation.

Through oral storytelling, Achebe constructs a decolonial counter-narrative that resists Western literary domination. As Ong suggests, oral cultures sustain collective memory and identity through structured narrative techniques, which Achebe masterfully employs. Furthermore, the clash between orality and literacy in *Things Fall Apart* underscores the insidious role of colonial language in dismantling indigenous cultural sovereignty, aligning with Said's and Ngũgĩ's critiques of imperialism. In this way, *Things Fall Apart* emerges as a literary act of decolonization, asserting the endurance of Igbo culture against the homogenizing force of colonial modernity.

ACHEBE'S ORALITY AS CULTURAL RESISTANCE

Achebe's fusion of oral and written traditions ensures that Igbo heritage is not lost but re-inscribed within global literature. His use of proverbs, folktales, and storytelling reflects both structuralist principles of narrative organization and postcolonial resistance against epistemic

violence. Achebe does not merely write a novel; he reclaims the oral aesthetics of an endangered culture, ensuring its continuity in the face of colonial erasure. "Until the lions have their own historians, the history of the hunt will always glorify the hunter." (91)

By embedding orality within a written form, Achebe challenges literary hierarchies, asserting African storytelling as a legitimate historical and artistic medium. As Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o argues: "The choice of language and narrative form is central to the decolonization of culture and knowledge." (4) In this way, *Things Fall Apart* stands as a revolutionary work, reclaiming African epistemologies and reaffirming indigenous cultural sovereignty against the homogenizing forces of colonial modernity.

CONCLUSION

Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* serves as a critical intervention in postcolonial discourse, utilizing orality as a form of resistance against Western literary hegemony. By seamlessly integrating Igbo storytelling techniques within a written novel, Achebe ensures the survival of indigenous epistemologies, challenging the notion that Western literary forms are the sole bearers of historical and cultural legitimacy. His use of proverbs, folktales, and communal narratives reinforces the centrality of oral traditions in preserving cultural memory and resisting colonial erasure.

The novel also illustrates the epistemic violence inflicted by colonial literacy, as seen in the conversion of Nwoye and the disruption of Igbo traditions. Achebe's depiction of this clash highlights the consequences of Western-imposed narratives that undermine indigenous knowledge systems. As Edward Said posits, colonial discourse functions by silencing local histories and replacing them with a dominant Western narrative. Achebe resists this imposition by embedding Igbo oral traditions within his novel, subverting Eurocentric literary hierarchies and asserting African modes of storytelling as equally sophisticated and valid.

Furthermore, Achebe's narrative aligns with Homi Bhabha's concept of the "third space," where hybridized cultural expressions challenge colonial authority and create room for indigenous reinterpretations. By positioning orality as a means of cultural survival and resistance, *Things Fall Apart* exemplifies how literature can function as a site of decolonization. As Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o argues, language and narrative form play a crucial role in cultural liberation. Achebe's work

embodies this principle, ensuring that Igbo heritage is not lost but re-inscribed within the global literary canon.

Ultimately, *Things Fall Apart* stands as a powerful testament to the resilience of oral traditions in the face of colonial modernity. Achebe's innovative blending of orality and literacy not only preserves indigenous storytelling but also disrupts Western literary dominance, reinforcing the importance of diverse cultural narratives. In doing so, Achebe paves the way for future postcolonial writers to continue the fight against epistemic erasure, asserting the legitimacy and richness of non-Western literary traditions.

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THE FUSION OF ARABIC HERITAGE AND LOCAL INNOVATION: EXPLORING THE SOCIO-HISTORICAL JOURNEY OF KUZHI MANTHI IN KERALA

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ABSTRACT

Globalization today has brought the world's food menu to our tables. This shift has been particularly noticeable in the past decade as food preferences and habits have evolved, reflecting the broader trend of cultural exchange and globalization. This investigation delves into how Kuzhimanthi, an Arab dish has become a cherished food in Kerala, while also examining the socio-economic and historical factors behind its rise to prominence. The current status of the manthi business, prioritizing the economic aspects, along with the details regarding the factors that make the dish appealing to the general public were amassed. Considering the triumph of the dish across the eateries of the state for more than a decade, affordability, taste and related factors are investigated as the major factors that contribute to its success. In the midst of the various food poisonings and deaths in the state made the recipe a culprit, the study reveals the virtue of the non-hazardous, historical cooking technique, and at the same concedes the real villain of multiple tragic incidents.

Key words: Food history, Globalisation, Culinary tradition, Food economics, Kuzhi manthi

INTRODUCTION

The study of human dietary history requires a retrospective exploration extending back approximately 4 to 2.5 million years. During this era, early humans faced substantial challenges in securing sustenance, relying on hunting wild animals, foraging for resources, and competing with other species—such as birds and other predators—for survival. The daily pursuit of food was marked by struggle, where considerations of preference or choice were virtually nonexistent.

Parallel to human evolution, the concept of food has undergone significant transformations. Changes in human physiology, culture, and societal structures are reflected in the preparation, presentation, and consumption of food. An analysis of these transformations underscores the profound influence of geographical and environmental factors on shaping dietary practices throughout human history. Since the beginning of human existence, food has always been a part of life. However, when we explore the evolution of food, we can observe the significant influence of geography, environment, and climate on its development. For instance, dishes such as Gravlax, Surströmming, Fondue, and Bigos, crafted in response to the cold climates of Europe, were designed to withstand harsh winter conditions and to provide the necessary nourishment for the human body in extreme cold. These foods are not just sustenance but a way to adapt to the environment. On the other hand, in tropical regions like Asia and Africa, food traditions are closely aligned with the warmer climates, leading to culinary practices that are suited to such environments.

Centuries old literature of India, viz., Bhagavadgita, Ramayana, Manusmriti, etc., had mentioned the various food belief systems in India. Most of these, however, have been influenced by Aryan beliefs and practices. Aryans believed food as a source of strength as well as a gift from God (Achaya, 1994). Bert Fragner (1994) observes that the writing of cookbooks was, to a certain extent, structurally related to the well-known and highly respected science recognised in Islamic culture as *'ilm al-hadīth*. According to Achaya (2003), the sociocultural reasons behind culinary choices can be easily traced historically. The advent of the present flavourful cuisine of the country can be socio-historically traced to the interaction between personal and social choices, the divine and the mundane obligations (Brown, 1998). Also, Mughal invasion threw in a long list of culinary inspirations and innovations which highly influenced the cookbook of India (Narayanan, 2016).

Globalization today has brought the world's food menu to our tables. Beyond traditional Kerala dishes like *thairu* (yoghurt), coconut-based fish curry, and ney dosa, Malayalis have started thinking beyond their customary cuisine. In modern restaurants, one can now find not only ney dosa, Malabar biryani, cutlets, chai, and coffee, but also an expansive range of international dishes other than a Pan-Indian menu. This shift has been particularly noticeable in the past decade as food preferences and habits have evolved, reflecting the broader trend of cultural exchange and globalization.

KERALA AND ARAB CUISINE

Over the past one and a half decades, compared to other global cuisines, Kerala cuisine has developed a marked preference for Arabic dishes. While the distinct culinary characteristics of these dishes are noteworthy, it is possible to discern certain socio-economic factors that underpin this shift. The affinity for Central Asian countries, the migration of Malayalis in search of better employment opportunities, and the lifestyle changes that accompanied the massive Gulf migration since the 1970s have all played a significant role in this transformation. Prior to this, influences from the Gulf or the broader Middle Eastern region had not permeated Malayalam food culture to the same extent. However, today, dishes such as Kubbos, Shawarma, Madhgout, Manthi, Shawaya, Hummos, etc have become popular favorites among Malayalis.

This article explores how *Kuzhimanthi*, an Arab dish, has become one of the most favored foods among Malayalis. It did not take long for *Kuzhimanthi* to gain popularity and establish itself as a beloved dish in Kerala. Compared to other Arab dishes, it is the unique characteristics of *Kuzhimanthi* that have contributed to its widespread appeal. This investigation delves into how this Arab dish has become a cherished food in Kerala, while also examining the socio-economic and historical factors behind its rise to prominence.

MANTHI : HISTORICAL TRAJECTORIES

Manthi is a celebrated Yemeni dish known for its delicious blend of basmati or Indian rice, tender slow-cooked meat, and a fragrant mix of spices. The name "manthi" comes from the "dewy" quality of the meat, achieved through its unique cooking method. Traditionally, manthi is made using a specialized underground oven called a tandoor, which acts like a natural pressure cooker, helping the flavors to meld beautifully into both the rice and the meat. While many modern restaurants may prepare manthi using contemporary methods, they strive to maintain the essential flavors and techniques that define this traditional dish. Manthi is typically served communally, promoting a sense of togetherness and allowing diners to appreciate the rich culinary heritage of Yemen.

KUZHIMANTHI : THE KERALA STORY

From the second half of the eighteenth century, there was a consistent migration of Arabs from the Hadhramaut region in Yemen, the birthplace of manthi, to Malabar. Despite this early

connection, it was not until the twenty-first century that the dish manthi became familiar to Malayalis. In 2006, Pulissery Muhammadali, a native of Alinchuvadu in Malappuram, introduced the dish "Kuzhi manthi" to Kerala, marking a significant moment in the region's culinary history. Today, Muhammadali is widely known by the moniker "Manthi Kakka". It was only after 2020 that kuzhi manthi began to firmly establish its presence in Kerala's dining establishments, gaining both popularity and recognition.

THE KUZHI MANTHI DEBATE

While the introduction of manthi to Kerala did not radically alter the dish's basic composition, it did result in a shift in nomenclature. The word "Kuzhi" was appended to manthi, and today, "Kuzhi manthi" has become synonymous with the dish among Malayalis. This shift in naming raises the question, as Shakespeare famously asked in *Romeo and Juliet*, "What's in a name?" However, in the context of food, the significance of a name cannot be so easily dismissed. When compared to other Arabic-influenced dishes, the term "Kuzhi manthi" initially faced resistance from certain segments of the Malayali population, sparking a significant debate regarding its cultural and linguistic implications. This discourse reached a peak in 2022, as the name's legitimacy was questioned. In his article "Kuzhimanthi and Impurity: Taste of a Food and a Word in Social Media," Muhammad Anees provides a thorough exploration of the complex socio-cultural dynamics surrounding the dish and its name, offering valuable insight into the evolving culinary landscape of Kerala. When prominent writers and cultural figures such as V.K. Sreeraman, Saradakutti Bharathikutty, and Sunil P. Ilayidam publicly expressed their discontent with the name "Kuzhi manthi" through social media platforms, igniting a substantial debate within the cyber world. This controversy, particularly among young people with a strong affinity for the dish, was met with significant opposition. Moreover, the academic sphere also engaged in extensive discussions surrounding the naming of the dish. Despite the varied perspectives, it is noteworthy that no other Arabic dish has provoked as much debate within the cultural milieu of Malayalis as Kuzhi manthi. The dish has become deeply embedded in the cultural consciousness of the Malayali community, leading to the establishment of a food economy centered around it.

METHODOLOGY

The study mainly focuses on the primary data collected through a well-structured questionnaire, whereas secondary data from various literature, journals, etc were also used.

Primary data regarding the consumer as well as producer perspective of manthi was collected from the sample selected. The current status of the manthi business, prioritizing the economic aspects, was amassed from the producers. The study has shortlisted the top five manthi brands/restaurants in Ernakulam town based on Google review. These restaurants have three to ten outlets within the district and are considered as the pioneers in manthi making. Restaurants were selected on the basis of the star rating in google. They are;

- The Salt Restaurant, Panampilly Nagar
- Charcoal Shack Restaurant, Angamaly
- Hotel Al Reem, Edappally
- Soofi Mandi, Edappally
- Arabian Palace, Edappally

In order to procure the details regarding the factors that makes the dish appealing to the general public, a google form was circulated among youngsters (between age group 18-28), as it was easier to collect data from them through online mode. A total of 100 respondents were selected randomly from various educational institutions, for the same. The students belong to three major educational institutes in Ernakulam district, viz;

- Morning Star Home Science College, Angamaly
- Central Institute of Fisheries Nautical & Engineering Training (CIFNET), Kochi
- Sacred Heart College, Thevara

A Garrett ranking analysis was done to point out the factors, according to both the sellers and consumers, that make the dish appealing to the general public. The technique ranks the factors according to the opinion provided by the respondents. The respondents were asked to rank the factors provided and each rank was given a percent position by using the formula;

$$\text{Percent Position} = (100 (R_{ij} - 0.5)) / N_j$$

Where, R_{ij} is the rank given for the i th factor by the j th respondent, N_j is the number of factors ranked by the j th respondent.

With the help of Garrett's Table, the percent position estimated is converted into scores by referring to the table given by Garret and Woodworth (1969). Then for each factor, the scores of everyone are added and then total value of scores and mean values of score is calculated. The factors having the highest mean value is the most important factor.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Sellers' Perspective

In order to point out the current economic aspects of Kuzhimanthi, it is relevant to analyse the producer perspective of the dish. Apart from google review, the relevance of the selected retail shops is corroborated with some basic queries. The selected outlets are dealing ample business through manthi on a daily basis itself. As already detailed, these brands are having an average of 6 outlets in the district ranging from 3 to 10 numbers. A quick review of their daily business can be grasped from table 1. The average sales of a full portion of kuzhi manthis in a single outlet of each brand are as detailed in the table. Altogether, it is approximated to an average daily business worth 1,35,650 INR, ranging from 20K to 4L INR, in just five outlets, of the selected brands.

Table 1
Daily Business Details

Brand Name	Number of Outlets	Sales of Kuzhimanthi per day per outlet (Average)	Value in INR (Average)
The Salt Restaurant	3	130	91000
Arabian Palace	10	600	420000
Hotel Al Reem	6	125	75000
Charcoal Shack Restaurant	3	25	20750
Soofi Mandi	3	100	71500

According to the top five retailers selected for the study, the major parameters supporting the fame and sustainment of the dish are analysed through Garret ranking technique. The result is as represented in table 2. The producers affirm the health aspects of kuzhi manthi. According to them, the least or no usage of oil and the unique cooking technique makes the dish healthier than most of the contemporary competitors. According to the study, the affordable price for the considerable

quantity made the dish a triumph in the eateries. The absence of toxins or health hazards were also acclaimed as an important factor by the producers.

Table 2
Sellers' Perspective

Factors	Garret Score	Rank
Taste	27	4
Price	72	1
Quantity	56	2
Health	43	3

Innocent Kuzhimanthi and Food Poisoning

While every brand selected for the survey was lauding much about the hygienic and healthy cooking of kuzhimanthi, various food poisoning cases that plagued Kerala and incriminated kuzhimanthi along with some other arabic foods should also be addressed. Multiple food poisoning cases reported in the state during the last many years, in which even fatality had happened. According to the producers, it is not manthi that caused the menace, but the accompaniments such as the mayonnaise and vegetable salad. Mainly these two side complements had defamed the entire cuisine in Kerala. Unhygienic preparation of mayonnaise without proper pasteurisation of egg can be a toxin. Also, the vegetable salad prepared in contaminated situations can also elevate the risk.

Infact, mayonnaise is not at all an original accompaniment of kuzhi manthi. Tomato salsa, vegetable salad, or yoghurt raita are the traditional accompaniments served with kuzhi manthi. It is the obsession of keralites towards egg mayonnaise, that made it a main accompaniment of kuzhi manthi in Kerala. The unhygienic preparation of this 'adopted' accompaniment was the troublemaker.

Consumer Perspective

According to the opinion of the selected sellers, youngsters are their major customers. Hence, to reach out a fair conclusion, an online survey was conducted among 100 students from three major institutes of the district, selected randomly. Basic details of the respondents are furnished in table 3 Majority of the respondents (66%) are from the age group 18 to 22, as the study was confined to youngsters only. The survey came out without any gender bias, as almost half of the respondents are

male (52%) and the remaining are female (48%). Both PG (35%) and UG (65%) students participated in the survey. An infinitesimally small percent (4%) of the respondents were found who hadn't eaten the dish yet.

Table 3
Details of Consumers

Parameters		Details*
Gender	Male	52 (52)
	Female	48 (48)
Age	18 – 22	66 (66)
	22 – 26	29 (29)
	26 – 30	5 (5)
Qualification	PG	35 (35)
	UG	65 (65)

**Figures in parentheses indicate percentage to total*

The study came across people who dine on kuzhi manthi multiple times a week, who constitute three per cent of the respondents. Seven percent of the respondents consume the dish once a week. The major portion of the respondents (62%) are found enjoying the dish once in a month at least, whereas a considerable amount of people (27%) consumes it two to three times a month.

Consumer Choice Analysis

On the basis of an initial group discussion done with the youngsters, as they were pointed out as the main patrons by the restaurants, major factors drawing attention towards kuzhi manthi were listed. According to a choice analysis conducted using the Garret ranking technique, the luscious taste of the dish is evaluated as the primary factor that makes it popular. The ranking of the factors according to the Garret score are furnished in table 3.4. Following taste, the quantity of the dish is adding on to allurements, ranking second in the analysis. This is in tune with the opinion of the producers, the restaurant owners, who implied the quantity and affordability of the dish as relevant factors. Here price is evaluated as the third parameter, followed by health benefits.

Table 4
Consumer Choice Analysis

Factors	Garret Score	Rank
Taste	72	1
Price	43	3
Quantity	56	2
Healthy	27	4

It is a matter of concern that the health outlook of the dish is least thought-out by the consumers, pushing it down to the last rank. Moreover, many of the respondents were of the opinion that the dish is unhealthy, opinionated in the backdrop of the recent food poisonings in Kerala, which turned manthi deadly in the state.

CONCLUSION

The study throws light on the history and economics of one of the most popular exotic cuisines in Kerala, the Kuzhi Manthi. Considering the triumph of the dish across the eateries of the state for more than a decade, the major factors that contribute to its success are well evaluated in the study. In the midst of the various food poisonings and deaths in the state made the recipe a culprit, the study reveals the virtue of the non-hazardous cooking technique, and at the same concedes the real villain of the multiple tragic incidents. Nevertheless, the study acknowledges the affordability and aroma, according to both producers and consumers, as the main ingredient which made it a success.

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UNDERSTANDING SANKETAM THROUGH GRANDHAVARIS

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ABSTRACT

Sanketam historically coined as the jurisdiction of the temples. The temple corporation called sanketam through which the Nambudiri Brahmins had executed their influence on contemporary politics of medieval Kerala. Thus all the landed groups had functioned as localized structure of power and this enable them to extract more and more landed properties. In course of time, these endowments were infringed upon and these privileges curtailed as the secular influence prevailed and the religious influence diminished.

Key Words – Sanketam, yogam, samudayam, Janam, Sanketa Maryada, Kaval palam, desom, Kaccam, Koyma, Kadiyakovil, Rakshabhogam, Padamulam, Manushyam, Uttaram Collal, Cangatam, Parishad, Cherikkal

INRODUCTION

The temple sanketam of medieval Kerala was at once strong, efficient and benevolent. *Sanketam* an asylum, a holy refuge exempt from war and profanation, the assembly of parish vym¹. *Sam- keta* means to make an agreement or appointment or appoint a place of meeting with any person². *Sanketam* historically meant the ‘jurisdiction’ of the temples³. Brahmin *Kshetra* became *sanketam* during the end of the Perumal period⁴. Two types of *sanketams*; one was controlled by Brahmin landlords and the other by kings. *Sanketams* were independent corporations which exercised spiritual authority through their ecclesiastical heads temporal in their respective *sanketams* or domains⁵.

The *raksha* of the *sanketam* wealth was in the hands of the *Kaval cangatam* of each *desom*. In Perumal period this was done by certain *nuttu koottangal* like *Arunuttuvar* in Venad, *Munnuttuvar* in Nantuzhainadu. Later this paved way for the rise of *Cangatam*. The *sanketams* existed in many parts of Kerala in medieval times. K.P.Padmanabha Menon pointed out that they were independent republics free from the control of kings from outside⁶. Prof.P.K.S.Raja has described *sanketams* as “independent jurisdictions, possession beyond the control of the

sovereign or local chieftains who were simply protectors of these jurisdictions”⁷. The *sanketams*⁸ existed in many parts of Kerala in medieval times.

SANKETAM IN TRAVANCORE

In Travancore there were existed *grama sanketam* and *kshetra sanketam*. Sree Padmanabha Swami temple and Thiruvalla temple had its own *sanketam*. The accounts preserved in the Archives of Trivandrum temple show several entries of heavy payments exacted from the Rajas of Travancore, for acts of aggression committed by them in the *devaswom sanketam*. The entries range from 500 M.E (1325 A.D) to 903 M.E (1728 A.D). The earliest entry says that a sum of 30,000 *fanams* had to be paid as fine, together with the surrender of valuable lands sowing 150 *paras* of paddy seed, to the temple by Kunninmel Sree Veera Keralavarmman Thiruvadi (of Travancore) for killing the officers of the temple⁹.

SANKETAM IN COCHIN

There were about five *sanketams* in Cochin. They are Perumanam, Koodalmanikkam, Vadakkumnathan, Annamanada and Elamkunnappuzha. Perumanam *sanketam* gets its details from *Perumanam Grandhavari*¹⁰ dated 898 M.E (1723 A.D)¹¹. Its geographical boundaries are located from North *Akamala* to South Kodassery hills, East Kuthiran to West Edathuruthi. *Cherikkalams*¹² which are prominent to the temple are Pallipuram, Purathur and Perinjeri. The *koima*¹³ or chief ship are *aka koima*, *melkoima* and *samudaya stanom* appertain to the Raja of Cochin. Among these *samudaya stanom* performed by *Vengattiri Namboothiri* and later by Paravoor Raja. *Oorayma stanom* by Chittoor, Avenavu and Cooruvetah Avenavu. Zamorin repaired the temple in 933 M.E (1758 A.D) from *devaswom* funds and Raja of Cochin repaired it in 983 M.E (1808 A.D)¹⁴.

Since Paroor fell to Travancore in 938 M. E they appointed Thuravurambalapat to superintendent the *samudaya stanom* in three *cherikkalams* and he placed two other persons under him for the above purpose and managed the affairs of the said *desom* up to 986 M.E (1811 A.D) agreeably to *Mamool* or former customs. Koodalmanikkam *sanketam* had its boundaries from North of Vellangalloor, West to Chalakkudi river, South of Kurumali river and East of Kakkathuruthi¹⁵. *Uralars* were 9 or 10 in number, they have proprietary rights. The Council of Fifteen included *Uttamattil Karaymakkars* they are the *Thanthris* and *Vaidiks*, responsible for the

management of the temple and also the function assigned by *Sabhayogam* and the Raja of Cochin. *Karaymakkars* are 26 members, among these two *Madhyamattil karaymakkars* and 9 *Adhamattil karaymakkars*.

Arunattil Prabhukkanmar, they are the feudal chieftains in and about the temple *sanketam*. *Sabhayogam* has 41 members and the Raja of Cochin constitute the *sabhayogam* which composed of 42, in whom was vested the ultimate authority. *Koima stanoms* are of four types *Aka koima*, *Pora koima*, *Mel koima* and *Raja koima*. The families associated with these *stanoms* were *aka koima*; Chief of Vellattukara, *Pora koima*; Perumpatappu Muppil, *Mel koima*; Chief of Ayrur, his duty is to accord permission for *Avarodha – Virodha* and protect the temple zone and *sanketam*. *Raja koima* was the Perumpatappu Muppil, superior to every other right in the temple.

SANKETAM IN MALABAR

The *Grandhavari* or palm leaf records gave detailed information about the nature and vast and varied powers over the ruling sovereign itself. The *Vanjeri grandhavari* help to trace the land relations of the period¹⁶. These records cover a period of three and a half centuries, from 1541 AD to 1886 AD. These palm leaf manuscripts relate to an aristocratic landlord family called *Vanjeri Illom* in Trikkandiyur village in Tirur Taluk.

This aristocratic house possessed the status of the leader of the *Yogam*¹⁷ (council) in the *sanketam* of Trikkandiyur a quasi – autonomous territory with feudal tenure built around Trikkandiyur temple¹⁸. The family elders had to deal with the properties and functions of all the members of the *sanketam* council known as *janam*¹⁹, and *sanketam* officials too. They managed the temple properties and administered law and order in the *sanketam* territory subject to the over lordship of the Vettam Raja and his political superiors. In the course of discharging their duties as *samudayam*²⁰ they occasionally came into contact with some of these powers. Their implications for the character and functioning of institutions like *yogam*, *pattini*, *uttaram collal*²¹ and *kaval changatam*²². The *kavalkkar* were Panikkars and Nairs called *Cangatam*, and were nominated by the Rajas to maintain law and order, like a police force.

Sometimes these different elements work in harmony but sometimes they come into conflict with each other, either resorting to violence or adopting the desperate vow of *pattini*. Property in the form of land, cash and gold are involved in most of the transactions in which

customary conduct of the *sanketam* or *desom* known as *sanketa maryada*²³ or *desa maryada* (*desa karam*)

YOGAM (COUNCIL)

Yogam is an administrative body of the *sanketam*. The *raksha* of the *sanketam* wealth was in the hands of the *kaval cangatam* of each *desom*. In the Perumal period this was done by certain *nuttukoottangal* like *Arunuttuvar* in Venad and *Munnuttuvar* in Nantuzhainadu. Later this paved way for the rise of *cangatam*²⁴. The Zamorin of Calicut is found to be directing the members of the *Yogam* which administered the *sanketam* to adopt certain rules of procedure. It had the power of an unwritten constitution. The records were putting down the details of every transaction. The Zamorin, the Raja of Valluvanad and a few other chiefs are seen to be sending Nairs for police duty within the *sanketam* and receiving a part of the revenue set apart for this purpose²⁵.

KAVAL SYSTEM

The system of *kaval* or *kaval cangatam* or *cangatam* is known to been prevalent in Medieval Kerala. References to *cangatam* can be seen in foreign accounts from the Portuguese period onwards²⁶. The Sanskrit term *raksha* was also used for *kaval* and *rakshabhogam*²⁷ was used in the place of *kaval palam* in certain documents²⁸. There are several other documents which mention *kaval palam*²⁹, *kaval ola*³⁰, *kaval virutti*³¹, *kaval padu*³², *kaval panayam* and *kaval kandam*. From those which refer to *kaval palam* was paid by each land owner for *kaval* with a fixed share per piece of land and this is known as *talaviri kaval palam* or as *kaval palam* from a certain field. From this inferred that the *kaval* or *raksha* (protection) was the joint responsibility of the house lords and the authorities of the *sanketam* to which belonged. *Sanketam* which directly concerned with the maintenance of law and order.

PATTINI (FASTING)

The ritual act of fasting intended to bring about the obstruction of enemies or the removal of injustice. The weakening of the *Yogam* and the decline of the power of the overlord, the Raja of Vettam, his *uttaram chollal* (atonement) found in 1602 A.D³³. Again these incidents happened 2 1/2 months earlier than the date of *uttaram chollal* of Mangalacheri, one of the *yogam*, in 1635 A.D. Basically the *pattini* was a kind of pressure tactics depending for its success on the

material and spiritual authority of the Brahmins in a given context. Thus the failure of Brahmins to move the powers that be, through this form of struggle, was an index of the rise of new forces to the traditional norms of culture.

The power and prestige of the *sanketam* and its *yogam* were quite real and effective among the feudal agricultural groups of orthodox high caste Hindus. The *patinjare chira* (Western tank) of Trikkandiyur was polluted by an *arayar* (fishermen), the *janam* and *samudayam* met and discussed and sent a message to *cerayan* not to touch the tank but he replied that he will touch it. The *padamulam*³⁴ people sent to the palace and to report this and conveyed the message to *yogam*, then the *punyaham* (ritual purification) was conducted once more and the *cerayan* repeated the same. Then the *samudayam* put *kattayum kallum* (a symbolic act of obstruction), informed the palace and afterwards the *janam* and the *samudayam* together started *pattini*, the ritual act of fasting intended to bring about the obstruction of enemies or the removal of injustice.

CONCLUSION

The *sanketam* jurisdictions have ceased to exist with the rise of the secular power and the diminution of religious influences just as the Raja of Cochin has stopped the *Avarodham* or installation of the *yogathiripad* in the Thrissur temple, he as well as the other Rajas of Malabar have infringed upon the rights of *devaswoms* within their limit and annexed them to their respective States. Within the advent of British supremacy which was, not long after, followed by the administration of the Governments of native states of Cochin and Travancore by the British Resident, Colonel Munro, most of the rich and important temples were annexed to the States, and it necessarily followed that their *sanketams* also ceased to exist as independent jurisdictions. About 1549 temples were taken over under state management by Col.Munro.

From these records it can be clear that the system of power relations which exercised by this institution was not exactly which depicted in the records. The practice of *pattini* against the fishermen folk showed the weakness of the institution which tried to exert its power over the society. Sanketam started to lost its power about 938 M.E onwards the period of Sakthan Thampuran in Cochin, in Travancore this was started by Veluthambi and later it was completed by Col.Munro the Resident of Travancore and Cochin.

END NOTES

¹Gundert, Dictionary

²Monier Williams, Sanskrit English Dictionary, p.1126

³T.K Velu Pillai, Travancore State Manual, Vol.III, P.303

⁴ Ragahava Varier & Rajan Gurukkal, *Kerala Charitram*, Vol.I, 1991, p.227

⁵ M.T.Naryanan, Agrarian Relations in Late Medieval Malabar, Delhi, 2003, p.49

⁶ K. P. P. Menon, *Kochi Rajya Charitram*, Vol.I, 1911, P. 109

⁷ P.K.S. Raja, Medieval Kerala, 1953, p.241

⁸ *Sanketam* – Temple Sanctuary

⁹ K.P.Padmanabha Menon, History of Kerala, Vol.IV, 1995, p. 101

¹⁰ *Grandhavari* _ Chronicle

¹¹ Perumanam Grandhavari, Regional Archives, Ernakulam, p.1

¹² *Cherikkalam* _ Crown lands; royal property

¹³ *Koyma* - Overlordship

¹⁴ Perumanam Record, Document B, Regional Archives, Ernakulam

¹⁵ Memorandum on the Irinjalakkuda Temple, Part I, P-24, Regional archives, Ernakulam

¹⁶ M. G. S. Narayanan, *Vanjeri Grandhavari*, Calicut, 1987, p.13

¹⁷ *Yogam* – Council of the temple

¹⁸ M.G.S. Narayanan, *Vanjeri Grandhavari*, 1987, p.17

¹⁹ *Janam* – Members of the governing council

²⁰ *Samudayam* – Secretary of the governing Council

²¹ *Uttaram Collal* - Atonement

²² *Kaval Cangatam* – Nair Militia

²³ *Sanketa Maryada* – Law of *Sanketam*

²⁴ Ragahava Varier & Rajan Gurukkal, *Kerala Charitram*, Vol.I, p.227

²⁵ Document Nos. 1A, 2A, 3A and notes under section 5.

²⁶ Fawcett, Nairs of Malabar, Madras, 1915, p.p 6 - 16; C.J.Fuller, The Nayars Today, Cambridge, 1976, p.p.151-2

²⁷ *Rakshabhogam* – Protection fee or money

²⁸ M.G.S.Narayanan, *Vanjeri Grandhavari*, p.23

²⁹ *Kaval Palam* – Remuneration for *Kaval*

³⁰ *Kaval Ola* – Register of *Kaval*

³¹ *Kaval Virutti* – Service tenure land for *Kaval*

³² *Kaval Padu* – Land set apart for *Kaval* Personnel

³³ *Vanjeri Grandhavari*, Document No. 41 A

³⁴ *Padamulam* – Offices and titles

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IMAGING SIVA: FEROCIOUS SCULPTURES IN THE TEMPLE AT IRANIKKULAM, THRISSUR DISTRICT, KERALA

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ABSTRACT

The proposed paper aims to situate the two ferocious sculptures, located on the balustrades of the circular shrine of the Siva temple at Iranikkulam in central Kerala within the sacred geography of the temple in the context of the changing socio-political conditions. The study is an attempt to establish how significant the ferocious and terrific sculptural forms of Siva were in imagining and imaging Siva in the religious milieu of pre-modern Kerala.

Key words: Gajasurasamhari, Kalasamhari, Perumal, Iranikkulam granthavari,, Nampoothiri brahmins

INTRODUCTION

The paper will focus on the two stone relief sculptures depicting terrific forms of Siva that came into notice within the political and sacred geography of the temple at Iranikkulam. In the iconographic traditions the manifestations of Siva are discussed with the formless linga¹ and later imageries in sculptures and paintings. The paper tried to trace the various contexts in imaging the themes within the temple architecture.

In the religious history of pre-modern Kerala, temples were a major part of the political power and economic center under rulers and Brahmins. Scholars on medieval Kerala history argued the power management of temples especially Siva on the basis of inscriptional, literary and manuscript records of medieval and late-medieval period. The paper will focus first on the two stone relief sculptures depicting terrific forms of Siva that became notable within the political and sacred geography of the temple at Iranikkulam. The two sculptures which are located on the balustrades of the main shrine are significant among the sculptural distributions of Siva in different parts of Kerala. The problem lies in the fact that under which situations such imageries made the part of the temple, though there are a number of other ferocious forms of Siva in different parts of Kerala. Similar sculptures in different parts of region other than Kerala

are described many times as demons, and there are stories about the depiction of Siva as the destroyer of demons like Gajasura, Andhakasura, Yama, Jalandhara etc.

Several various manifestations of Siva ferocious are Gajasurasamhari, Adhkasuravadhamurti as well as Kalasamhari, Tripurantakan are the imageries of Siva in different parts of India. Religious scholars have traced the patronage of such manifestations on the rulers and elite groups of society specifically in the Tamil region. But there are critical approaches on the development of religion and the making of sectarian gods including Siva in different parts of India with his various manifestations.² Among the destructive characters of Siva, there are Kalahari, Tripuranthaka Gajasurasamhari seen during the early-medieval centuries in the temples of Chalukya – Cola period. Siva as the slayer of the elephant demon and as the destroyer of three cities of demons significantly seen in the temples of Tamil region, were the imageries to endows as a heroic energy of Siva with warrior power.³ The largest composition of Tripurantaka found in the northern sub-shrine of the western *vimana* of Rajasimhesvara temple at Kanchipuram shows Siva seated on his chariot drawn by two prancing horses., carved with numerous attending figures including Brahma and Visnu.⁴

THE TEMPLE AT IRANIKKULAM IN THE HISTORY OF KERALA

The temple at Iranikkulam was one among the brahmin council of the Perumal period, among the thirty-two brahmin settlements as per the Parasurama legend. The administrative power of the *tali* temples in different parts of Kerala is seen in the inscriptional evidence of the medieval period. They have the power to manage political and economic affairs without the permission of the Perumal rulers of the period. The *tali* authorities in Kerala had discussed that the Brahmin council acted as the advisory group of the Perumal rulers. According to Keralolpathi⁵ stories, there were four *talis*⁶ during the Perumal period Paraur, Mulikkulam, Iranikkulam⁷ and Iraingalakkuda. These places are locating in the surroundings of Mahodayapuram, the capital of Perumal rulers. The significance of the region begins with the Perumal period as the brahmanic centre.

Two families were selected from each *grama* who held hereditary right to send taliyatiris into the capital. From Iranikkulam, Karingampilli and Cheruvalli represented as significant⁸. The history of the region begins with the Perumal period as the Brahmanic center. The role of

Brahmnis remained large and eventually became crucial in the expansion of temple lands and the dominance of temple land-holding networks in the local economy during the feudal period.⁹

There are epigraphical records on the power and hold of the temple in the social milieu discussed through the 9th-century inscription from the temple on the punishments given to those who violated the daily temple affairs are considered as guilty as one who killed his father or teacher. We can see the quarrels between various groups on the power management related to the temple. Similar inscriptional records in the temples of nearby regions, Urakam and Avittathur are in the same period.¹⁰

Another inscription from the temple, from the 12th or 13th century AD, discusses the merging of Tiruvalla and Cerakesvaram with Iranikkulam *gramma* and speaks on the fines against uralar, who were against new arrangements as per *Mulikkalam kaccam*.¹¹ The record signified the transition of management by various groups and the fragmentation of temple land and administration after that time. Though the temple at Tiruvalla is politically and economically dominant among the temples of southern region and discussed the power of the temple at Thiruvalla on its political and economic dominance over different regions as recorded in the 44 copper plate records of 10th and 11th century AD. It also speaks on the punishments for the uralars if they violated any of the daily temple affairs as per the *Mulikkalam kaccam*. The discussion on this temple was less significant when Iringalakkuda, Peruvanam, Vadakkunathan become centres of political powers during the late-medieval period.

In the general history, the rulers and position of the temple during the Perumal period legitimized with the brahmin hold in the ritualization of power through the concept of *bhakti*. The inscriptional and literary records from different parts of India and South-east Asia points on the rulers patronage on construction of Siva temples and consecration of linga and various images of Siva. In Kerala, king Rajasekhara identified as saiva patron from the copper plate record from Valappally, which begins with *Namassivaya* as invocatory word.¹² King Rajasekhara then identified as Ceraman Perumal, one among the sixty-three saiva saints of Tamil region, they sung in praise of Siva.¹³ Modern historians are but questioned on the making of political history within the frame of *Keralolpathi* and the inscriptions, they only give partial evidences on pre-

modern period.¹⁴ Other than this we have no direct reference on the rulers patronage over Siva in Kerala temples.

The discovery of a palm-leaf record from the Vadakke pushpakam¹⁵ was a turning point in the history of the temple in the subsequent centuries. The period of the record starts from 15th century. The *uralars* in the temple are three families such as Akavur¹⁶ nampoothiri, Cheruvalli bhattathiri and Patinjattedathu bhattathiri and also there are 42 brahmin families to look after the temple affairs mentioned in the record called *ampalappadi yogakkar*. The administration was under the control of uralars from Akavur mana near the temple. The house of the *uralars* called 'Pushpakam'. As per the discussions, Pushpaka brahmins are reluctant to cling to their traditional professions like priesthood, teaching (in *pathasalas*), *malakettu* (garland making) and *vilakkeduppu* (lamp bearing), are grouped under *ambalavasis*. Some of the records discusses Pushapakans and brahmanic separately as per their services.¹⁷ The ladies in the houses are known as Brahmanis and they were also known by the name Pappinis¹⁸ and are differently seen in the various occupation related with the temple and now categorized under *ambalavasis*.¹⁹ There are differences seen in the occupation of these groups throughout Kerala. On the whole, the documents discuss on a number of communities engaged in the temple affairs.

PRESENCE OF RITUAL GROUPS IN THE TEMPLE

In the medieval society, the land grant to the temples rather than the brahmins in the name of *devadanam* have seen in large extent including the Malabar region. Majority among the epigraphical and palm-leaf records had discussed on the land grants to the temple and other rituals for the temple. The Brahmins who performed ritual services in the neighborhood continued to perform their functions through the temples rather than as independent landlords. The right of the brahmins over the land in Kerala was legitimized through the power of the brahmins as administrative staffs or as ritual performers.²⁰ But there is need to trace the roots on the various categories on the existing brahmins and other temple related workers in Kerala. The epigraphs strengthened the royal patronage on temples during the Perumal period. The political fragmentation during the period of nadus under various *swarupam* also affected the power distribution throughout the temples and also the daily affairs of temples.

The significance of the temple during the Perumal rulers is evident from the inscriptions of Kotha Ravi located in the temple premise. The presence of the *upadhyaya* such as teachers in the inscription proved the presence of knowledge groups in the temple. Though the temple as per the ritual conditions is situated within the saiva sacred landscape the sculptures are patronized by the ritual groups of Jiva. The significance of the temple in political power in the subsequent period was sidelined when Airanikulam grama merged with Tiruvalla and Cerakesvaram. A detailed list of ritual groups of Vedas and sutras mentioned throughout the palm-leaf records collected near to the temple also proving the ritual participation of the brahmins of the region than their political power. Though there were no direct references on the saiva brahmins in Kerala, the repeated and also the rare sculptural forms of Siva symbolizes the condition of the temple in those period as action against the brahmins who dedicated the ritual to the temple.

The *urazhma* of the temple discussed with the two brahmin families Akovur nampoothiri, Cheruvalli bhattathiri and Patinjaredathu bhattathiri. The suffix with the family names such as Akavor and Cheruvalli as nampoothiri and bhattatiri signifies their hierarchy in society. The categorization of brahmins in Kerala still considered as an untouched area of study. Thus it is considered that every temples which are developed within the brahmanical gramas are patronized by such significant groups. They were priestly groups, teachers otherwise advisors to the royal chiefs.

There were 42 illakkar for the temple considered as the *ampalappadi yogakkar*. Prominent among them are Vallivattom and Kossappilly. As per palm leaf records collected from Vadakke pushpakam the special rituals such as Trsantha, panchatantha, Vaaram, Othuttu were performed in the temple. The presence of *asvalayana* and *baudhayana* in ritual performers and *othuttu* for the rgvedis specially mentioned related with the temple. The tantri to the Siva temple at Vaikom determined from the yogam at the temple of Iranikkulam. Though the region of Vaikom once was under the control of Poonjar rajas, they were once the residence of Aditya Varmah, the raja of Travancore, it is assumed that the region under ritual power extended up to Vaikom devasvam.²¹ The regional prosperity in the late-medieval period discussed with the trade-rout through the backwaters. The regions such as Perumpadappu and Ilangalloor svarupam are

repeatedly mentioned in the Tirupuliyur granthavari connected with the ritual and land documents of Tirupuliyur Mahavisnu temple.

The existence of a Siva temple near Vellarappilly, the region of *Mootha tavazhi* of Perumpadappu swarupam of significant while discussing the loss of the Iranikkulam temple in the political history of Kerala. The region of the Siva temple known in the name ThiruvIranikkulam belongs to Tekkumbhagam of Sreemoolanagaram, a village on the banks of river Periyar. The temple traced its history from the Iranikkulam temple, when a brahmin getting old, he was unable to go and worship Siva at Iranikkulam. Because of his adorable *bhaki* towards Siva, the lord himself travelled with the devotee in a wooden boat and when the devotee realized his lords presence, consecrated the deity nearest to his home. The brahmin was from Akovur family, one among the *urazhma* of the Iranikkulam temple. It is not clear that whether the Akovur brahmins were from Iranikkulam, they moved to this region after the transfer of power. There must be a lost history in the movement of ritual groups into the region from Iranikkulam. Venmani brahmins also are the urazhmakkar of the temple at Tiruvairanikkulam considered as the poets and knowledgeable group among the brahmins. Politically, the region is significant with the connection with Sakthan Thampuran as his birth place.²² Records say that the region on the banks of Periyar was significant in the brisk trade with Christian communities through the water channels.

SITUATING THE SCULPTURES WITHIN THE SACRED GEOGRAPHY OF THE TEMPLE

There are two temple structures in the same complex and architecturally distinct from each other. Siva linga is in the main circular a shrine (PLATE-1) and Somaskanda consecrated in the rectangular shrine, located in the northern part of the circular shrine. Linga in the circular shrine was made of sand, thus not permitted to give *abhiseka* and *dhara* to the deity though they are common rituals in Jiva temples. The shapeless linga is termed as *svayambhu* such as self-emanated as per the Silpa texts.

The rectangular shrine of Somaskanda, consist of Siva with Uma and Skanda is also significant in the imageries of Siva in the Kerala context. Consecration of this form as an idol is significant in the imaging of Siva in Kerala temples specifically with political patrons.²³ Similar

themes are seen on the balustrade of the Siva temple at Isanamangalam. Ganapathi and Sastha are the sub-deities of the circular shrine. The idols and the sub-deities are thus shows saiva patronage in the temple. The prominence given to the goddess Parvathi, through the ritual of *trpputh arat* is specific in the temple. The presence of such festive occasions in the same temple need to be discuss with the accommodation of goddess cult in the temple.²⁴

As per the architectural significance of the temples in Kerala, there are various styles are used to construct the *srikovil*²⁵ in which deity was placed. There are square, circular, rectangular and elliptical shapes for Kerala style. The *silpa* texts on temple construction had discussed these variations on temple structures. The main *srikovil* of the Iranikkulam temple is in circular style roofed as *dvi-tala* when compared with the other styles. The base of *namaskaramanda* has been seen in front of the srikovil and base of other structures also seen in the right side of the *srikovil*. The other shrine of Somaskanda is in square *dvi-tala* attached with a *mukhamandapa*.²⁶

IMAGING OF SIVA

The manifestations of the each and every deity reflected in sculptures and images had been identified with the iconic attributes along with the stylistic variations and aesthetic beauty. Other than the decorative motifs on architecture the images are the thematic representation on the specific ideologies of particular period. The sculptural representation of Siva also developed from the varying socio-economic and religious atmosphere within the specific patronage. Regional concentration and appropriations are also seen in imaging of Siva from the transformation from formlessness into the anthropomorphic forms.

The sculptures discussed in the paper are situated on the balustrades²⁷ of the main circular shrine. Balustrades are the part of steps to enter into the *srikovil*. Ferocious manifestations of Siva are Gajasurasamhara(PLATE 2)Kalasamhari(PLATE 3)as well as Andhakasuravadha.²⁸ The sculptures distributed on the two balustrades are the first two representations are significant in the iconography of saiva forms within Kerala temples.



Plate 1
Circular main shrine

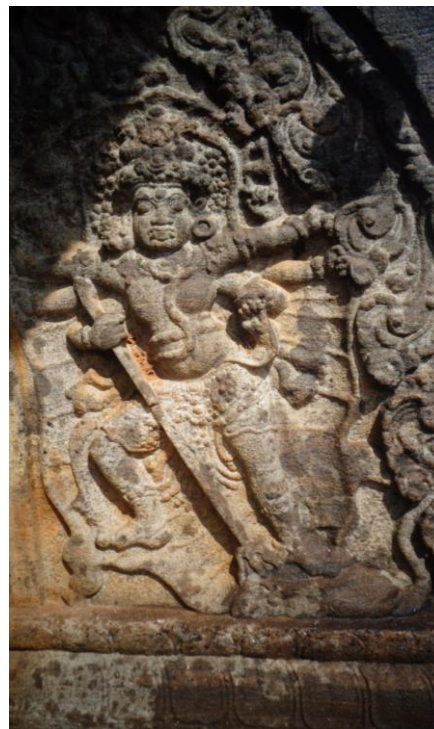


Plate 2
Gajasurasamhari



Plate 3
Kalasamhari

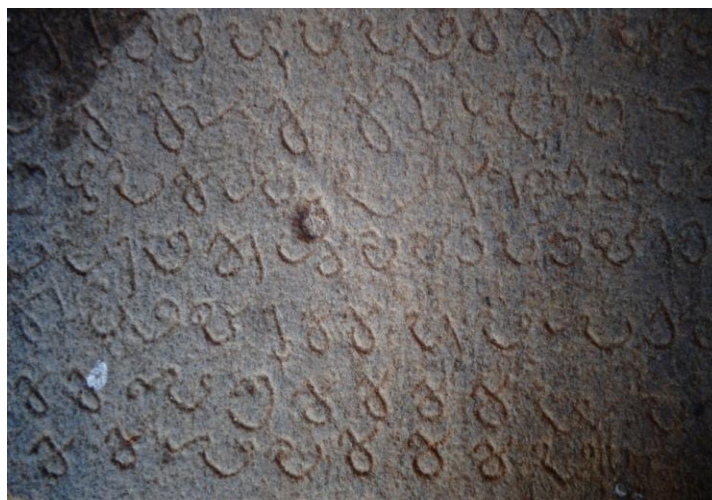


Plate 4
Inscriptional evidence

a) Gajasurasamharamurti: Sculptural significance of the Siva temple at Iranikkulam

The sculpture located on the right portion of the balustrade of the main shrine. As per the iconic attributes the sculpture represents the Gajasurasamhari form of Siva. The iconic attributes are: his face is terrific with bulging three eyes and *damstra*, *kapala kundala* and *patrakundala* in his ears. Eight arms- back top arms holding *parasu* and *mrga* on the right and left respectively. Two of the hands holds are seen holding the skin of the elephant. He is standing on the head of an elephant by pointing the trident on the head and right leg little raised and footed on the skin of the elephant.

b) Kalasamhari- Sculptural significance of the Siva temple at Iranikkulam

The form is also known as Kalarimurti or Kalanthakamurti, Siva as the victor over Kala (Time) or Yama(the lord of death) is represented in Indian sculptures in various ways. The sculpture in the Iranikkulam temple located on the left side of the balustrade of circular main shrine .There are eight arms, right part hold (from top)- *parasu*(axe), *pasa*(coir), *agni*(fire)?, *sula*(trident) and in the left portion, only the *mrga* (antelope)identified. There is terrific face with three eyes, *damstra*(long teeth). *jatamakuta*(mated hair) adorned the head, *kapala kundala*(ear stud made of bones) in his ears. He placed his right leg on the neck and the left on the chest and the edge of the *sula* pointing towards the demon *Yama* lying below his feet.

NARRATIVE STRATEGY OF THE PURANIC STORIES IN IMAGING SIVA IN THE TEMPLE

Both of these sculptures are seen as ferocious forms specifically seen in the temple at Iranikkulam. The sculptural in the temple mostly are based on the themes from local myths and puranic stories made regional traditions on the patronage of various deities. The late-medieval period in peninsular India marked conspicuous shift to the dominance of puranic world view in the construction of religious ideologies.²⁹ Bilingual tradition such as Sanskrit and tamil textual tradition is specifically influenced in South India in the development of iconography in the larger context.

The form is discussed under both puranic and *agamic* traditions. Canonical texts give different stories on Siva killing Gajasura. As per the *Kurmapurana* Siva came out of *linga* when a demon assumed the shape of an elephant came near it to disturb the meditations of several Brahmanas who had gathered round it and killed the elephant and made its skin as upper garment.³⁰ Another version was the demon Nila, the “dark” who assumed the shape of an elephant in order to kill Siva, was destroyed by Siva. After he had flayed the elephant, Siva took up his skin and danced frantically, flinging the skin high before it came to rest upon his shoulders as his upper garment.³¹

There are agamic versions of stories also seen on the form. It was through the iconographic attributes the form has defined in the agamas. As per *Suprabhedagama* there are about ten arms which carries *mrga*, *khetaka*, *kapala*, *naga*, *khtavanga* in the left and *sula*, *danda*, *sakthyayudha*, sword and *aksamala* in the right. *Amsumadbhedagama* defines its attributes with slight variation. Here the form carries skin, *vismaya*, *kapala* and tusk on the left and skin, *trisula*, *damaru*, *pasa* on the right. The theme in the later period has seen in the performing arts in different parts of South India. In Bharatanatyam tradition, Siva ripping the hide of the elephant and then tying it above his shoulders is frequently shown.³²

Kalasamhari, another ferocious form of Jiva is frequently seen in the temples of Kerala than the other forms. As per the puranic mythology, the *rsi* Mrkandu was long without a son. He prayed to Siva that he may be blessed with sons. Siva appeared to him and blessed to have a boy with extra intelligent. But his life limited to sixteen years. The hearts of the parents began to be weighted with sorrow, for at the sixteenth year of his age he was fated to die. On that particular day when he finished his sixteenth age, Yama the god of death appeared. Markandeya he holds on the Siva linga tightly. Siva burst out of the linga in great anger and kicked on Yamas chest, which almost killed him.³³ The story taken from *Markandeya purana*

Karanagama and *Kamikagama* made their own interpretation on the Kalahari through the iconic attributes. Through the tamil *tevaram*, local interpretation are made to strengthen the Kalahari form in the region by narrating the story with the temple at Trkkadavur. As per this the temple worshipped by Markandeya in this temple. Same mythical narration had seen in the temple at Trppangod in Malappuram district of Kerala.³⁴

Silpa texts of the period also made the narrative strategies by discussing the manifestations of deities with their iconic attributes. Majority among them discussed the iconic attributes with hymnal forms. The forms Siva discussed here, Gajasurasamharamurti³⁵ and Kalahari³⁶ are discussed in the *Silparatna*, treatise on temple architecture and art considered from the Malabar region dates back to 16th century.

SITUATING THE SCULPTURES WITHIN THE POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY OF THE TEMPLE

Iranikkulam as per the *Keralolpathi* legends, was one among the four *talis* of Perumal period. There are three inscriptions are available from the temple complex. Two are located on the separate granite slabs and the other one on the base of the incomplete *namaskaramandapa* of the central circular shrine. The record of Kotha Ravi date backs to 896 AD (PLATE 4) describes the merging up of three gramas such as Iranikkulam, Tiruvalla and Cerakesvaram. The record points out the transition or fragmentation of the power during the period. Another inscription from the temple records on the punishment to the uralars of the temple, if they violate the day to day temple affairs. The significance of the record is on the punishment given to the accused person considered as the killer of his father or teacher. But the temple and its connection with the region of was not part of Tiruvalla copper plate records of 10th or 11th century AD.

The presence of the rulers name in the inscriptions and legitimized the power of the temple during that period. The ritualization of power and the presence of divinity made as major component in the legitimization of ‘temple centred’ society in medieval Kerala. The art and architectural features within the temple sidelined in the history for a long period, though there is no serious effort to take up its relevance. The region of Iranikkulam was one among the 10 gramas,³⁷ in which the brahmins of these gramas had possesses special power and Among the 36000 brahmins distributed by Parasurama 4000 are from Iranikkulam for Edappilly Nambiathiri, Venmanattu Nampyathiri, Kannithalapandala, ,Puthumanakkattu nampyathiri,Elampayilandala(?), Punnathoornampiti, Thalayoormoosatha, Pilamanthol Moosath, Chozhathoorelayatha, Kuzhimandamooosatha, Kallekkaatelayatha, Ponnilatha mumpila....the sword was given to Edappilly Nampyathiri. Thus the power of the region related with the Edappilly rajas most probably in the late-medieval period. The paucity of the records on the

reference of the region depicts the lost of the brahmanical power of the temple as in the previous years. The political fragmentation during the period of nadus under various *swarupam* also affected the power distribution throughout the temples such as Iringalakkuda, Vadakkunathan, Peruvanam and also the daily affairs of temples also in the temple at Iranikkulam. When we traced the political contestations during the period related with the Perumpadappu region, there are frequent internal conflicts in between the ritual groups and power groups of the temples.³⁸

The manuscript records give idea on the power gradation in the temple administration during the late-medieval period. The record begins with praising hymns on Siva consecrated in the circular shrine. There is a ruler namely Rama Varman Keralan. According to the granthavari the deity is main power holder which can be legitimized with the concept of *devasvam*. Perumpadappu muppil possesses the second position. Third position given to *sabha*, then the Airanikkal patanayar, cerikkal land holders and the janam made the various stages of power gradation related with the temple and the related regions

The temple records further political transition of the temple in the subsequent period. The record mentions on the *Samudaya adbhikaram* of the raja of Venad in the temple at Iranikkulam connects the temples prosperity when Venad as a significant power in Southern part of Kerala during early-modern period. The *melkoima* on Tulassery³⁹ and Tiruvalla by the temple at Airanikkulam strengthened the power of the temple over Thiruvalla from post Perumal period onwards as per the inscriptional evidences. The ritual domination over the temple at Vaikom⁴⁰ is also significant with the expansion of temples relation during those periods. The temple at Vaikom was under the control of Punjat rajas and the hill territories of Poonjar were assigned as the residence of Aditya Varma of Travancore and extended his power upto northern devaswams including Vaikom.⁴¹ The position of the Perumpadappu mooppil was the political power during the period records *patteri avarodham* from the 42 *ampalappadi yogakkar* legitimize the stage of political power of central Kerala. Thus the region of the temple was part of the power fluctuations of Edappally and Perumpadappu rulers and also maintained the relation with the Venad region in the subsequent period. European involvement in the administration of Perumpadappu influenced the internal administration of the *thavazhis* of Perumpadappu rulers.⁴² The temple at Iranikkulam must have a role as a centre for product accumulation from its

surrounding regions. The political boundary of the temple depicted in the palm-leaf records. Thus it is evident that, the period of the temple architecture only after the trade contact with the west.

THE SCULPTURES WITHIN THE ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TEMPLE

The temple as mentioned above featured with *dvi-tala* circular *sri-kovil*. In the south Indian temple architectural features, the *dvi-tala* are the styles after the Late-cola phase. There are several shrines of *dvi-tala* style are seen in different parts of Kerala including the square shrines. As per the categorization of Kerala temple architecture, the circular main shrine of the temple date back to later phase as per style of its base as well as *adistana*. *Mrgamala* and *kudu* are the features of later phase of temple architectural styles.⁴³ *Kudu* which is a conical shape design located on the *adistana* and *balikkallu* of the temples. Some of them are decorated with designs and some depicts gods and semi-gods. The face of long bearded man looking central Asian is significant in the artistic development in Kerala context, though they are repeatedly seen in the other temples of Kerala. It denotes the interference of the external ideas and also in the temple regions by the Europeans. The basic features of *adistana* of the shrine on which the sculptures are located is similar with the features of the temple at Tiruvalathur in Palakkad and Udayanapuram in Kottayam. The architectural features of the *sri-kovil* of the circular shrine more similar with the Tiruvalathur Bhagavati temple, traced its period in between 16th-17th centuries.⁴⁴

The sculptures, both are existing within the developed temple architectural style most probably during the late-medieval period is significant on the period of production of such ferocious forms in the temple. The fluctuating political power under various local chiefs strengthened the expansion of structural significance of temples of late-medieval period. The legitimization of loyalty in between brahmin and rulers as interpreted Perumal period was different in the later centuries. The power fluctuation continuously seen in the subsequent period affected the power of the temple centres. The connection with Tiruvalla temple and with temple at Vaikom in the later period, are the evidences which suggest the temple at Iranikkulam was part of trade networks of late-medieval period. The structural expansion of the temple Iranikkulam thus mostly related within the context of material transaction connected with the temple.

The temple structures as the space for expressing various ideologies. Imaging of various narrative characters thus made the part of temple structures including Kerala. the two shrines are dedicated to Siva, but both were developed in different contexts. The circular shrine is considered the main shrine and it is older than the rectangular shrine. The self-emanated linga in the circular shrine is considered as older than the second shrine. Consecration of Somaskanda thus considered as the later addition in the sacred geography of the region may be the reasons for internal clashes in between the ritual groups of the temples. Though there is no direct reference on the specific groups of rituals it is assumed that there must be a patron to introduce epic or puranic theme in the temples, based on the religious idea of the patron. Rulers, priests, brahmins, merchants may be the patrons of such imageries in the temples. The ferocious theme of both sculptures as per the narrative stories in epics and puranas are more related with the protection of the brahmins otherwise ritual groups. Both Gajasura and Kala made disturbances for saiva devotees as per the puranic interpretations. Though Kalasamhari is a repeated imagery of Siva in Kerala, Gajasurasamhari is specifically seen in this temple and both are assumed as the earliest specimens of Saiva iconography in Kerala region when compared with the other forms of Siva seen in sculptures and murals. Thus the both sculptures of Siva signify the presence and power of saivite groups related with the temple.

ENDNOTES

¹ Linga- cylindrical stone with a base, symbolically representation of Siva

² D.D.Kosambi, *Myth and Reality: Studies in the Formation of Indian Culture*, Poular Prakashan, Bombay, 2005, Pp-2,4

³ Stella Kramrisch, *Manifestations of Siva*, Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1981, pp-46,47

⁴ Gerd J.R.Mevissen, Three Royal Temple Foundations in South India: Tripurantaka Imagery as a Statement of Political Power in *Temple Architecture and Imagery in South and South-east Asia*, P-170

⁵ Manu V Devadevan, *The 'Early-Medieval' Origins of India*, Cambridge University Press, UK, 2020, P-54

⁶ Tali- Medieval inscriptional sources *taliyar* are the *uralars* who hold some power in the temple administration

⁷ M.R.Raghava Varier, *Keralolpathi Granthavari: Traditional History*, National Book Stall, Thiruvavanthapuram, 2016, P-33

⁸ MGS.Narayanan, *Perumals of Kerala: Brahmin Oligarchy and Ritual Monopoly: Political and Social Conditions of Kerala under the Cera Perumals of Makotai (AD 800-AD 1124)*, p-162

⁹ James Heitzman, *Gifts of Power: Lordship in an Early Indian State*, Oxford University Press, 1997p-108

¹⁰ T.R.Venugopalan, *Sampathum Adhikaravum: Thrissurilninnulla oru Kazhcha*, Current Books, Thrissur, 2017, p-339

¹¹ M.G.S.Narayanan, Index to Cera Inscriptions in *Perumals of Kerala: Brahmin Oligarchy and Ritual Monopoly: Political and Social Conditions of Kerala under the Cera Perumals of Makotai (AD 800-AD 1124)*, p-497

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- ¹² M.R.Raghava Varier, *South Indian Inscriptions: Inscriptions from Kerala(Vol- Vol.XLIII)*, Archaeological Survey of India, New Delhi, 2021, Pp-136-37
- ¹³ M.G.S.Narayanan, *Perumals of Kerala: Brahmin Oligarchy and Ritual Monopoly....*, p-19
- ¹⁴ Manu V Devadevan, *The 'Early-Medieval' Origins of India, ...* P-54
- ¹⁵ House of the priestly class situated in the northern part of the temple.
- ¹⁶ Akavur griham consists vedic brahmins called adhyans, in Cochin State Manual, p-252
- ¹⁷ Edgar Thurston, *Castes and Tribes of Southern India(Vol-VII)*, Government Press, Madras, 1909, Pp-222-223
- ¹⁸ Pappinis in the general sense is a term related with Buddhism. No more studies with these communities.
- ¹⁹ Edgar Thurston, *Castes and Tribes of Southern India(Vol-I)*, Government Press, Madras, 1909, P- 393
- ²⁰ James Heitzman, *Gifts of Power* ,p-108
- ²¹ Shungoony Menon, *A History of Travancore: From the Earliest Times*, Asian Educational Services, New Delhi, 1998, p-93
- ²² Puthezhath Ramamenon, *Sakthan Thampuran(M)*, Mathrubhumi Books, Thrissur, 2023, p-35
- ²³ The form is significant during the period of Pallavas in tamil region
- ²⁴ Nalankal Krishna Pillai, *Mahakshetrangalude Munnal*, DC Books, Kottayam, 2009, p- 452
- ²⁵ *Srikovil*- The central shrine is where the idol or linga is consecrated.
- ²⁶ *Mukhamandapa*- Square platform in front of the central shrine
- ²⁷ Steps into the main shrine
- ²⁸ T.A Gopinatha Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography(Vol-II, Part I)*, Law Printing House, Madras, 1916, p-145
- ²⁹ Archana Verma, *Temple Imagery from Early Medieval Peninsular India*, Ashgate Publishing Ltd, England, 2012, p-23
- ³⁰ T.A Gopinatha Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography (Vol-II, Part I)*, p-150
- ³¹ Stella Kramrisch, *Manifestations of Siva* , p-46
- ³² Anne-Marie Gaston, *Siva in Dance, Myth and Iconography*, Oxford University Press, 1991, p-152
- ³³ T.A Gopinatha Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography (Vol-II, Part I)*, p-157
- ³⁴ Chemboli Srinivasan, *Samuthiri Rajavinte Bhakti Samrajyam*, Poorna Publications, 2012, p-85
- ³⁵ K.Sambasiva Sastri, *The Silparatna of Srikumara: Trivandrum Sanskrit Series No: XCVIII*, p-111
- ³⁶ *Ibid*-p-122
- ³⁷ M.R. Raghava Variyer, *Keralolpathi Grandhavari, ...* p-33
- ³⁸ T.R.Venugopalan, *Sampathum Adhikaravum; Thrissuril ninnulla kazhcha....*, P-114
- ³⁹ Tukalassery near Tiruvalla
- ⁴⁰ S. Rajendu, *Iranikkulam Granthavari(AD 146; Inscription on the Ayanikkulam Mahadeva temple with an Introductory Study*, Vallathol Vidyapeetham, Thrissur, 2015 p-13
- ⁴¹ *A History of Travancore: From the Earliest Times*, Asian Educational Services, Madras, 1998, p-91
- ⁴² K.N.Ganesh, *Keralathinte Innalekal*, State Institute of Languages, Thiruvananthapuram, 2018, p-374
- ⁴³ H.Sarkar, *An Architectural Survey of Temples of Kerala*, Archaeological Survey of India-No.2, New Delhi, 1978, p-80
- ⁴⁴ George Michael, *Late Temple Architecture of India, 1th to 19th centuries: continuities, Revivals, Appropriations and Innovations*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2015, p-283

MICRO SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES :THE ENGINE OF GROWTH IN EMERGING ECONOMY

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ABSTRACT

Since independence, a standout feature of Indian economy is the rapid growth of small industries. The dynamic sector plays a pivotal role by fostering employment and growth contributes the economic and social development of the Indian economy as a whole over the last five decades. As a vibrant sector, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) made a remarkable contribution in the inclusive industrial development of the country by widening the domains and meeting the growing demand across the globe. Kerala is a front-runner among the Indian states with 2,14,564 enterprises by pooling the investment of Rs 13,474.52 crore and generating 4,56,913 employment opportunities. The study highlights the performance evaluation of MSMEs in the emerging economies. The study summarises various challenges of MSMEs in national and state perspective. The issues need to be addressed with strategic priority since it has the potential to boost socio-economic development.

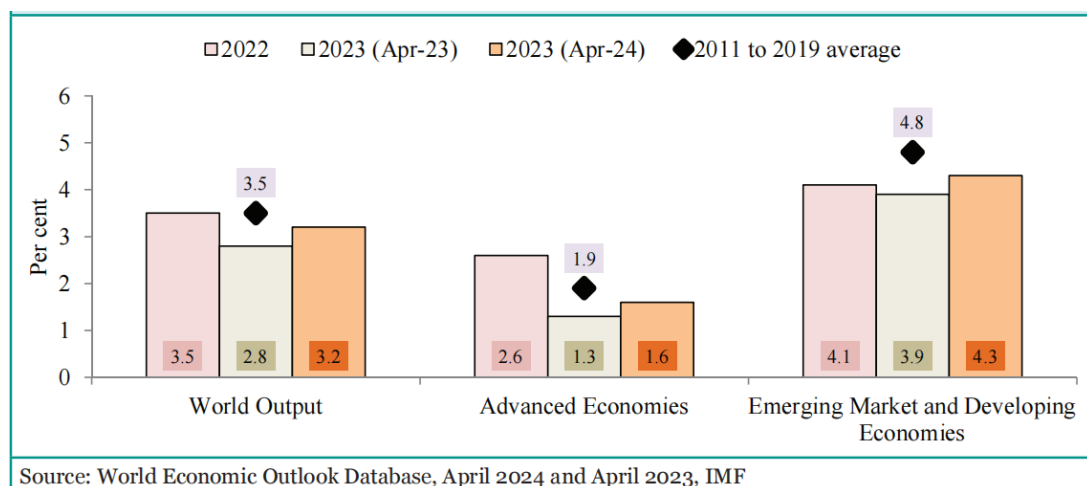
Key Words: MSMEs, Performance evaluation, Challenges

INTRODUCTION

The Indian economy is on a strong wicket and stable footing, demonstrating resilience

in the face of geopolitical challenges which reflected in heels of economic growth of 9.7% and 7.0% in the 23rd and 24th financial years and was surprisingly robust. The twentieth century witnessed unquestionable supremacy of science and technology and industrialisation is the yardstick of development. The social and economic dimensions of Industrial progress can open avenues of employment and income and irrespective of any other excellence, it is imperative for overall economic growth. (Economic Survey, 2022) Jawaharlal Nehru, First Prime Minister, in his address to the Special Silver Jubilee Convocation of Lucknow University (28th, January 1949) articulated that, “Now, India we are bound to be industrialized, we are trying to be industrialized, we want to be industrialised, we must be industrialised”.

Growth rate of Global Economy



Kerala economy with modern and diversified industrial sector achieved a substantial progress of 28.4 per cent in GSVA at constant basic prices in 2022-23 (QE) and registered a growth of 7.72 per cent in 2022- 23 at constant 2011-12 prices (QE) and provided a vibrant industrial ecosystem. On the flip side, in the financial year 2022-23, the other predominant Sub-sectors like Manufacturing and Construction sector recorded a positive growth of 8.96% and 6.04% respectively .Even if manufacturing sector is relatively small in size, in recent years,it accounted for about 13 per cent of Kerala's GSVA (at 2011-12 prices) in 2022-23 which shows the consistent growth in terms of value.The share in GSVA (at 2011-12 Prices) has increased to 13.1 per cent in the financial year 2022-23.Among this Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) are the driving force, through innovative business practices, it foster entrepreneurial expansion and contributed significantly to the industrialisation of rural and backward areas by narrowing regional imbalances and ensuring equitable distribution of income and wealth.Recognising the immense potential of this sector Government of Kerala has assigned it a high priority.(Economic Survey,2023)

MSMEs are entrepreneurial nursery which favours the growth of indigenous technology innovation and various other economic activities in their vicinity. So the study emphasised on the performance of different MSMEs in the emerging economy of India and Kerala and the challenges faced by the enterprises. As an engine of growth ,MSMEs can can check economic concentration

in few hands and encourage self sufficiency, self reliance and co-ordination. It is imperative to strengthen MSMEs to drive economy to the path of development.

OBJECTIVES

1. To analyse the performance of MSMEs in India in general and Kerala in particular
2. To ascertain the issues and challenges faced by MSMEs

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Economic development of a nation is closely associated with the growth of its industrial sector. Industrial sector is composed of Large, Medium, Small and Micro enterprises. While large industries help the overall economic development of a nation, the contribution of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) is quite significant in employment generation, industrial production and exports. More than 80 percent of the employment generated in this sector is contributed by unregistered enterprises. (Rajeevan N, Sulphrey M.M & Rajasekhar S, 2015). A dynamic, innovative and competitive entrepreneurship sector is a prerequisite for the long-term economic and social competitiveness of a country. The potential of the MSME sector is not less than that of large companies. At the same time, a smaller enterprise can achieve significant business success as according to the principle of “many small businesses make a difference” because over time, the entire economic structure can undergo a competitive transformation (Janos Varga, 2021). The major barriers to growth are social, legal, economic, management. Study clearly emphasized the need for companies to be flexible in terms of changes taking place in these areas. The more so as it is the flexibility that allows MSMEs to exist and survive on the market. Therefore, management strategies used in enterprises should be exceptionally focused on adapting to the changing environment on an ongoing basis. (Ciekanski Z., Wyrębek H, 2020). The primary responsibility of promotion and development of MSMEs is of the State Governments. However, the Government of India, supplements the efforts of the State Governments through various initiatives. The role of the MSME and its organisations is to assist the States in their efforts to encourage entrepreneurship, employment and livelihood opportunities and enhance the competitiveness of MSMEs in the changed economic scenario. (Kochukalam, C., Peters, M., & Thomas, J, 2016). The present study focuses on the performance of the MSME sector in emerging economy of India and the various hindrances to the growth of the sector.

METHODOLOGY

This study MSMEs : The engine of growth in emerging economies ,is an analytical and descriptive in nature .The study focuses on the growth trajectory of MSMEs in India in general and Kerala in particular.Inorder to draw inferences , study depends on secondary data published by the Ministry of MSMEs Government of India, Reports of the Economic survey, Results of various All India Censuses of SSIs/MSMEs, SIDBI Report on MSMEs Sector in various years, Annual Reports on SSIs/MSMEs sector etc. The statistical tool Percentage is used to analyze the data collected from these sources and thus assessed the growth trend of MSME Sector.

PERFORMANCE OF MSMES IN INDIA AND KERALA

During the period 2015-16,with diversified activities, there were 633.88 lakh unincorporated non-agriculture MSME in the country .Now MSMEs contributed more than 40 % of India's aggregate exports and shares 45% of India's manufacturing output . Moreover 28 per cent of the GDP is generated by the MSME sector. In both rural and urban areas, MSMES provide employment to about 11.1 crore people that is 3.60 crore in manufacturing, 3.87 crore in trade and 3.62 crore in other services and 0.0007 crore in non-captive electricity generation and transmission.across the country . Across the country,out of the 633.88 lakh MSMEs, 324.88 lakh (51 per cent) were in rural areas and 309 lakh (49 per cent) were in urban areas.(MSME Annual report, 2023-24)

Estimated number of MSMEs (activity wise)

	Number of enterprises (in lakhs)			Share
Manufacturing	114.14	82.50	196.65	31
Electricity	0.03	0.01	0.03	0
Trade	108.71	121.64	230.35	36
Other services	102.00	104.85	206.85	33
All	324.88	309.00	633.88	100

Source-MSME Annual Report 2023-24

MSME s constitutes Micro, Small and Medium enterprises in which 630.52 lakh estimated enterprises, accounts for more than 99% of total estimated number of MSMEs, are Micro enterprises . Along with this Small sector with 3.31 lakh and Medium sector with 0.05 lakh estimated MSMEs, accounted for 0.52% and 0.01% of total estimated MSMEs. Out of 633.88 estimated numbers of MSME, 324.88 lakh MSME (51.25%) are in rural area and 309 lakh MSME (48.75%) are in the urban areas.

Category wise distribution of enterprises

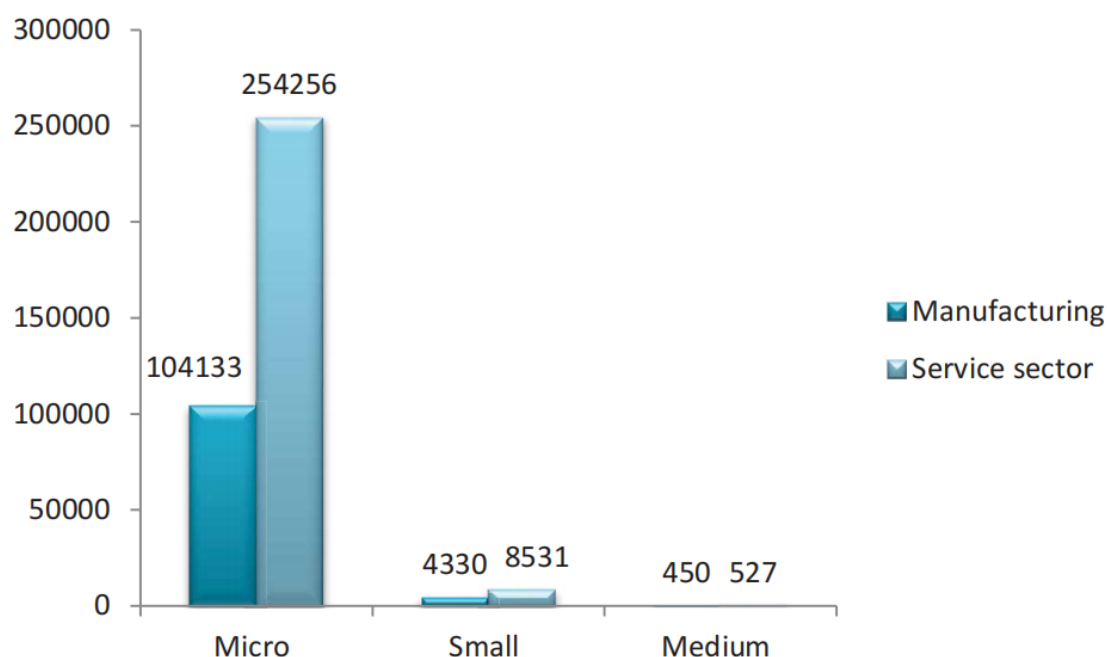
Sector	Micro	Small	Medium	Total	Share (%)
Rural	324.09	0.78	0.01	324.88	51
Urban	306.43	2.53	0.04	309.00	49
All	630.52	3.31	0.05	633.88	100

Source-MSME Annual Report 2023-24

The MSME sector in Kerala , even though the investment levels in the sector are still relatively low , is a key player generating income and providing employment opportunities . According to the MSME Survey and Quick Results of the 4th Census, Kerala is home to 5.62 percent MSMEs .The MSME Annual Report 2022–2023 also shows that Kerala has a large number of MSMEs, ranking 12th in terms of total MSME and the State is well known for its distinctive blend of modern and traditional industries, which include everything from IT and health care to tourism and agriculture. As an employment generator,the MSME sector gives employment opportunities to the marginalized sector and is imperative the upliftment of rural as well as underdeveloped areas.

A remarkable increase in the number of micro businesses units in the MSME sector was achieved , both in terms of employment and working enterprises. Handicrafts, handlooms, khadi, food processing, clothing manufacturing, textiles, and industries using coir, wood, bamboo, plastic, rubber, leather, and clay items are all included in this sector.In 2022–2023, the State witnessed a notable increase in the number of new MSME units and with an investment of Rs 8,421.63 crore, 1,39,840 new MSME units were established in 2022–2023with a registered growth of 449%.

Number of Micro, Small and Medium units registered under Manufacturing and Service Sectors in Kerala in 2022-23



Achievement in MSME sector 2017-18 to 2022-23 (As on August 31, 2023)

Year	No of MSME s	Investment (in crore)	Employment (in number)
2017-18	15,468	1,249.61	51,244
2018-19	13,826	1,321.94	49,068
2019-20	13,695	1,338.65	46,081
2020-21	11,540	1,221.86	44,975
2021-22	15,285	1,535.09	56,223
2022-23	1,39,840	8,421.63	3,00,051
Total	2,09,654	15,089.62	5,47,652

SOURCE-DIRECTORATE OF INDUSTRIES AND COMMERCE

The employment prospects of the MSME sector, which currently employs 3,00,051 people, are a positive sign for the State's economy and proof of its potential for expansion and development.

The state profile of MSMEs shows that , with investment of Rs 840.89 crore ,generating employment opportunities of 29,878 and 14,434 new units,Thirunananthapuram stands out as a front runner.Ernakulam had 14,128 units and creating 33,765 job opportunities occupied the second position, and Thrissur had 14,123 units and an investment of Rs 752.42 crore, creating 29,536 job opportunities. The smallest number was Wayanad (3,950 units), which created 8,234 jobs with an investment of 236.58 crore.The sector-wise growth of MSME units over the last five years reveals an increase in the number of agro and food-based units from 2,712 in 2018-19 to 23,474 in 2022-23. The number of service related MSME units has increased from 3,259 in 2018-19 to 26,159 in 2022-23.(Economic Review, 2023)

ISSUES AND CHALLENGES IN THE SECTOR

MSMEs have played a key role in defining the economic trajectory , the Government has focused attention to enable the MSME sector to portray India's economic story. Nevertheless, the sector continues to face extensive regulation like Licensing, Inspection, and Compliance requirements and faces significant bottlenecks with access to affordable and timely funding and so on.Even though government is proving considerable promise in the form of Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana and the Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises,the credit gap in the MSME sector is estimated to be around Rs 20-25 lakh crore .Moreover,due to a plethora of reasons including lack of collateral or credit history, high rate of interest, complex documentation , long processing times etc,many MSMEs struggle to secure the necessary funds to start, operate, or expand the business.

FORMALISATION AND DIGITALISATION

Innovative company concepts must be encouraged and supported in order to develop into companies and to establish an environment that is conducive to MSMEs. Centers for incubation and entrepreneurial development can help achieve this. The use and scope of some programs, such as credit support programs, are still limited for a variety of reasons. It has proven difficult to encourage MSMEs to register and to formalize and digitalize the operations.

INFRASTRUCTURE

The sector's expansion is hampered by the lack of basic facilities like work sheds, tool rooms, product testing labs, electricity, rural broadband, and innovation hubs. Only a small number of MSME clusters offer high-quality infrastructure.

CREDIT AND CAPITAL RISK

MSMEs are not able to access formal sources of credit because of the informal nature. Lack of financial data makes it difficult for banks to evaluate the credit risk of MSMEs. Few MSMEs are able to secure venture capital funding and equity support.

MARKET LINKAGES AND PARTNERSHIPS WITH PUBLIC PROCUREMENT PLATFORMS

MSMEs deal with the dual problems of having little access to high-quality raw materials and a market for their final goods. Partnerships with public sector organizations can benefit expansion.

POLICY AND INSTITUTIONAL INTERVENTIONS

Lack of targeted policies in the areas of infrastructure development, difficulties in establishing backward and forward connections, modernization, technology adoption, closing the credit gap, and guaranteeing MSMEs receive payments on time are the major constraints in the growth path.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

In sufficient credit flow the MSME units hold back from growing to the full potential and being job creators of substance. Strengthen the credit supply to the MSMEs through State financial mechanisms like cooperatives. Easy availability of financial assistance by minimising financial bottle necks, redtapism and formal proceedings of registration will encourage MSMEs and will pave the way for the entry of new entrepreneurs. Private investment should be initiated in these enterprises which will increase efficiency and also solve the problem of limited access to capital. The majority of MSMEs are found in the unorganized sector of the economy.

In order to better their access to the numerous government, banking, and other agency schemes, entrepreneurs in this area should be encouraged to register the business with the Ministry of MSME. Necessary steps should be taken to formalise and to introduce digital inclusion in the sector to facilitate access to the capital essential for business. Special arrangement should be made by the Government to supply raw materials at minimum cost and product testing facilities to ensure the quality of the product. Special rewards should be given to those MSMEs by evaluating the performance. Along with this special planning should be implemented to rejuvenate the sick units and to introduce grievance redressal mechanism.

CONCLUSION

Over the past 50 years, the Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSME) sector of the Indian economy has become one of its most dynamic and lively sectors. MSMEs not only create a lot of jobs at a lower capital cost than large industries, but they also aid in the industrialization of rural and underdeveloped areas, which lessens regional imbalances and ensures a more equitable distribution of wealth and national income. MSMEs are ancillary entities that supplement larger sectors, and they play a significant role in the nation's socioeconomic development. The Indian government's Ministry of MSMEs is primarily in charge of creating and effectively implementing plans, projects, policies, and initiatives for the expansion and advancement of MSMEs. The social respect, outreach initiatives, social network growth, decision making, enhancing opportunities, etc. are all part of the social perspective. Economic perspectives, on the other hand, focus primarily on controlling risks, investors' returns, steady and profitable expansion, and so forth. As a concluding remark, a multidimensional approach is essential to strengthen MSMEs, since it is the driving component and backbone of Indian Economy.

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THE CURATIVE POWER OF LITERATURE: EXPLORING BIBLIOTHERAPY AND HUMAN CONNECTION IN MENTAL HEALTH RECOVERY THROUGH *EVERY LAST WORD* AND *ELEANOR OLIPHANT IS COMPLETELY FINE*

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ABSTRACT

The novels *Every Last Word* by Tamara Ireland Stone and *Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine* by Gail Honeyman delve into the intricacies of the human psyche, focusing on protagonists grappling with severe mental health issues. Samantha McAllister's journey through Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD) is profoundly influenced by the therapeutic power of poetry, while Eleanor Oliphant's recovery from emotional trauma is facilitated through the empathetic support of her friend Raymond. This paper examines how bibliotherapy, particularly through poetry and interpersonal relationships, can alleviate mental stress, enhance positive affect, and reduce negative affect. The discussion highlights the transformative potential of literature and human connection in addressing mental health challenges in contemporary society.

Key words: Bibliotherapy, Positive Affect, Negative Affect, Literature.

INTRODUCTION

The prevalence of mental health disorders such as depression, anxiety, and other neurocognitive conditions has risen significantly in recent years. Factors contributing to this increase include social and political instability, economic challenges, and the enduring impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Amid these stressors, non-pharmacological approaches like bibliotherapy have gained attention as effective tools for promoting emotional well-being and supporting mental health recovery. Bibliotherapy, defined as the use of literature to help individuals cope with personal difficulties, has shown promise in reducing symptoms of depression, enhancing problem-solving skills, and fostering self-awareness.

This paper explores the therapeutic potential of literature, focusing on the roles of poetry and supportive relationships in managing mental health challenges. Through the analysis of *Every Last*

Word and Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine, the paper illustrates how bibliotherapy and human connection can serve as powerful mechanisms for emotional healing.

BIBLIOTHERAPY: DEFINITION AND FUNCTION

Bibliotherapy involves the intentional use of books and literary works to support individuals dealing with emotional and psychological issues. According to Pardeck (1994), bibliotherapy serves as a method for addressing emotional problems and mental illnesses through literature. It aids individuals in navigating personal challenges such as grief, trauma, depression, and anxiety. Lenkowsky (1987) highlights its role in facilitating personal growth and positive change, while Adderholdt-Elliott & Eller (1989) emphasize its contribution to developmental progress.

The effectiveness of bibliotherapy lies in its ability to act as a mirror, reflecting the reader's own experiences and emotions. This reflective process fosters self-awareness, emotional validation, and coping strategies. Reading literature that resonates with personal struggles offers comfort, empathy, and a sense of solidarity. When integrated with supportive human relationships, bibliotherapy can significantly enhance emotional resilience and psychological well-being.

THE THERAPEUTIC POWER OF POETRY IN *EVERY LAST WORD*

In *Every Last Word*, Samantha McAllister battles OCD, characterized by intense anxiety, panic attacks, and emotional isolation. Despite being surrounded by friends, Samantha feels disconnected, unable to share her inner struggles. Her discovery of the Poet's Corner, a secret club where students write and share poetry, marks a turning point in her life.

Poetry becomes a cathartic outlet for Samantha, allowing her to process complex emotions, confront her fears, and initiate healing. Through writing, she gains a sense of control over her emotions and articulates her innermost thoughts. The supportive environment of the Poet's Corner fosters a sense of belonging, illustrating the dual therapeutic power of creative expression and community. Samantha's journey underscores how poetry, as a form of bibliotherapy, can facilitate emotional healing and resilience.

HEALING THROUGH HUMAN CONNECTION IN ELEANOR OLIPHANT IS COMPLETELY FINE

Eleanor Oliphant's story in *Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine* highlights the significance of human connection in mental health recovery. Eleanor leads a solitary life, structured by rigid routines that shield her from emotional vulnerability. Her emotional distress intensifies following the disillusionment of an imagined relationship with a musician, compounded by unresolved childhood trauma.

Eleanor's path to healing begins through her unexpected friendship with Raymond, a compassionate colleague. Raymond's consistent support, simple acts of kindness, and genuine empathy provide the emotional anchor Eleanor needs. His encouragement to seek professional help, coupled with his unwavering presence, plays a pivotal role in her recovery. Raymond's character exemplifies how interpersonal relationships, marked by empathy and support, are crucial in addressing mental health challenges.

LITERATURE AND HUMAN CONNECTION: A SYNERGISTIC CURATIVE POWER

Both *Every Last Word* and *Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine* illustrate the complementary curative effects of literature and human connection. Samantha's healing is facilitated through the cathartic release provided by poetry, while Eleanor's recovery is nurtured through the empathetic support of a friend. These narratives demonstrate that the therapeutic benefits of literature extend beyond reading to include emotional expression, self-reflection, and the healing power of shared human experiences.

The combined influence of bibliotherapy and supportive relationships suggests that healing is both an internal and external process. Literature offers a medium for introspection and emotional articulation, while human connections provide validation, empathy, and a sense of belonging.

ADDRESSING MENTAL HEALTH IN THE MODERN WORLD

Contemporary life presents numerous stressors, including work-related pressures, financial instability, relationship challenges, and societal upheavals. The post-pandemic era and the increasing integration of artificial intelligence into daily life have further complicated mental

health dynamics. In this context, bibliotherapy emerges as an accessible and effective strategy for emotional well-being.

Engaging with literature that mirrors personal experiences can help individuals process emotions and develop coping mechanisms. Creative activities such as poetry writing and journaling offer additional avenues for emotional expression and healing. Equally important are supportive human relationships, which provide the empathy and understanding necessary for mental health recovery.

CONCLUSION

Literature, through its diverse forms—poetry, fiction, reflective writing—holds significant curative power in addressing emotional and psychological challenges. The experiences of Samantha McAllister and Eleanor Oliphant underscore the transformative roles of bibliotherapy and human connection in mental health recovery.

Bibliotherapy facilitates emotional processing, self-awareness, and resilience, while supportive relationships offer validation and hope. In an era marked by increasing mental health concerns, embracing the therapeutic potential of literature and the power of human connection can provide meaningful paths to emotional well-being and personal growth.

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