

## **'Paradigm Shift' - the Bottom Line of the Novel *Kayar***

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### **Abstract**

The paper aims to investigate the novel *Kayar* by Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai, by trying to cull out the crux of the novel. This paper also illustrates how political interventions have tremendous impact on social pattern, cultural values and economical system. This research brings up the discussion on the origin of existing social order and its pros and cons. *Kayar* a realistic novel, portrays the lives of men and women with feudalism and capitalism, matriarchal and patriarchal setup, colonization and patriotism and private ownership and communism. In these binaries the aforesaid are the products of the socio-economic system that existed and followed by the people as law and the following are the counterparts. This novel is the registry of the history of Thakazhi's own village kuttanad in central Travancore. This paper unveils the logic behind the radical changes that are delineated in the novel *Kayar*. The paper also attempts to manifest the conflict theory.

**Keywords:** Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai, *Kayar*, Feudalism and Capitalism, Matriarchal and Patriarchal setup, Colonization and Patriotism and Private Ownership and Communism, Conflict Theory.

Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai's *Kayar* came out in 1978 as a single volume around a thousand pages. The novel narrates the lives of four generations of men and women in Kuttanad. It is unique in its conception and unorthodox form from the classical view of the novel. *Kayar* portrays the social transformation that took place in Kuttanad specifically and the changing patterns of man's relationship with land. *Kayar* the novel expresses both economical and emotional bond between the land and man. It also narrates the birth of a new consciousness which has no resemblance of the world's old consciousness. In this novel Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai registered the history of the village Kuttanad, which is the political miniature of the Kerala state. Through this novel Thakazhi emphasized the concept of change, which is inevitable in the universe. He focused upon change as the common law of the universe. This research paper substantiates the same as the crux of the novel.

Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai records the historical changes that affect the village life of Kuttanad. The historical changes consist of political, social, economic, religious and cultural

changes. The political interventions have tremendous impact on social pattern, cultural values and economical system. The novel *Kayar* is contended with dichotomy of the whole society of kuttanad. It brings out the discussion on the origin of existing social order and its pros and cons. The novel is running over nearly a thousand pages and divided into 9 parts and 139 chapters: stretching over the period of nearly 120 years.

In the first part of the novel Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai explains the past histories of several families and also the arrival of the Klassiper from Trivandrum and another officer Nagan Pillai from Tamil Nadu as the in charge of measuring lands. The reader can trace out the historical record of the first-time land allocation for cultivation on scientific basis. This shows the first change that occurs in the village which leads to several changes. The land allocation for cultivation drags the village people for a new consciousness. The feudalistic setup slowly changes its face into capitalism.

The advent of modernization in the village and the evolution of a new bourgeois consciousness affect the old feudal setup. This made a change in the life of the people who rely on the land and its corps. Money becomes the wage instead of grains. The Tamil Brahmins are the money lenders and lands become their belongings. The farmers become debtors and Brahmins become loaners. This made an encroaching impact into the society. It results in disputes in temple management and leads to ruin the Tharavads. In this novel Ganapathy Potti Iyer of Mankombil, a Brahmin money lender at Palathol Illam becomes accountant of the temple, thereby brings the financial state of affairs of the temple and the people under his control.

The fifth part of the novel delineates the religious and social reforms occurred in the village. Vettippurackal Kunjan Nair, the son of Kunjachi Avar creates awareness about Gandhian thoughts and the importance of ahimsa to the people. He starts an ashram in the village with a small group of people; later many youngsters of the village joined the ashram, when it comes to the quest for independence. But now and then there was a rustle in the ashram about idea of supporting Chovas, Puzhyas and Parayas for their education.

By supporting Gandhi, Kunjan Nair also triggered the patriotic fervor among the youngsters. But after some time Kunjan Nair's speech become unheard and the members attending prayers got reduced. The next generation moves towards the new ideology called socialism. Marxism begins to take roots all over Kerala. In the village Kuttanad Surendaran becomes an icon of the communist party. Kunjan Nair's approach towards the society is patriotism which is against colonialism. After the Second World War the society's needs change and move towards socialism.

After independence first-national level common elections are conducted and congress party has won the election in most of the parts of India, except few states. Kerala is one among the states where communist party heads the power. The party creates awareness among the bonded labourers and other working-class people in the country. This brings the new consciousness among proletariat against private ownerships. The land lords are not happy with the new government's land reform. The new government passes a new bill on the land reform, which restricts the excess cultivating lands with private ownership. The lands are distributed equally among working class who raises their voice with the slogan land for tillers.

The novel *Kayar's* skeleton is paradigm shift. Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai framed the novel by the documents that he receives from Alapuzha municipal. Thakazhi also explains the important change that occurs due to the land reform. The matriarchal setup of the society is gradually transformed into the patriarchal society. The female hegemonic feudal setup is grabbed by the male members of the family. Women also have lost their sexual liberty. Gradual transformation occurs in the society.

Debi Prasad Chattopadhyaya in his book *Lokayata: A Study in ancient Indian Materialism* has about the existence of matriarchal setup in Kerala. He observes that agriculture is the invention of women. So, in the early stage of agricultural economics women's social status was at its summit. In this book Debi Prasad quoted Kosambi's statement that we can see the remnants of the matriarchal way of life in Thiruvangore and Cochi and that the remnants of the matriarchal way of life is clearly visible only in north east region of India, Kasi, Nairs of South West Malabar coast.

Debi Prasad also has quoted Bells in his book. Bells strongly affirmed the crude use of violence in eliminating the matriarchal governance. In India three kinds of institutions have emerged. They are 1. Hyper gamy 2. Child marriage 3. Sathi. These were practiced in Indian society and to impose the inferior status of women in the society. Bells reasons that the invasions of Aryans make a change in the primitive Indian society. They use limitless violence against the primitive Indian society.

This paper tries to substantiate the basic laws of dialectical materialism. They are the law of transformation of quantitative to qualitative change, the law of unity and struggles of opposites and the law of negation of negation. In the novel *kayar*, Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai tries to show the dichotomy of the society as well he narrates the story of the village with the logic behind the radical changes. Klassiper from Trivandrum and Nagan Pillai from Tamil Nadu are the in charges of measuring land and land allocation. They allocated the land for cultivation on scientific basis for the first time. This activity demonstrates the law of transformation. This system of allocation leads to modernism and the emergence of new consciousness. The

consciousness requires education, to make use of advance opportunities. So schools opened and people let their children to schools. The arrival of modern technology and it's expansion made a qualitative change in the social life.

Due to new bills implemented by the government the life pattern of the Nayars in Tharavad becomes deplorable. Tharavads lose their value and ends in the disaster. In Kerala under the matriarchal system property belonged to the female members in the family. The male head was only a custodian. The implementation of new bills and the advancement of modernism have great impact in the Tharavads. The male member of the family has to stay with his wife, but not in his Tharavad. The cultivation land remains with the Tharavad and male members of the family received a little piece of land. They also have to take care of their wife and children.

When money is paid as wages, the labourers have suffered. The agricultural labourers' association are formed to raise voice against the land owners. The character Chennatan Kunchu Nair, father of one of the principle characters Manikantan, has lost all his land and received a small piece of land as his share. When the communist party assumes power in Kerala, the extremist group is also formed against the land lords. In Kuttanad the three feudalists are Varkey of Paruthikkattu, Vattathra Gregory and Vattathra Peeli. They are afraid of the extremist group. Many feudalists are killed and some committed suicide in order to escape from the hands of enemies. The union of labourers with significant solidarity and in unison revolt against the feudalist's atrocity. This demonstrates the law of unity and struggles of opposites.

The third law of dialectical materialism is the negation of negation. It means the qualitative changes are not constant and it has to move forward. So, all qualitative changes have to reproduce the new conflicts. This leads to the qualitative changes happen in the society due to land allocation. Owing to the degradation of Tharavads and land reform bill, the matriarchal setup declined and later feudalistic consciousness which paved way for the evolution of Marxism among people. The novel also depicts the contemporary realities, the failure of land reform, decline of interest in farming and nepotism in politics.

Thus, the novel *Kayar* makes its reader realize that paradigm shift is inevitable in the society. The changes occur, so that growth of society is possible. The political interventions like land allocations and reform bills have a tremendous impact on social pattern. The changes also occur in cultural values due to reformation in religion. On account of these small but significant changes the socio- economic system faces a paradigm shift. This is unavoidable in the growth towards the idealistic society.

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