



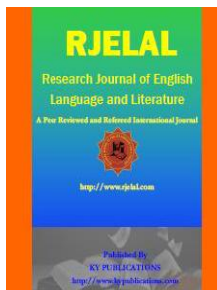
HISTORY REFLECTS THROUGH LITERATURE: AN ANALYSIS OF ISMATH HUSSAIN'S NOVEL 'KOLODAM'

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ABSTRACT

Kolodam is the first Malayalam novel from Lakshadweep. It is written by Ismath Hussin, a well known writer in Lakshadweep. The work depicts the real life situations and experience of the ancestors, its history and culture. The novel contains the difficulties and gradual development islanders experienced in the island. The novel comprises of 29 short chapters. The beautiful Landscapes and nature are depicted clearly in the novel. The novel can be considered as a true historical narrative and a representative work of Lakshadweep literature. This novel depicts the pathetic condition of the people of islands. Sea becomes a major character in the novel. One can feel the unforgettable memories of the islanders as presented in the novel. The real life incidents and events such as the dolphins that went to the lagoon, call of the wind and the ancient practices and traditions are clearly depicted.

Key words: - *Kolodam*, Lakshadweep, ancestors, pathetic condition, sea etc.

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INTRODUCTION

Lakshadweep is not all about unparalleled scenic beauty and stunning biodiversity, Apart from its coral atolls, picturesque island and submerged reefs, Lakshadweep also has an intriguing history to narrate. Like the rest of India Lakshadweep too had to put up monarchical dominance and colonial rule in the past. Historical records confirm that the islands were home to the cheras before, that pallavas annexed it in the 17th century. By 14th century Lakshadweep fell into the hands of Muslim. The Muslim rules not only governed the place but also left a lasting impression on the culture of island. Although Lakshadweep came under the dominance of diverse rulers, very few empires managed to influence the land as much as the Muslim traders

did. The supremacy of the Arakkal family continued even after the invasion of the Portuguese and the Dutch rulers in the 17th century. Once the British East Indian company completely took over the Arakkal clan was forced to cede its power to the colonial rulers.

The people of the island maintain their distinctive identities in their day –to- day activities. The entire population can be divided in to four separate entities. Each of them is considered a separate community and is recognized as the Amindivis, the Koyas , the Malmis and the Melachais . It is believed by the islanders that among the first settlers on the island were the Amindivis. Among these four communities, the Koya are considered as the land owners whereas Malmis comprise the

community that works off the Farms of the Koyas. Thus either takes up the farming work on annual contract basis or carrying some part of all the activities that go into tending the vast land holdings. It is the last community Melachery who work as the lowest ring of the work Force. They are the labor community of the islands and their primary occupation is collecting coconuts from the trees. They are skilled in this occupation and have conducted it for generations. Each of its communities has their own celebrations and ceremonies which are totally exclusive to them. However, there are very positive aspects of this segregation of the form communities. They do not carry the segregation beyond work and take great pleasure collectively observing all the festivities together. All of them participate whole heartedly in each other's festivities.

Early settlers carried with them art forms and music travelling in karalla in those days of migration with passages of time changes occurred in them due to the social and environmental changes in the territory, new art forms and music have come up in this background. In every people specially of the villagers that the traditional theme of Lakshadweep and their religious trends the life style which all so influence although spirituality of religion. The inners covering of Arabian sea that which made Lakshadweep keep away from the view of traditional and heritagious believe have in rainy season people used to travel in boat like 'odam' go to mainland the whole circumstances was so dangerous to and islander on that days and reached by the somewhere because of the ruthless to landing other foreign countries. Cause of their journey that influence the things which bearded and secant also experienced attracted that the people of olden days of Lakshadweep that on their life style which change their mind and flows in the life of each and every people of Lakshadweep that it has eighteens as in form of stories songs as the place of islanders life still wit investigation at the hand off Literature is a form of art it is capable of bringing about differing emotions and a general sense of spiritual well being it takes various forms and general like history novels and Essays story and poems it became historical literature when the

intent of it is based on the evidence derived from factual learning and is written without any bias novels poems and stories must be written focusing the values ideals of humanity to must also be tended to improve the knowledge base of Humanity. **Ismath Hussain's *Kolodam*: - Reflection of dweep history**

Literature helps us to understand the past better and learn important lessons of life from it. It also allows us to know and learn rituals, beliefs and culture of other religions and develop a secular approach towards it .Lakshadweep has great and standard Literary creation as for as Lakshadweep is concerned. It is very essential to a few literary genres reflecting the moral values, culture and social practices of island with the presence of such people of great caliber and responsibility. The use of native colloquial language, which is slightly differing from Malayalam, is explained in the foot notes that are present on almost all pages. The writer tries to awake the social survival in the life of the people with the story of the people who lived before 50 years. The most touching and frightened scene of the novel is the pathetic condition of the people when they suffered from cholera.

Kolodam a reflection on sea lives it is the first Malayalam novel from Lakshadweep written by Ismath Hussain. Born in 1975 December 9 at kiltan island Lakshadweep, son of Baliyapathada Muhammed Koyahaji and Rahmath Neduthiru. He was the editor of Lakshadweep Dairy and Kannadipatha. He learned Hipnotism scientifically. Now he is the secretary of LSPS (Lakshadweep sahitya pravarthaka sangam)

The work is the clear picture of the life and experience of the ancestors. It is the life of island and its history and culture. The novel contains the difficulties and gradual development of islanders experienced in the island, thoughts, sweating smell of the sea and the pulse of life. This novel can be considered as a true historical narrative. The novel depicts the pathetic condition of the people of the island. Sea became a major character in the novel. The language in the novel Koladam is mixture of native tongue and Malayalam.

The novel travel through the history of Lakshadweep. The story reveals around through the

major characters such as Kunniseethi, Sainabi, Valiya Koya. The writer portrays the life of Lakshadweep just before independence in the novel. It discusses some movements in relation to independence struggle and also the story call for independence that echoed everywhere. The stories of the revolutionaries who went to participate in the congress meeting held at Thrissur are still exiting for the people of Lakshadweep.

He portrays the social and economic living conditions of the people of Lakshadweep. It is not necessary that one should visit a place to know about its social and economic conditions instead a work born in the lap of the land can speak about its life. Kolodam (boat) by Ismath Hussain is such a work, title itself suggest the same.

Ruhiyabi is an unforgettable character in the fifth chapter she dies is an understanding teaching used in the novel. The Dancing waves of Arabian Sea slowly reveals the enchanted island of Lakshadweep where the lives of some people are enclosed background all Limitations sea-life and them to describe the life and islanders. They adjust their lives according to the nature and sea. It becomes possible to maintain a balance essential for preserving cultural values. At present we are privileged to have many poets, novelist and great thinkers who are famous in the national level.

The islands scattered in the blue carpet of the ocean are always are inspiring as they are very far from the mainland, 'Kolodam' was the only means by which the islanders could get connected to the main land. The Kolodam remained as a symbol of their hard ship and hard work. They went to the mainland with coconut once in six months or once in a year. They sold it and with the money, bought the goods and food items required for a year.

The journey of the 'Kolodam' depends on weather conditions. If the weather conditions are very hostile they would through the goods in to the sea. Many a time's empty Kolodam came back to the island. Without any goods this broke down the hearts of the islanders who waited for the Kolodam bringing back goods for a year. They shed their tears over their lost money made of hard work and savings, and the lost coconuts. Unexpected climate

changes broke down the rhythm of their lives. As a result starvation was an uninvited visitor many times.

The Arakkal dynasty during the period of Arakkal Beevi introduced the system of 'Kanakkara Pilla'. They ruled the islands. Later, the Britishers introduced system of Ameens. Thus ruling system called (Ameen kacheri) was also formed. There was also a system of Arakkal Ameen before that later Ameen kacheris began to function as centres of administration. Judgments of cases were also done here the islanders used to make coir out of coconut husk and sold it in the Ameen kacheri as a means of livelihood. Equal amount of rice was given for a cabot of coir. Rice was not given if the coir was not well dried or if it did not meet the required weight. The novel 'kolodam' provides a very clear description of the how the Ameen kacheri's functioned

The novel also portrays a clear depiction of the cast system that existed in Lakshadweep years before. The novel indicates how far the cast system was badly affecting the society. The untouchability and caste system that existed in Kerala were also present in the islands as well even though not in an equal scale. Like the discovers as Braahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and sudras in the mainland, the islanders were divided into koyas, the malmis and Melacheris. Caste system even though not as strong as before, still exist in some of the islands- especially in Androth and Amini

Ismath Hussain through his novel shows how caste system can conquer human minds. Kunni seethe and sainabi were close friends from their child hood days. But when they grew, they too were suppressed by the limitations of the society. The wall of caste grew between them. Caste system is better understood through the perspective of Kunni seethi; Sainabi forgets her hatred and falls in love with him when he saves her from the sea putting him in danger

When Kunniseethi, a lower caste man dared to love a high class girl Sainabi, the whole society turns against them. Only Baliyakoya, the head of Sainaba's family and a few who followed him were there to support their marriage. Really it was a rebellion and a challenge against the society.

Another important event in the novel is when Baliyakoya challenges the Kanakkar pillai who stored rice in his garner, not supplying it when common people dying out of starvation.

The Novel also discusses the role and condition of women in the islands just before independence. It portray a period when women did not have any were at all in the society. The novelist opens up the conditions of women who had to suppress their wishes and dreams, withdrawing to themselves in a male dominated society.

This so called 'male domination' removes women from the mainstream society. In the Island where Islam is the only religion, they used religion to create limitations and bonds for women. Islam does not deny freedom for women. Islam asks people to expand their minds and destroy evil. Nobody saw the suffocation experienced by women within the walls created in the name of religion. The vested interests behind supposing these rules and regulations as part of religions belief are easily understood. They created clear cut separation between men and women.

Educational opportunities and conditions for women were very much limited compared to men. They fear of the patriarchal society, of women becoming superior to men made them keep women away from education. Men were allowed to study as they wished. There even existed a society; they believed that school education was forbidden for women.

There also exists history which is not recorded anywhere other than in the minds of the Islanders. The period of British administration was very painful for the islanders. It created memories of fear and terror in their minds. The islanders hinted their women and gold when they saw the sailing ship of Britishers approaching the islands. Women were made to sit in large pits to hide and gold was buried. They did this in order to save their women's dignity from a group of animals who gave new value for it.

Conclusion

The language in the novel Kolodam is mixture of native tongue and Malayalam. The use of native colloquial language, which is slightly different from Malayalam, is explained in the foot notes that

are present on almost all pages... the title Kolodam is very suitable for this short novel. It means canoes- the lifeline of the islanders. The characters of the novel are living and dead people in the island. Events are subdued through the new vision. The writer tries to awake the social survival in the life of people with the story of people who lived before 50 years.

The novel does not specify the historical time of the events thought different seasons and circumstances are brought in. The most touching and frightened scene of the novel is the pathetic condition of the one who suffered from cholera. There are many circumstances that depict love, hatred, heroism and spirituality. The shift from spiritual life to magical realism in the novel is through the woman who named Rukiya who is dead at the time of delivery, but even after she is dead child moves from within her womb.

Sea is the main character in the story. The native people of the place, in novel, fully depend on. Fishing is one of the main reasons why their life is closely connected to the sea. The various experiences in their life have close relation to the surrounding sea. They adjust their life according to the nature of the sea. Sea and their life are interconnected. But when the sea becomes furious, their livelihood is challenged, hence poverty visits them with all its mighty force. The memory they have on the sea is basis of the life they lead in the risky place. Their fishing trips are embedded with songs and stories that they have composed and they perform these songs during their long voyages. This has become a way of shedding away their worries and boredom.

The dignity of their women was very important for the islanders. The Islanders did not have the voice to question the Britishers. But young rebellious leaders like Kunni Seethi did challenged and spoke against them and also had burned their houses .Literary works provide us with the unrecorded histories and cultural myths which cannot be found anywhere else. The novel 'Kolodam' itself is a typical example to show as how far a literary work is related to the history of a place. Many incidents in Kolodam are real life situations of these tiny islanders as well.

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