

Executive Summary of Minor Research Project

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Title of the Project: Rebellious Heroes in the Novels of P. Kesavadev – A Critical Study

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Novel as a literary genre reflects the totality of human nature. Though the Malayalam novels cover a short history it has gone through a speedy advancement in popularity. The flexibility to present human life as such, may be the reason behind its success.

The reflection of contemporary ongoing issues of life, social criticism, synchronism and the unity of the plot, action and time are the essentialities of a novel. The challenge for a novelist is to maintain the sharpness in character creation. The intelligence of a novelist lies in the created plot. Thereby the character study of a novel appears with great importance.

The prominent Malayalam novelist, Kesavadev as a suicide squad fought against the social evils and for the social change. He advocated that literature is for the society and for life. The rebellious nature of Kesavadev has influenced his novel characters too. Dev questioned the discrimination on basis of creed; caste and economy through his protagonist. Social justice and independence were the aim of Dev.

Dev experienced satisfaction in standing for the society. Dev and his characters were stamped as rebels. This project digs out the social commitment of the novelist through the analysis of the Dev's protagonists who were rebels.

The word 'Rebel' is used to represent one who protest against the popular customs and one who negates and establish it. The rebellious nature appears in varying phases in the characters. These phases may be society, time, life, quest for change and psychological background. The first chapter evaluates the background of the explosion of individual understanding. The autobiographical stories of Kesavadev are analyzed to understand the period, the social system, the economic inequalities and caste distinctions at the time of the author.

The second chapter evaluates the rebelliousness of the protagonists in the selected novels of Kesavadev. P. KesavaDev who initiated Malayalam novels in presenting the life of the downtrodden in the society. The writers who were socially committed always reacted for human rights and justice. The characters like Pappu, Kochayyappen, Kuttan, Gopalan, Kattu, Anthony and Rocky responded against social justice. They rejected everything against humanistic concerns. Dev as a novelist and as a social being synchronized with the backwardness. Dev criticized against everything that suppressed human rights. His writings were more autobiographical.

Many novelists pictured the life of working class and peasants. Dev succeeded in knowing the pain and struggle of laborers and instructed artistic solution for them. The humanistic discourse of Dev was the result of his inclusive approach to the marginalized.

Through his hero's, Dev protested against the social injustice. The rival heroes stood like symbols against all social system that should be opposed. Here, the analysis is based on heroes of selected novels

The protagonists in Kesavadev's novels have acerbically responded to the prevailing social injustices. They symbolize the social conscience that rebel against the objectionable social norms. Rebellious nature of P. Kesavadev's protagonists can be summed up as given below:-

1. The hero named Pappu, in his first novel 'Odayil Ninnu' is portrayed as a challenge to the prevailing elitism in the literary culture of that period. Through Pappu, Kesavadev introduce a novel concept to the heroic attributes of the protagonist hitherto nonexistent in Malayalam Literary Culture. An adamant Pappu whose self-esteem never allows him to subservient to anyone truly represents the rebel in him who fight against the social inequalities and injustice. He dares to challenge and question the evils of feudalism and stands as a symbol of independence and self- respect.
2. Kochayyappan, Kuttan and Gopalan – the protagonists in his novel 'Ūlakka' are all rebels against the cruel exploitation by the feudals. The seeds of protest in the minds of the oppressed, passed on from generation to generation find germination and these characters fight against the oppressors. They find fruits in the fight against feudalism but of course at the cost of some losses.

3. The novel 'Kannadi' exhibits strong undercurrent of Marxist ideology which the writer felt necessary for a social revolution. Kattu, the protagonist in the novel wages war for the working classes who are exploited by the capitalists. Two other leading characters in this novel, Rocky and Anthony, also voice their protests against the oppressors. The plot of 'Kannadi' develops through the perspectives of these three heroes.

Kesavadev introduced protagonists who relentlessly fought, rebelled and raised voice against the existing social inequalities and injustices. The very true essence of the writer finds out ways of expressions through his rebellious characters in the novels drawn out the common place episodes and incidents.

Social reformation was the aim of Dev. Dev dreamed of a secular society that is free from all discriminations and divisions in the name of caste, color, creed and occupation. Dev promoted his ideas to the society through his heroes. Though a rebel, KesavDev was a real philanthropist who dealt with humanitarian discourses. The protagonists of Dev's novels prompt for social welfare and to equip common man to think so. Dev's commitment to the society is etched out through his rebel heroes.