

Significance of Background and Beliefs in the Select Novels of O.V. Vijayan

**A Thesis Submitted for the Award of the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in English**



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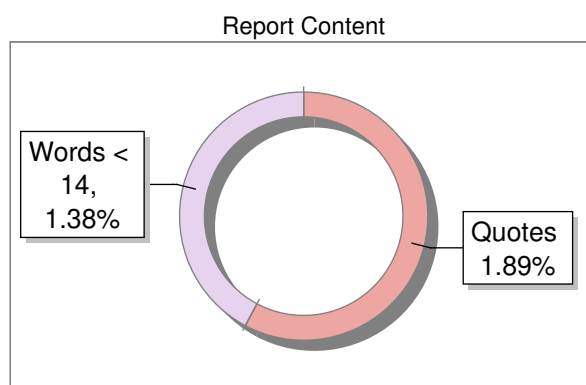
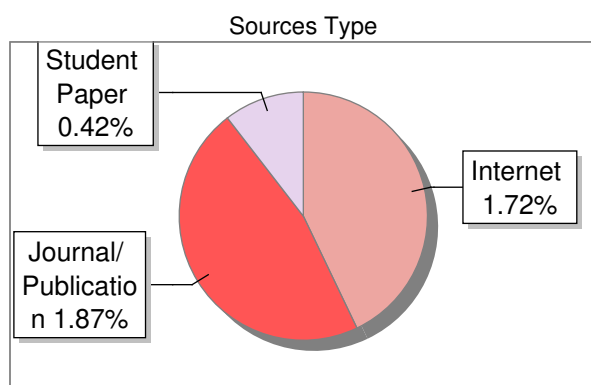
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*Dedicated to my dear Dada Ji
(Late Shri Rajaram Yadav)*

PREFACE

Indian English Novel was the last to arrive on the Indian English Literature scenario. As during the initial years of Indian Writing in English poetry was dominated and followed by drama. In India, there is a great tradition of storytelling from the time of Rig Veda, Purana, and *Upanishad*. Sake Dean Mohomed in 1794 published *The Travels of Dean Mohomed*, the first book written by an Indian in English. Kailash Chandra Dutt's *A Journey of 48 Hours of the Year* 1945 appeared in the Calcutta Literary Gazette. Then we have S.C. Dutt's *Republic of Orissa*. Indian novel in English grew rapidly in the nineteenth century and thematic variety was introduced with the publication of Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's *Rajmohan's Wife*. The rise and development of Indian English Novel were felicitated by the impact of English education, national awakening and the influence of European models. In terms of themes, techniques and human values English novels have emerged as a product of Indian soil.

The flowering season of Indian English Novels is generally regarded with the arrival of the trio – Mulk Raj Anand (*Untouchable, Coolie, Village*), R. K. Narayana (*Swami and Friends, The Dark Room, The English Teacher*) and Raja Rao (*Kanthapura, Serpent and the Rope*). The main themes of Indian English Novels during this period are viz – the struggle for freedom, East-West encounter, communal tension, the plight of poor and women etc. After this trio, the notable novelists are Bhabani Bhattacharya, Kamala Markandaya, Arun Joshi, Khushwant Singh, R. P. Jhabvala, Nayantara Sahgal, Shashi Deshpande, Anita Desai, Bharti Mukherjee, Shobha Dey, Arundhati Roy, who wrote on different aspects related to India.

In literature, "regional" refers to works rooted in a particular area, capturing its unique features, while 'universal' is often considered more encompassing. Regional novels reflect the social relations, customs, and geography of specific places and illustrate how the environment affects the people living in it.

The regional novel is a writing in which the setting or local colour, plays an unusually important part. In almost all narratives there is setting of some kind but in many of them it could as well have been somewhere else. Regional literature deals with the distinctive atmosphere, people, problems, customs and expressions of one particular community or district. It shows a marks tendency to frankness and realism. Some examples of regional novels are Hardy's Wessex novels. Indian author R. K. Narayan [1906-2001] his novels,

including *'The Guide'*. O.V. Vijayan is another notable writer whose novels, such as *'The Legends of Khasak'* and *'The Saga of Dharmapuri'*, reflect this genre.

Modern Malayalam Literature focuses on questions of politics and ethics and the ways to explore the possibilities of language. To begin with, the French and Russian revolution influenced Malayalam literature in the early 1940's and 50's. The trinity of Ullur, Vallathol and Changampuzha had reigned Malayalam literature for a long time, until Kumaran Asan along with Ayyappa Panicker and Kakkad laid the foundations of Western modernism in Malayalam literature. However, Malayalam literature was marked by the need to protest and the need for introspection. Modernity in Malayalam literature seen in nineteenth century. Modernity is also seen in Ananthamurthy's *'Samskara'* and *'The Legends of Khasak'* by O.V Vijayan.

The post-independence period saw a fresh start in the history of longer fiction in Malayalam as in many other Indian languages, parallel to the evolution of post-world war fiction in other parts of the world. The modernist literature in Malayalam exhibits the frustration of a generation that believed in the promised ideals of the newly emerged liberal state in India. O.V. Vijayan and Kamala Das, Madath Thekkepattu Vasudevan Nair remains unchallenged as the eminent celebrity of Malayalam literary world.

Vijayan's novels are a blend of realism and fantasy, portraying the complexity of human life. His works are deeply influenced by his background in Kerala, incorporating its landscapes, languages, and cultural practices. The belief systems of his characters often reflect a blend of traditional Indian thought and contemporary existential questions. Vijayan used his narratives to critique societal and political issues, making his literature relevant beyond its immediate cultural context. His exploration of human consciousness and existential angst has contributed to his novels' enduring appeal.

In order to cover the vast area of the present research, this study is divided into Six Chapters. The first chapter is introductory in nature and an attempt has been made to peep into the history of Indian Writing in English. It also covers a brief survey of Indian English Novels, a brief discussion on Malayam Novelists and their contribution, and offers information about O.V. Vijayan and his contribution in the growth and development of Indian English novels. The second chapter is on Unravelling Existential Pursuits, Self-Realisation and Freedom of Self where the research study focuses on Quest for Self-realization, Identity Crisis and Search for Freedom and also it analyses traditional and modern norms. The chapter third is about Impact of Socio- Cultural Norms in the Select Novels. It explores the concepts of Urban V/s Rural Sensibilities,

Traditional V/s Modernity, and Social Consciousness as elaborated in the Select Novels. The Chapter fourth is on Significance of Social Beliefs wherein the research study makes an attempt to unfold the broad concept of Psychological Impact, Influence of Social Taboos, and Emergence of New Generation. It also explains ethical issues and challenges and discloses Pseudo Spiritual Practices and has at length discussion on generation gap and family values. The chapter fifth explores Festivals, Bliss and Human Welfare. The chapter sixth is conclusion and has an overview of previous chapters, points out relevance of the research study in the modern context and brings out key findings of the research study.

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CHAPTER - 1

INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Concepts and Definitions
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-

CHAPTER-1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Concepts and Definitions

Background

The term “Background” can carry various meanings depending on the context in which it is applied. Here are several common interpretations.

Visual Background:

In a visual or graphical context, the background refers to the area or space behind the main subject or objects in an image, photograph, or design. It serves as a backdrop and often provides context or contrast to the foreground elements.

Auditory Background:

In the realm of sound or music, the background typically refers to the sounds or music that play a supporting or secondary role. For example, in a movie soundtrack, background music sets the mood without being the primary focus.

Contextual Background:

This refers to the details, conditions, or events that come before or accompany a specific situation, event, or subject. Understanding the background of a story or issue is essential for gaining a comprehensive understanding of it.

Educational Background:

When discussing a person's educational background, it refers to their history of formal education, including degrees, qualifications, and institutions attended. This information is often relevant in job applications and professional contexts.

Cultural Background:

This pertains to a person's cultural heritage, including their customs, traditions, language, and values. It can influence their perspectives and behaviors.

Personal Background:

This encompasses various aspects of an individual's life, such as their family history, personal experiences, and life events. It can be relevant in social interactions, therapy, or personal narratives.

Scientific Background:

In scientific research or discussions, background information often includes existing knowledge and previous research related to a specific topic. It provides a foundation for new research and helps situate findings within a broader context.

Computer Background:

In the context of computers and technology, “background” can refer to processes or tasks that run in the background without requiring immediate user attention. Examples include background software updates or background tasks running on a computer's operating system.

Environmental Background:

This can refer to the natural or man-made elements that are present in a specific environment, such as the background noise in a city or the geological background of a region.

The interpretation of the term “Background” depends on the specific context in which it is used, and it can refer to the surroundings, context, history, or supporting elements relevant to that context. Background information is a crucial part of an essay, research paper, or presentation because it captures the reader's interest and encourages them to continue reading. It offers supporting details or evidence related to the topic. Typically, background explains the history of the subject or the root of the issue, providing the reader with a general understanding of the topic.

Although there are many key aspects to effective research, one of the most crucial for the reader is the background of your study. It may include both important and relevant studies.

According to “**Merriam Webster**”, “Background refers to the scenery or ground behind something”.¹

According to “**Cambridge Dictionary**”, “Background can be seen behind the main things or people in a picture”.²

According to “**Collins Dictionary**”, “Background refers to the family you are born into and the education you have received. It can also encompass aspects like your social and ethnic roots, financial situation, or the nature of your work experience”.³

Background information serves as a tool for the writer to guide readers who may be unfamiliar with the concepts. It helps to prepare the reader, offering necessary context. Often, readers are interested in understanding events that led up to the research, making background details essential.

Background refers to the circumstances or events that lead up to a phenomenon or development. It provides the context for research, much like the scenery of a tree and mountain in the background, while the study's findings represent the foreground. Establishing a solid background is crucial, as it usually comprises the first section of a research article or thesis, explaining the need for the study and summarizing its objectives. However, many authors find it challenging to write the background effectively. Another common challenge is differentiating between the background and the literature review. The background section can sometimes include a lot of information, and if not handled properly, it may become overwhelming, leading readers to lose engagement.

Figure No: 01 Main Components of Background



Source: Based on Literature Review

Beliefs

The term "beliefs" refers to the feeling that something or someone is true, morally right, or genuinely exists. The word "belief" is derived from two components: "be," which relates to existence or living, and "life," which comes from the Indo-European root "leubh," meaning love. There are four types of beliefs:

- **Meta:** Thoughts about the nature of beliefs themselves.
- **Perception:** Beliefs influenced by how the world is perceived through available evidence.
- **Opinions:** Beliefs concerning the interpretation of reality.
- **Predictions:** Beliefs about anticipated future events based on present knowledge.

According to “Merriam Webster”, “Belief is a state or habit of mind in which trust or confidence is placed in some person or thing”.⁴

“Belief is something that is accepted, considered to be true, or need as an opinion, something believed”.⁵

According to “Collins Dictionary”, “Belief is a feeling of certainty that something exists is true or is good”.⁶

According to “Oxford Dictionary”, “Belief is a strong feeling that something or someone exists is true, or something/someone is good or right”.⁷

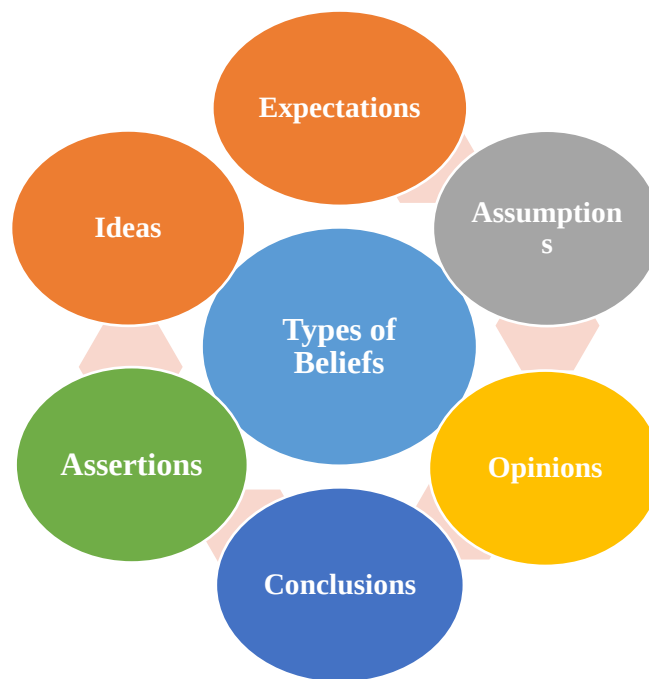
The concepts of beliefs, attitudes, and values represent distinct sociological and psychological constructs. Beliefs mainly encompass the assumptions individuals make about themselves, others, and the various phenomena in their environment. They represent our perception of reality and are strongly ingrained, with our values stemming from these beliefs.

A belief is an internal conviction that something is true, even if that conviction remains unproven or irrational. Generally, beliefs can be categorized into two types based on their expression: core beliefs and dispositional beliefs. Core beliefs pertain to ideas individuals actively consider, while dispositional beliefs emerge when a person is not directly engaged in a particular action.

In epistemology, philosophers refer to "belief" as attitudes about the world that can be true or false. Various contemporary philosophers have attempted to describe beliefs as representations of potential realities. Beliefs are central to many significant philosophical discussions. Religious beliefs involve attitudes toward mythological, supernatural, or spiritual aspects of faith. Belief systems are guiding principles that influence people's daily lives, manifesting in religion, political affiliation, philosophy, or spirituality.

A religious belief typically revolves around a moral code, the existence of one or more deities, and the influence of supernatural events on our lives and the universe. In contrast, political beliefs shape an individual's views on government, economic systems, and various social structures.

Figure No: 02 Types of Beliefs



Source: Based on Literature Review

- **Assertions:** Assertions are strong, confident statements presented as facts. They are often backed by evidence or reasoning.
- **Ideas:** Ideas are mental concepts or notions. They may not always be grounded in evidence but can serve as the basis for further exploration or development.
- **Expectations:** Expectations are anticipations of future events or outcomes. They can be based on previous experiences, assumptions, or beliefs.

- **Assumptions:** Assumptions are beliefs taken for granted without direct evidence. They serve as foundational elements in reasoning but may not always be accurate.
- **Opinions:** Opinions are subjective expressions of one's beliefs, preferences, or judgments. They may not be universally true and can vary among individuals.
- **Conclusions:** Conclusions are inferences or deductions drawn from evidence, observations, or reasoning. They represent the end point of a thought process.

Each type of belief has an important role in shaping an individual's worldview, influencing decision-making, and contributing to the richness of human thought. It's important to critically evaluate beliefs and be open to adjusting them in light of new information or perspectives.

A Background Study of Indian English Novels

A novel is defined as a prose fiction work, usually of substantial length. It can be seen as an extended narrative that blends elements of storytelling, history, philosophy, poetry, imagination, social critique, and a distinct perspective on life. The novels have various elements such as plot. It deals with the event and situations that are presented in the plot. And second is the characters of men-women that appear in the novels, The third component is dialogue, reflecting the exchanges between characters. The fourth pertains to the setting and timing of the events. The fifth focuses on the narrative style, and the sixth is the perspective provided by the author. Novelists present a unique and creative interpretation of human life.

According to “**Merriam Webster**”

“A novel deal with human experience, and with their perceptions, thoughts. It is seen as long and complex. It is considered as invented prose”.⁸

According to “**Collins Dictionary**”

“A novel is defined as a long-written story, it depicts about imaginary people and events”.⁹

According to “**Oxford Living Dictionaries**”

“A Fictional prose that narrates and represents the truthfulness of the character and their action”.¹⁰

Novels of Manners

Romantic poetry, particularly the focus on emotions known as "sensibility," had a significant influence on novels of the time [Rajimwale, 2004]. Jane Austen [1775-1817] critiqued

sensibility, viewing it as a sign of weakness in women. She explored how women's behavior was shaped by their inner emotions and criticized the idea that sensibility was a defining characteristic of femininity. Austen's novels, including *'Pride and Prejudice'* [1796], *'Sense and Sensibility'* [1797], and *'Mansfield Park'* [1814], revolve around women and offer detailed depictions of the customs and values of her society.

Historical Novels:

Sir Walter Scott [1771-1832] pioneered the historical novel genre. According to Albert [1979], Scott infused the genre with "life-giving force, vital energy, insight, and a unique skill," transforming it into a new literary form. His notable works include *'Rob Roy'* [1817] and *'Ivanhoe'* [1820].

Chronicle Novels:

Novels like Jane Austen's *'Emma'* [1815] and Charlotte Brontë's *'Jane Eyre'* [1847] are examples of chronicle novels, as they trace the lives of their protagonists from childhood to adulthood, with events in the story connected to specific dates.

Gothic Novels:

Gothic novels often feature supernatural elements, such as ghosts and eerie settings like tombs and dungeons, creating a sense of horror. The first gothic novel was *'The Castle of Otranto'* [1764] by Horace Walpole. Emily Brontë used gothic elements in her novel *'Wuthering Heights'* [1847], where the ghost of Catherine appears.

Stream of Consciousness Novels:

James Joyce and Virginia Woolf played a pivotal role in the advancement of the stream of consciousness technique, where a character's inner thoughts and emotions are presented in a fragmented and nonlinear way. This style emphasizes how characters experience reality from within, rather than through external narration. Examples include Joyce's *'Ulysses'* [1922] and Woolf's *'To the Lighthouse'* [1927].

Regional Novels:

The regional novel, a genre associated with Victorian author Thomas Hardy [1840-1920], is set in a specific region and depicts its local customs, language, and culture. Hardy's works are often set in the fictional region of Wessex, as seen in novels like *'The Return of the Native'*, *'The Mayor of Casterbridge'*, and *'Tess of the d'Urbervilles'*. Indian author R. K. Narayan

[1906-2001] his novels, including *'The Guide'*. O.V. Vijayan is another notable writer whose novels, such as *'The Legends of Khasak'* and *'The Saga of Dharmapuri'*, reflect this genre.

The study focuses on two key concepts: regional and universal. In literature, "regional" refers to works rooted in a particular area, capturing its unique features, while 'universal' is often considered more encompassing. Regional novels reflect the social relations, customs, and geography of specific places and illustrate how the environment affects the people living in it.

The regional novel is a writing in which the setting or local color, plays an unusually important part. In almost all narratives there is setting of some kind but in many of them it could as well have been somewhere else. Regional literature deals with the distinctive atmosphere, people, problems, customs and expressions of one particular community or district. It shows a marks tendency to frankness and realism. Some examples of regional novels are Hardy's Wessex novels.

In the Ninetieth and Twentieth century the regional novel flowered abundantly. It received a fresh input from a certain historical situation and flourished numerically more than ever before. The golden age of English regional novel is from 1800 to 1940. It developed in the works of Maris Edgeworth, Charlotte Bronte, George Eliot, Thomas Hardy, R.K. Narayan and O.V. Vijayan. Maria Edgeworth is the first of the great regional novelists of England. The regions, she discovered was Ireland. In her novel she made a quite new use of national element. Critics say that the regional novel is too locale. It is not sufficient universal in its reference. It is too preoccupied with what George Eliot calls "Vulgar details". But regional novel has merit also. It is brilliant illumination of English landscape. It shows a detailed faithfulness.

A key factor in the emergence of the novel was industrial development. As machinery increased work efficiency, people gained more time for rest and leisure, and many choose to spend this time reading novels. The availability of the printing press allowed for mass production of books at lower costs, making them more affordable even for low-income individuals. Unlike in the past, when only the aristocracy could afford to read, books became accessible to a broader audience.

Romances, which had once been favored by the elite, began to lose their appeal because they lacked relevance to the common people. These older stories, centuries old, no longer captivated readers' interest. As a result, the popularity of romances as a genre began to fade. Additionally, the decline of drama further played a role in the emergence of the novel. To fully understand the emergence of the novel in the 18th century, it is important to not only look back at its

origins but also consider its evolution over time, as readers today are in the 21st century. This broader perspective helps in comprehending how the novel developed and transformed into its current form.

Indian English novels attain their position in the international field. English novels flourishing in both quality and quantity since independence, novels have crossed many stages to achieve popularity. Novels are considered an easy medium to connect with readers. Thus, novels are heart-touching to readers. Indian English novels undergo natural development and become an appealing part of our literature. Indian English novels are a bridge between the East and the West. M.K. Naik delineates his thoughts about the novels.

“Novels are known for their notable work, not only in English education in India but also in prose fiction, it is considered as a source of story-telling, in today’s world novels are known because of their importation from west”.¹¹

After independence, Indian English novels became the most prominent form of Indian English literature. In modern times, the number of readers is grown up. The novels have their journey from the time of *Rig-Veda or Upanishad*. Many Bengali literary works were translated into Hindi language.

The Indian novels are divided into four stages, in the first stage, we have writers like Bankimchandra Chatterjee, Toru Dutt, and Romesh Chunder Dutt. Bankimchandra Chatterjee’s *‘Raj Mohan’s Wife’* [1864] is regarded as the first Indian Novel in English. Most of the works were translated from the Bengali language to English and Shaikh Dean Mohammad was the first person in India who wrote the first book in English, entitled *‘The Travels of Dean Mohammad’* in [1793] which was published in England.

The world war Ist was considered the second phase of Indian English novels. The novelists of this period are, Shankar Ram, A.S.P Ayer, and K.S Venkataramani, after that we had a great trio of, Mulk Raj Anand, R.K Narayan, and Raja Rao. The foremost novelists of this era are Manohar Malgonkar, Bhabani Bhattacharya, and Khushwant Singh, and so on so forth.

And after that, some of the prominent novelists came into existence like as Kali Krishna Lahiri’s *‘Roshanara’* [1881], Raja Lakshmi Devi’s *‘The House Wife’* [1876], Toru Dutt’s *‘Bianca’* [1878], and other writers who had contributed significantly to Indian English literature.

The nineteenth-century novelists are Anand Prasad Dutt's *'The Indolence'* [1878], Ram Krishna Punt's *'The Bay of Bengal'* [1866], Trailokya Das, *'Hirimba Wedding'* [1884], Shoshee Chunder Dutt's *'The Young Zamindar'* [1883], and Michael Madhusudan Dutt's *'Bjoy Chand: An Indian Tale'* [1888], and Yogendra Nath Chattopadhyaya's, *'The Girl and Her Tutor'* [1891]. The novelists appeared like Ramesh Chunder Dutt, who translated his novel into the English language *'A Lake of Palms'* [1902], Noor Jahan, *'The romance of an Indian Queen'* in [1909], *'Nasrian an Indian Medley'* [1911], *'Kamala'* [1925], *'Khamenei'* [1931].

Rabindranath Tagore, novels are *'The Home and the World's'* [1916], *'Gora'* [1910], *'The Wreck'* [1910]. Cornelia Sorabji's, *'Love and Life behind the Purdah'* [1902]. Sir Joginder's Singh, *'Nasreem'* [1915]. A novelist like Sarat Kumar Ghosh's *'Verdict of Gods'* [1905]. L.B. Pal's *'A Glimpses of Zanana Life in Bengal'* [1904]. Bhabani Bhattacharya's *'Goddess Named Gold'* [1760].

Twenty century becomes an inspiration for writers, during this time, the novels are based on social and political conditions. They write about freedom struggle. Mahatma Gandhi influenced many writers of that time. Mahatma Gandhi's literature was appealed to everyone's heart. His writing becomes popular in literature and is called Gandhian literature. The novelists who were during, Gandhian movement R.S Ventatramm's Murugan in *'Kandan the Patriot: A Novel of New Indian in the Making'* [1932] and *'The Tiller'* [1927].

During the 1930s the best three novelists are Raja Rao, Mulk Raj Anand, and R.K Narayan, and their works published in the year 1935, and 1938, respectively. These three novelists are known as the father of Indian English novels, they started writing around mid-1930. Their works are the real beginning of Indian English novels. K.S. Iyengar mentions:

"The Indian novelists managed their difficulties, which they had to face, and provide us a creative fiction in both the condition in bulk as well as in quality".¹²

Modern Malayalam literature initially followed Western models but soon shifted its focus to political and ethical issues while exploring the possibilities of language. In the 1940s and 1950s, Malayalam literature was influenced by the French and Russian revolutions. For a long time, the literary scene was dominated by the trio of Ullur, Vallathol, and Changampuzha, until writers like Kumaran Asan, Ayyappa Panicker, and Kakkad introduced elements of Western modernism. However, Malayalam literature retained a distinct need for protest and introspection. Modernity in Malayalam literature began in the 19th century and is also reflected

in works like Balachandra Nemade's '*Kosla*' [1963], Ananthamurthy's '*Samskara*' [1965] and O.V. Vijayan's '*The Legends of Khasak*' [1969].

Malayalam novels emerged at the start of the 20th century, influenced by Western literary forms. Novels written during the first decade after India's independence lacked the radicalism of earlier works and often reflected a sense of despondency and introspection. Sadness became a recurring theme, and writers viewed the world from a new perspective. This turbulent and sensitive period also led to the creation of politically and culturally significant texts in regional languages, particularly in Malayalam and Bengali.

Malayalam writers expressed the pain of subjugation under colonial rule, which became evident in Kerala's feudal structure. The first novel written and published in Malayalam was '*Kundalatha*' [1887] by Appu Nedungadi. Although not considered a major novel, it holds the distinction of being the first work in Malayalam to exhibit the essential features of a novel. O. Chandhu Menon's *Indulekha* was the first major Malayalam novel and marked a turning point in the history of Malayalam literature, establishing the novel as a thriving genre. *Indulekha*, along with later critiques of nationalism and modernity, are significant works. The novel's title refers to its main character, an educated and beautiful 18-year-old Nair woman. C.V. Raman Pillai's '*Marthandavarma*' [1891] holds several distinctions it was the first historical novel in any South Indian language, the first novel from Travancore, the first Malayalam novel to be part of a trilogy, and the first to feature a male protagonist.

In the early 20th century, Malayalam literature was enriched by outstanding novels, often translations or adaptations of Western literature. The post-independence period marked a new beginning for Malayalam fiction, paralleling the evolution of post-World War fiction in other parts of the world. The modernist literature in Malayalam exhibits the frustration of a generation that believed in the promised ideals of the newly emerged liberal state in India. The first novel that espoused this new style of writing was Madath Thekkepattu Vasudevan Nair's '*Nalukettu*', [1958]. The other novels that he wrote during his long literary career became equally popular. Many other novelists started writing around the same time, in the early 1960s. The modernist phase thus also shows the tendency of the writers to embrace the folk and the primeval traditions in the place of a defeated nationalism and modernity.

Under these situations, it became a necessity for the modernist writers in Malayalam to give expressions to a new sense of subjectivity and collective experience and sometimes they tried to bring to the forefront, the voices of marginalized sections of society who were completely

forgotten during the process of nation building. They witnessed the newly emerged nation state receding back to the colonial paradigm, coming in the guise of a neo colonial fascism which was a combination and communalist and elitist forces. The euro centered modernity, nationalism, nation state paradigm was found to be unsuitable to the Indian Context.

All these factors prompted the modernist writers to search for the suitable mode of creative expression which can provide a vision of all the issues associated with colonialism, modernity and nationality. There are numerous creative treasures in regional languages that could have been lost to the world. Malayalam is one of India's richly diverse languages and is spoken by nearly thirty million Malayali's. Malayalam literature embodies a spirit of inclusiveness and has developed a tradition over centuries that, while deeply rooted in local culture, is also truly universal in its appeal.

In the early days, Malayalam literature was primarily poetic in nature. Even forms like *Atta Katha*, which combined dance, drama, music, and poetry, were largely based on poetry. However, prose began to develop rapidly in the 19th century, paving the way for the emergence of the novel. The novel quickly established itself as a prominent form, and today, after poetry, it remains one of the richest literary forms in the Malayalam language. It has been observed that the novel in Kerala, as in other regions of India, did not emerge solely due to British influence through English education, but also because of the internal and external socio-political conditions that prevailed in India at the time. These circumstances fostered the growth of this new genre in Malayalam literature.

Writers like O.V. Vijayan, Kamala Das, and Madath Thekkepattu Vasudevan Nair are unchallenged figures in the Malayalam literary world. M.T. Vasudevan Nair, in particular, is renowned for his masterful depiction of Kerala's social history. His fiction often centers on Kudallur, located in the Valluvanad region, which is portrayed as a scenic beauty and serves as a representation of Kerala's agrarian society. The economy in his works is depicted as being shaped by feudalism, highlighting the suffering, exploitation, and inequalities of patriarchal and caste-based systems. Kudallur was a microcosm for the sweeping changes that overtook Kerala in the latter half of the 20th century, driven by the freedom struggle, social revolution, and cultural renaissance. Most genius writers of Malayalam fiction they are O. V. Vijayan, Kakkanadan, Anand-Mukundan, V.K.N. Sethu, Punathil Kunj Abdulla, P. Padmarajan, N.P. Muhammad, Rajalakshmi Vilasini (real name M. K. Menon), C. Radhakrishnan, P.K. Balakrishnan, Lalithambika Antharjanam, Malayattoor Ramakrishnan, V.T. Nandakumar,

Perumbadavam Sreedharan, Puthoor Unnikrishnan, P. Valsala, George Onakkoor, U.A. Khader, V.A. Azeez, Sarah Thomas, P. R. Syamala, T. V. Varkey, and P.R. Nathan. O.V. Vijayan's first story was published in [1953] and first novel (*Khasakhinte Ithihasam*) '*The Legends of Khasak*' in [1969]. With the publication of '*Khasakhinte Ithihasam*' new chapter was written to the world of Malayalam Literature. His famous novels are 'Dharmapuranam' '*The Saga of Dharmapuri*' published in [1985], '*Gurusagaram*' (*The Infinity of Grace*) in [1987], '*Madhuram Gayathi*' in [1990], '*Pravachakante Vazhi*' (*The Path of the Prophet*) in [1992] and '*Thalamurakal*' (*Generations*) in [1997]. '*The Legends of Khasak*' fetched him the Odakkuzhal Award in 1970. Vijayan also received the Kendra Sahitya Akademi Award, Kerala Sahitya Akademi Award, Vayalar Award, Muttathu Varkey Award, M.P. Paul Award and Government of Kerala's Ezhuthachan Prize. He was conferred with the Padma Bhushan in 2003.

Raja Rao's novels deal with the theme of Indian Independence. His first novel '*Kanthapura*' [1938] depicts Gandhian Philosophy. His novels '*The Serpent and the Rope*' [1960] received the Sahitya Akademi Award 'in 1963. It narrated the connection between the east and west. '*The Cat and Shakespeare*' [1965].

The other novelists like Mulk Raj Anand, novels reveal hierarchical evils. His first novel '*Untouchable*' [1935] deals with the life and struggle of an untouchable Baka who was a sweeper. Character Munoo, in the novel '*Coolie*' [1936] struggled due to poverty. His other novels are '*Seven Summer's*' [1951], '*The Old Woman and the Cow*' [1960], '*The Big Heart*' [1945], '*The Road*' [1961], and '*The Private Life of an Indian Prince*' [1953].

R.K Narayan is considered a regional novelist. Malgudi a fictitious town, just as Wessex of Thomas Hardy. Gandhian _influence is seen in his novel '*Waiting for the Mahatma*' [1955], other novels are '*The English Teacher*' [1946], '*The Bachelor of Arts*' [1937] '*Swami and Friends*' [1935], '*The Guide*' [1958], '*Man-Eater in Malgudi*' [1962] and '*Dark Room*' [1938]. His novels have immense fame in India and abroad. Iyengar mentions: "He is one the few writers in Republic of Asian country who take their craft seriously, attempt to enhance the instrument, following with the simplest way of dedication possibly seem to be the mirage of technical perfection".¹³

These three novelists mark their presence within the history of Indian English literature. A number of the profile novelists express, the reality through their works is Manohar Malgonkar, Khushwant Singh, Chaman Nahal, and Bhabani Bhattacharya.

Bhabani Bhattacharya's novels unfold social, economic, and political issues and he writes six memorable novels. His first novel was '*So many Hungers*' [1947], his later novels are '*A Goddess Named Gold*' [1960], '*Who Rides a Tiger*' [1954], '*Music for Mohini*' [1952]. Thus, Bhabani Bhattacharya's novels are unforgettable. Manohar Malgonkar works include '*Distant Dream*' [1960], '*The Princess*' [1963], '*Spy in Amber*' [1971], '*Combat of Shadows*' [1962], and '*A Bond of Ganges*' [1964].

Khushwant Singh is a renowned writer in English. His novels are '*Company with Woman*' [1999], '*A Train to Pakistan*' [1956], and '*I Shall Not Hear the Nightingale*' [1959]. His novels have become popular across the globe.

Chaman Nahal was a great novelist of his time. Some famous novels are '*My True faces*' [1937], '*Azadi*' [1978], '*The Triumph of the Tricolor*' [1993], '*The English Queen*' [1979], '*Introduction another Dawn*' [1977], '*The Salt of Life*' [1990], and '*The Crown and the Loincloth*' [1981].

Novelists like, Salman Rushdie, Vikram Seth, Shashi Tharoor, Anita Desai, Arundhati Roy, Shashi Deshpande, Bharti Mukherjee, and Amitav Ghosh, Githa Hariharan gave a new shape to Indian English novels. Salman Rushdie began his journey as a novelist from '*Grimus*' [1978]. '*Midnight's Children*' [1981] received a Booker prize in 1981. His later novels are '*Shame*' [1985], '*Enchantress of Fluorine*' [2008], '*The Moor's last Singh*' [1995], and '*The Ground beneath Feet*' [1999].

Amitav Ghosh's novels are '*River of Smoke*' [2011], '*The Hunger Tide*' [2005], '*The Circle of Reason*' [1986], '*Sea of Poppies*' [2008], '*The Calcutta Chromosome*' [1996], and '*The Wass Palace*' [2000]. Arun Joshi's novels include his experience, his novels include '*The City and the River*' [1990], '*The Foreigner*' [1968], '*The Labyrinth*' [1981], '*The Apprentice*' [1974], '*The Strange Case of Billy Biswas*' [1971]. His novel '*Labyrinth*' won a 'Sahitya Akademi Award' in 1982. Vikram Seth was a popular Indian English novelist. His novel is '*The Golden Gate*' [1986]. '*The Suitable Boy*' [1993] and '*An Equal Music*' [1999].

Shashi Tharoor's famous novels are '*The Great Indian Novel*' [1989]. Brought him immense popularity. His novels include '*Small Remedies*' [2000], '*If I Die Today*' [1982], '*Matter of Times*' [1996], '*Riot*' [2001], '*Show Business*' [1992]. These writers give a new direction to Indian English novels.

Women novelists made a significant contribution to Indian Writing in English. The novelists portray a real picture of Indian society and culture and they had a reputed position in literature, among women novelists like Cornelia Sorabjee, Kamala Markandaya, Ruth Praver Jhabvala, Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande, Jhumpa Lahiri, Kamala Das, and Arundhati Roy.

‘Cornelia Sorabjee’ marks her last impression on English literature, her stories are *‘Love and Life Behind the Purdah’* [1902], depicts the life of a woman in the early nineteenth century and who was supposed to live in four walls and follow customs and traditions. Her other novel is *‘Between the Twilight’* [1908]. This novel gives her immense popularity. She expresses her views on women and their place in society and the condition in which they live. K.S. Iyengar states: “Miss Sorabjee in her productive work. She tried to push silken curtain to the ‘Purdah’ and mention different shade of feminism”.¹⁴

Another Famous novelist like Kamala Markandaya, and Ruth Praver Jhabvala, depict the realistic condition of women in society. Kamala Markandaya’s novel *‘Nectar in a Sieve’* [1954], represents a peasant’s life and the struggle faces during her lifetime. Her novels are *‘Some Inner fury’* [1957], *‘The Nowhere Man’* [1972], *‘A Silence of Desire’* [1961], *‘The Coffer Dams’* [1969], *‘A Handful of Rice’* [1966], *‘The Golden Honeycomb’* [1977], *‘Two Virgins’* [1973], and *‘Pleasure City’* [1982].

The concept of Ruth Praver Jhabvala’s novels is based on arranged marriages. Her early novels are *‘Shards of Memory’* [1995], *‘To Whom She Will’* [1955], *‘Like Birds Like Fishes’* [1963], *‘The Nature of Passion’* [1956], *‘Get Ready for Battle’* [1962], *‘A Backward Place’* [1965], *‘A New Dimension’* [1973], *‘Out of India’* [1986], *‘Heat and Dust’* [1975], *‘Poet and Dancer’* [1903], *‘Three Continents’* [1987], *‘Edmond in India’* [1958], *‘An Experience of India’* [1971], *‘To Whom She Will’* [1955], *‘The House Holder’* [1960], and *‘A Strong Climate’* [1968], K.S. Iyengar states:

“In the novels of Mrs. Jhabvala’s mankind are shown as insane, but some condition and situation of people are entertaining than others. She exposes human follies, self-deceptions, Mrs. Jhabvala makes us laugh”.¹⁵

Nayantara Sahgal’s novels depict women's freedom. Her novels include *‘Plans for Departure’* [1985], *‘A Time to be Happy’* [1957], *‘Rich Like Us’* [1985], *‘A Situation in New Delhi’* [1977], *‘Storm of Chandigarh’* [1969], *‘The Day in Shadow’* [1971]. Her novels also express individuals suffering.

Among the female novelists, Anita Desai is considered a novelist of 20th-century. She has a unique personality in Indian English novels. Her novel '*Cry, the Peacock*' [1963], portrays a picture of the female protagonist 'Maya' who is sensitive and cannot deal with her insecurities, out of anger she kills her husband. Desai's later novels are '*In Custody*' [1984], '*Clear Light of Day*' [1980], '*Voices in the City*' [1965], '*Bye-Bye Blackbird*' [1971], '*Fire on the Mountain*' [1977], and '*Where Shall We Go This Summer*' [1975]. Arundhati Roy, the most famous novelist, won the Booker prize, for her first novel, '*The God of Small Things*' [1997]. Her writing style is unique which is seen in her novels.

Many Indian English novelists, contributed their work. Women novelists like 'Nayantara Sahgal,'. Her novels are '*This Time of Morning*' [1965], one of the best political novels in Indian English literature. Her novels include '*Mistaken Identity*' [1988], '*A Situation in New Delhi*' [1977], '*Plans for Departure*' [1985], '*The Day in Shadow*' [1971], '*A Time to be Happy*' [1957], and '*Rich Like Us*' [1985].

After the 1980s, it is said that women should be treated like men, they should not be treated as an animal or property. They can raise their voice against male-dominated society. All women novelists made their efforts for the development of novels. Thus, novelists made a significant contribution to Indian English literature.

Creativity involves navigating personal experiences and elevating them to establish a meaningful connection with readers. Translation has evolved beyond merely transferring language; it is now recognized as a complex and creative process that bridges different cultures. The criticism that translation is mechanical and inferior to original writing has been largely dispelled with the rise of translators who understand the nuances and politics of the practice. Scholars now discuss the translator's role as an agent of empowerment and the ethical choices they must make.

New dimensions of translation, once overlooked, are now being explored, such as self-translation. Renowned Malayalam poet Ayyappa Paniker translated many of his own poems, while Dilip Chitre worked in both English and Marathi. V. K. N. (Vadakke Koottala Narayanankutty Nair), a well-known Malayalam writer famous for his deep analogies and playful language, translated many of his stories into English. This shows that self-translation plays a significant role, especially in Indian literature. In Malayalam literature, such works marked the advent of postmodernism, delving into questions of identity and merging reality with myth, where the individual and the universal, sinner and saint, became indistinguishable.

Many of India's literary gems are written in regional languages. Writers from varied backgrounds—including those from rural areas, marginalized castes, minority religions, eco-activists, and women—are entering the Indian literary landscape with new and innovative perspectives, telling fresh stories that resonate with contemporary audiences.

1.2 Life and Works of O.V. Vijayan

O.V. Vijayan's full name was Ottupulakkal Velukkuty Vijayan. Born in 1930 in Palghat, Kerala, he was the son of a police officer and spent his childhood in an armed constabulary camp where his father was in command. He did not receive formal schooling until the age of twelve, instead spending his early years at home reading fairy tales. In 1954, he earned a Master's degree in English Literature from Madras University and briefly worked as a teacher before transitioning to a career as a political cartoonist. His cartoons have been featured in publications such as *The Hindu*, *The Statesman*, *Mathrubhoomi*, and the *Far Eastern Economic Review*. His cartoons are known for the blending of politics and philosophy. He published one book of cartoons- *Ithiri Neramboke, Ithiri Darshanam* (A Little Pastime, A little Vision) in 1990. He started his career as a teacher in Malabar Christian College, Kozhikode, and Kerala and subsequently switched over to journalism.

He is also known for his thought-provoking and multi-layered novels that often delve into complex themes and social issues. He was also honoured with Padma Bhushan in 2003. The significance of the background in O.V. Vijayan's novels can be understood in several ways as:

Cultural and Historical Context

In many of Vijayan's novels, the background serves as a rich cultural and historical tapestry against which the characters and events unfold. He often explores the socio-political landscape of Kerala, India, and beyond, providing readers with a deep understanding of the cultural and historical forces that shape the lives of his characters.

Symbolism

The background in Vijayan's novels is often symbolic and can represent larger societal or philosophical ideas. For example, the natural landscape in his works can symbolize the connection between humanity and the environment, or it can serve as a metaphor for the characters' inner struggles and conflicts.

Political and Social Commentary

Vijayan's novels are known for their sharp political and social commentary. The background elements, such as the political climate, economic disparities, and social injustices, are often used to highlight and critique the issues prevalent in society. The background becomes a canvas on which he paints his critique of the world around him.

Psychological Development

The background in Vijayan's novels can also contribute to the psychological development of his characters. It may mirror their inner turmoil, aspirations, or desires. By carefully constructing the background, Vijayan can create a setting that complements and enhances the emotional and psychological experiences of his characters.

Mythical and Magical Realism

He is known for his use of mythical and magical realism in his storytelling. The background often plays a crucial role in creating a sense of magical or other worldly realism in his narratives. This blending of the ordinary with the extraordinary adds layers of meaning to his novels.

Atmosphere and Mood

The background elements, including descriptions of nature, weather, and landscapes, are used to establish the atmosphere and mood of the story. They can evoke a sense of nostalgia, foreboding, or wonder, enhancing the reader's emotional engagement with the narrative.

In the works of O.V. Vijayan almost all the protagonist fight with the forces of society, because these forces are working against them. His characters are isolated, alienated, or tormented, they are in search of their identity. The society has certain codes and these codes of society do not allow the personal choice of the individual. In the background of O.V. Vijayan novels, the characters over-rule the set codes of society and fights for their identity and existence. His novels bring out, dilemma, tension, identity clashes, Quest for freedom, and Emergence of new generations.

He has published six novels, three novellas, eight story collections, and several volumes of political essays in Malayalam. His third novel, *Gurusagaram (translated as The Infinity of Grace)*, received the National Sahitya Akademi Award, as well as the Kerala State Akademi

Award and the esteemed Vayalar Award. He depicts an alienated world. He speaks about cultures, languages, social evils, and beliefs.

“Vijayan’s visionary energy converts what could easily have been an ordinary naturalistic rural narrative into a magical experience of myth proportions”.¹⁶

His writing is full of energy and sharp humor. He delves deep into the essence of language, seeking the eternal truths within it. By exploring the human mind, he reveals inner struggles, loneliness, anguish, and a sense of suffocation. Like many novelists, he carries visionary ideas about the realities present in the physical world. To express this, he often employs an absurd style of language. He wrote numerous short story collections, ranging from humorous to philosophical, and translated most of his works from Malayalam to English. His first novel ‘The Legend of Khasak’, and other novels ‘*The Saga of Dharmapuri*’, ‘*Madhuram Gayathi*’, ‘*The Path of the Prophet*’, ‘*The Infinity of Grace*’, and ‘*Generations*’.

His first short story entitled ‘*Tell Father Gonsalves*’ was published in 1953. Later in 1957, he published his first volume of short stories entitled ‘*Moonnu Yudhangal*’-Three Wars. Among his short story collection ‘*After the Hanging and Other Stories*’ is considered as a masterpiece. Besides, that he has written several essays.

As a short story writer, O.V. Vijayan created his impact in the literary history of India. His short-stories discussed the degradation of moral values, and various other issues of modern Indian Society, ‘*In Remembrance of a Long Night*’ in 1979, ‘*Peacelessness*’ in 1985, ‘*In the Sea-Shore*’ ‘*The Story Told by the Wind*’ etc., were his famous short stories.

O.V. Vijayan portrays small-town life and values in a way that allows readers to connect with the characters, despite their poverty, lack of education, and unique way of life. His novels emphasize the role of superstitions, with characters largely indifferent to the harsh realities they face and without remorse for their actions. Their thoughts and behaviors are driven by myths, superstitious beliefs, and a lack of awareness of their surroundings. Though Vijayan’s ideological beliefs underwent a sea change from his communist commitment at the beginning to Hindu spiritual, philosophical convictions.

His concise use of language, deep introspection, and vivid imagination allowed his characters to transcend regional and religious boundaries, resonating with readers everywhere. He undoubtedly crafted a magical world in his works, offering readers a broad perspective on the known and the existential aspects of human life in the universe, while also presenting a

mysterious approach to life's purpose on earth. He employed Grotesque Realism in his novels to portray India's political, social, and economic conditions.

Vijayan rejected the dominance of social realism, crafting fiction that felt more like a musical composition, freeing readers from conventional ways of seeing the world. Kerala, rich in folklore, myth, and dark humor, heavily influenced his childhood and shaped his unique writing style. In his novels, most female characters are portrayed as illiterate and oppressed by a male-dominated society, lacking the mental strength to assert their identities and unable to find a place in the mainstream of society. According to famous literary critic PP Raveendran "O.V. Vijayan reigned supreme in the world of Malayalam letters while he was alive, and continues to be guiding force of Malayalam fiction even after his death".¹⁷

His precise use of language, deep reflection, and vivid imagination allowed his characters to transcend regional and religious limits, appealing to a broad audience. He skillfully created a world of magic, giving readers a wide perspective on both familiar realities and the broader questions of human existence, while exploring the mysteries that make life on earth meaningful. In his novels, he used Grotesque Realism to illustrate India's political, social, and economic conditions. Vijayan challenged the dominance of social realism, writing fiction that resembled a musical composition, freeing readers from their conventional ways of seeing the world. His childhood in Kerala, a land rich in folklore, myths, and dark humor, deeply influenced his writing style. In his works, many female characters are depicted as uneducated and oppressed by a patriarchal society, unable to assert their identities or integrate into mainstream society.

As a novelist, O.V. Vijayan's narrative style reflected his genius and originality. He uses a peculiar combination of the living language of the people of the time. His characters speak in the language of day-to-day life. It often leads the Malayalee readers belonging to different regions of Kerala to take extra effort to comprehend the essence of the narratives. However, his work was accepted by the Malayalee readers across the globe without any regional differences. Another remarkable aspect of his narrative style is that the voice of the author is expressed through a peculiar language often falling beyond the comprehension of an average Malayalee readers. It gives the feeling that the author thinks in English and translates his thoughts into Malayalam. He creates words and phrases of his own. The works of Vijayan are deeply rooted into the Socio-political realities of his time or immediate past. The socio-political issues churned out from the day-to-day life of ordinary people assume the central place of many

of his works in the background of the socio-political realities of the time and space of the author. Eminent literary analyst Dr. N.A. Karim says “In a very broad sense Vijayan belonged to the main stream of modern Malayalam novel, the foundation of which was laid by the unrelenting realist”.¹⁸

It was a time when reformatory ideas and social organization were accepted in the Kerala society. Gandhism, Communism, Socialism etc. Influenced the Kerala society during the period from 1930 to 1950. This had created a great influence on the mindset of youth of that time. The culture of progressive writing in Kerala was deeply rooted in realism. It brought out the attitude of rebellion in the mind of the ordinary people. O.V. Vijayan who identified himself with the forum did not try to imitate the style of his fellow writers. On the other hand, he, depicted the inner world of individuals with all its diversities which was altogether new to the Malayalee readers. O.V. Vijayan attempted to portray the weakness, moral failures, dreams and aspirations of the society through his unique narrative techniques centered on the individual self. Hence his characters, their language their field of interest and actions were different from his contemporaries. Vijayan crafts a diverse array of characters and intertwines the folkloric elements of their surroundings with their lives through his imaginative storytelling. His novel reveals a complex vision of both people and places, reflecting his unique perspective as a novelist and cartoonist. Known for its experimentation with style and content, his work is often associated with Magic Realism.

Magic Realism is an artistic genre where magical or illogical elements are woven into an otherwise realistic or familiar setting. It is widely used in literature, art, and film, distinguishing itself from pure fantasy by taking place in the real, modern world, with authentic depictions of humans and society. This genre blends detailed realism in portraying ordinary events with fantastical, dream-like aspects. Writers using magic realism, such as O.V. Vijayan, do not create entirely new worlds but instead highlight the magic within the world we know. His novels combine the real with the surreal, the modern with the traditional, creating a unique narrative that falls within the magic realism tradition.

Magic realism include the significance of magic and myth, the questioning of rational thought and progress, skepticism toward knowledge, personal expression, and a distinct aesthetic. Works of magic realism often challenge conventional understandings of reality, offering a new language that casts doubt on accepted notions of truth. For many authors, life itself isn't inherently magical; introducing magical elements into realistic settings helps reframe both the

magical and the real. Magic, myth, and the hybrid elements of postcolonial and postmodern storytelling often lead to what authors refer to as “true magic.” Magic has long been a part of storytelling, from ancient epics to plays and dramas, often placed alongside ordinary life to explore themes like life and death, dreams, civilization, sex, gender, and metaphysics.

As a literary style, magic realism is broad and diverse. It has become especially popular among Latin American, Caribbean, and Indian authors, who use it for various purposes, including resistance, subversion, and expressing multiculturalism. The genre is often understood as a tension between the real and the magical, making it discursive and varied. Magic realism is compelling not because of its contradictions or fantastical elements, but because the world it creates is captivating.

However, the concept of Magic Realism has faced criticism for being vague and lacking a clear definition, often being classified as postcolonial discourse. Despite this, Vijayan created a magical world where readers can explore expansive ideas of consciousness, human existence, and the mysteries that shape life in the universe. Like other novelists, Vijayan seeks to uncover truths within the physical world, acknowledging the absurdities of life that lie at the core of existence.

The Legends of Khasak (Khasakkinte Ithihasam)

O.V. Vijayan first novel “The Legends of Khasak” was published in 1969. This novel is significant for introducing a new aesthetic in Malayalam literature, and it is also notable for how it interprets, adapts, and reconfigures the Gandhian vision of communal village life. Khasak was initially serialized in the Malayalam weekly Mathrubhoomi in 1968 before being published as a book in 1969. Following its tremendous success, Vijayan translated the novel into English himself, releasing “The Legends of Khasak” in 1994, 25 years later. The writing process spanned twelve years and was inspired by Vijayan’s year-long stay in 1956 in Thasarak, a remote village in the Palakkad district of Kerala. “The Legends of Khasak” is set in imaginary village Khasak. Ravi, an outsider appointed to establish a single teacher school to give the local children access to basic education, misuses the social concept as a fodder to satiate the carnal beast that has taken possession of the young soul. O.V. Vijayan translated majority of his works into English. Quite often substantial differences were noted between the original and their translation.

“It has been difficult translating this book. It is full of dense images of nature, old folk customs, evocations of caste differences, and the rich play of dialects, all of which are difficult to render into English. So much has been lost, there was no way it could have been salvaged. I have tried to make the narrative depend on its own energy as much as possible, and preserved the pace and rhythm of the original”.¹⁹

“The Legends of Khasak” is rich in vivid imagery, portraying nature, traditional folk customs, and caste distinctions, while also showcasing a diverse use of dialects. The novel encompasses the marginalized voices of women. The characters in Khasak are socially illiterate and uneducated, and their life is mostly dominated by myth and beliefs. Vijayan offers a picture small-town wisdom and values. The novel depicts the life journey of Ravi, the main protagonist, who is introduced as a troubled, guilt-ridden soul who abandons his education and career midway. His deep connection with nature facilitates his transformation, as Ravi, initially an outsider in Khasak, gradually becomes one with the village. His knowledge and rational thinking fade away, and he eventually surrenders to the place, becoming an integral part of it. In the end, his soul finds eternal rest in the village of Khasak.

The novel is set in Kerala in the middle Twentieth century. The novel creates modern world that meets tradition, and strangers that mix with village locals. There is much in Khasak that is ugly, it has its share of death, ignorance, cruelty, and grinding poverty. Khasak is depicted as a village filled with numerous shrines and gods, home to both Muslims and Hindus, as well as a few communists. Vijayan portrays the daily life of this village in a simple, realistic manner, highlighting themes of birth, death, poverty, and cruelty. He effectively uses the setting, showing a village with little room for modernity, as the fate of a science student, emphasizing that humans are inherently connected to nature and cannot resist this bond. Vijayan is credited with liberating Malayalam fiction from the constraints of tradition. “The fictional genius whose 1969 masterpiece ‘The Legends of Khasak’ shot him into fame as a legendary story teller, the harbinger of a version of modernism that heralded a radical change of sensibility in Malayalam”.²⁰

O.V. Vijayan in his work “The Legends of Khasak”, provides a ‘magical journey’ for his readers indeed. Magic realism in the novel which unconsciously operate the Postcolonial ideology within its framework. The village Khasak represents age old myths, legends, and the traditional practices. His approach is unique as it focuses on representing the relics of myth and legends with vivid detail as a strategy building a literary resistance against the shadow

colonization of villages. Through the use of magical realism and cultural symbols, the author creates a dreamlike quality in certain parts of the novel. This allows him to convey feelings and thoughts while remaining silent or interpreting dreams in new ways. Reminiscence serves as a method for characters to revisit the past, offering readers insight while enabling them to see things from different perspectives.

The novel lacks a strong narrative drive, primarily portraying Ravi's encounters with spirituality and philosophy. In these experiences, Vijayan weaves together various myths, legends, and superstitions from Khasak. As a former student from Madras, Ravi is ideally positioned to contrast these traditional beliefs with the science and logic he learned in the West. The tension between these two worlds is central to the narrative. Through the myths and legends of Khasak, Vijayan re-examines the cultural connections between time and place, revealing the distinct mythical atmosphere of the village. The residents live without concern for life's chaos or regrets, while Ravi, as an outsider, must grapple with reality and take responsibility for his actions. As he spends more time in Khasak, he becomes increasingly integrated into the community, encountering supernatural events that he eventually comes to accept as normal.

Ravi's arrival in Khasak is not an escape from his life; rather, it represents his quest for eternal understanding. He begins this journey in the evening, symbolizing the subconscious, driven by guilt and past anxieties—reflecting the pervasive emptiness within the novel. Without clear direction, he follows the rhythms of the universe and material life. Over time, he becomes a passionate seeker of absolute truth and gains profound insights. However, when he ultimately leaves Khasak, it remains uncertain whether he can reintegrate into the non-magical world beyond the village.

Ravi's unique position between Khasak and the outside world invites reflection on the relationship between magic and reality. An intelligent student of astrophysics, Ravi's experiences in Khasak challenge the fundamental truths he had long accepted in his studies. The villagers, resistant to development and higher education, view these influences as threats to their way of life, further isolating them from contemporary society and giving Khasak a timeless quality. Their beliefs about illness, attributed to offended deities, and their perception of Ravi as an adversary of nature due to his modern education further highlight this divide.

By positioning Khasak outside modern society and time, Vijayan creates a mythic space to explore the presence of magic in the "real" world. Initially, Ravi finds this strange but soon

becomes immersed in the village, questioning the authenticity of the life outside Khasak. Throughout the narrative, Vijayan prompts both Ravi and the reader to reconsider their understanding of “reality.” The characters are closely intertwined with the Khasak landscape, which includes lush forests, small huts, and an old mosque. Khasak emerges as a realm where humans and nature coexist without boundaries. In *The Legends of Khasak*, the landscape communicates as powerfully as the characters do, influencing their fates from beginning to end. Vijayan’s unique approach vividly represents myths and legends, serving as a literary resistance to the lingering effects of colonialism on village life. The novel concludes with Ravi’s death from a snake bite while waiting for a bus.

The Saga of Dharmapuri (Dharmapuranam)

“The Saga of Dharmapuri” published in 1985 is a political satire dealing with Delhi’s politics of 70s, especially just before the declaration of emergency. “The ideology of the celestial birds will be endangered: Dharmapuri will no longer be able to lend the struggle for peace; mankind will become spiritually leaderless; there will be no one to prevent a nuclear holocaust”.²¹

“The Saga of Dharmapuri” is a political allegory which is presented as a folktale, full of magic realism, disguised lovers, and daring escapes. The novel is filled with scenes where women are raped. The novel reveals various theme such as theme of Fantasy, theme of Social and Economic condition, theme of Identity of Self, theme of Exploitation, and the theme of Spirituality. The erotic imagery used in the novel focus primarily in sexual exploitation of women. The sexual exploitation of women thus marks a transition from the nationalist origins of Dharmapuri. Vijayan blends the contemporary Indian political situation and the general human predicament of being oppressed and exploited in the novel. This novel implicitly follows a rigid patriarchal structure that imposes silence on the gendered subject. The women characters in the novels, respond to define patriarchal ideologies such as domestic, familial space from within their marginalized positions. Vijayan narrates how the moral codes of the family and chastity are broken. In the words of O.V. Vijayan himself. “When the novel began appearing left and progressive critics cried it down for what they thought was an imperialist slant and my own constituency of readers was unhappy about its ‘Obscenity’ Dharmapuri, as a book had to wait till 1985 to find a major Malayalam Publisher”.²²

“The Saga of Dharmapuri” is marked by its shocking content, presenting a relentless narrative of violence and degradation, featuring a grotesque portrayal of political power characterized

by obsessions with excrement and sex. In Vijayan's novel, female characters are not just oppressed; they are depicted as consistently abject in political, sexual, and domestic contexts.

The novel primarily serves as a shocking critique, challenging both sensory perception and moral sensibility. Dharmapuri, dubbed the "Country of Righteousness" and its capital, Shantigram, or "Village of Peace," are ironically named, as they are governed by a power-hungry and greedy President. This character is portrayed throughout the novel engaging in acts of eating, defecating, and fornicating, demonstrating his sole concern for satisfying his bodily needs while neglecting the welfare of the populace. Vijayan employs "grotesque realism" to highlight the political, social, and economic landscape of India in the 1970s, particularly during the period of Emergency.

The Saga is the saga of a third world country by the name of Dharmapuri, it is a country which has lost its traditional and values. Life in Dharmapuri is symbolically and representatively reflected in the life of its capital, Shantigrama, and resonates in perfect sympathy to the rhythm to its Prajapathi's carnal desires and hours of defecation. Nevertheless, the novel shows how Siddhartha is overwhelmed by the extent of the deep-rooted corruption. The introduction of Siddhartha, the king of Kapilavastu who left his kingdom to atone for the guilt of kings and wars, gives a new turn to the novel. He creates a stir among the people of Dharmapuri. He gives peace to Lavannya and her son. He teaches people to find succour in tress and rivers. The character of Siddhartha emerges powerfully in the novel. He teaches people to find consolation in their own culture and civilization. Thus, Siddhartha symbolizes the state of a postcolonial society that has lost all its identity. One of the greatest ironies within the novel is the presence of the confederate trading houses within Dharmapuri. As they exploit local resources and drive local industries out of business, these houses provide ceremonial Vice-President Positions to the President's sons and son in law.

"The Saga of Dharmapuri" explores historical themes and the struggles of individuals ensnared by karma. It offers a prophetic view of ongoing social issues, linking the contemporary Indian political landscape with the broader human experience of oppression and exploitation. The people of Dharmapuri interpret these challenges as symbols of their nation's resistance to imperialism. The novel subtly critiques the pervasive nepotism in Indian politics, particularly through the president's fear of not having heirs to succeed him. Vijayan satirizes the idea of material advancement by highlighting Dharmapuri's claims to military, scientific, and industrial power.

“In Dharmapuri there was a parade every month. Weapons were taken out of soils and towed along, the weapons were antique, but so were Dharmapuri’s wars, antique wars waged on antique neighbours”.²³

The industrial development in Dharmapuri is depicted as a farce, primarily centered around the export of cadavers to the Confederacy. Adults are killed for their bodies to be used in Western medical sciences, while young children are slaughtered in factories, their meat exported as food. This intertwining of medical and monetary science means that only the ruling elite can access healthcare.

Vijayan's use of bodily imagery is intricate, focusing on three basic human functions—eating, defecating, and fornicating. These natural impulses are employed throughout the novel to evoke disgust in the reader. The narrative includes several scenes where government officials exploit women for their desires under the guise of patriotism. For instance, Laavanya, the kitchen maid of the Minister of Sorrowing, is raped multiple times, with detailed descriptions highlighting how the body becomes a tool of power. The symbolism is clear: bodies represent power dynamics, with citizens both physically and sexually deprived. One character even contemplates selling his elderly parents and children, illustrating how the body of a citizen like Laavanya becomes a site of state violence.

Siddhartha, the King of Kapilavastu, emerges as a significant figure, having left his kingdom to aid humanity, reminiscent of Lord Buddha on his path to enlightenment. He stands out as the only sane observer of the atrocities in Dharmapuri, embodying a moral compass that blends leadership with compassion for the people. Siddhartha represents Vijayan’s ideal vision for the nation and its leaders. In stark contrast, the President embodies the excesses of the newly independent Dharmapuri, reflecting the reality of contemporary India.

The novel concludes without a clear resolution. Siddhartha transforms into the pipal tree, symbolizing enlightenment and the awakening of the populace to the prevailing injustices. His character complicates the narrative, personifying ideal leadership, human conscience, compassion, and mercy. "The Saga of Dharmapuri" ultimately offers no solutions but instead raises questions and possibilities, deepening the reader's understanding of the common man's suffering.

The Infinity of Grace (Gurusagaram)

“The Infinity of Grace” was published in 1987. explores the complexities of the human psyche. Vijayan drew significant inspiration from the teachings of Karunakara Guru of Sree Santhigiri Ashram, near Thiruvananthapuram, which also influenced his own spiritual transformation after meeting the Guru. This change is mirrored in the evolution of the central character, Kunjunni, a journalist from Kerala who embarks on a profound physical and spiritual journey to discover the infinite grace of life.

Distinct from Vijayan’s earlier works, this novel showcases a different use of language, vision, and characterization. Like his other writings, Vijayan translated this novel into English himself. “The Infinity of Grace” received several accolades, including the prestigious Vayalar Award and the National Sahitya Academy Award. It marks not only a transformation in Vijayan’s craft but also a shift in his ideology, moving from staunch communism to the spiritualism he embraced during this period, emphasizing the transcendental nature of human existence.

The novel begins with an Upanishad mantra and largely unfolds through flashbacks. It weaves a complex, multi-layered narrative centered on Kunjunni’s experiences, each thread rich with its own atmosphere, collectively enhancing the significance of his journey. Disturbed by the human condition and capable of deep introspection, Kunjunni’s fragile world collapses. Set against the backdrop of the Bangladesh war, he travels to Calcutta to cover the conflict, where he encounters his estranged Bengali wife, Shivani, and their daughter, Kalyani, before heading to Dhaka. However, fate delivers a blow more devastating than the war itself, leading him to an irreparable loss and unbearable truths, ultimately guiding him toward a spiritual awakening.

Towards the end of his life, he gets to know the guru presence in his life. His first guru is his father, clutching whose hands he used to roam about his village when he was a kid. Even then, he was exposed to the intricacies of the ineluctable karmic bondage and its mysteries. This search continues until he meets his formal guru, Swami Nirmalananda who was his childhood friend and whose insights into the Nachiketas episode from the Upanishad underpin the oceanic grace of Guru, after which the novel is titled. “The quest and arrivals are both delusions of pilgrims’ journey; between them, the union of Guru and shishya was the perennial truth”.²⁴

Many more persons on his journey become his guru. Even Lalitha whom he seduced becomes his gurus. It is ultimately his putative daughter, Kalyani, she becomes his final guru who teaches him the ultimate oneness of human existence and the futility of trying to decipher life

by millions of binaries and dichotomies that tear up human life. His estrangement with his wife, Shivani, is a catalyst which makes his life more contemplative. Their daughter Kalyani whom he loved so much was the bridge between their shaky lives. But Kalyani dies of blood cancer. Kunjunni was dreaming that he was the Garuda, the sacred vehicle of the Lord Vishnu. Vishnu and the ocean on which he was lying and Kunjunni's identification with Garuda were all now gone. He has an advaitic vision which becomes rooted in the aftermath of the death of his daughter towards the end of the novel. "He was a pulsating luminance, at once an infinitesimal seed and the infinite Universe, as he flew through the spaces of Brahman".²⁵

The author here and elsewhere uses beautiful parallelisms with materials drawn from Indian mythology. The Vedantic quest of Kunjunni is fulfilled by the insights he gets through his painful experiences. The novel beautifully recreates the Vysasa- Suka episode in the novel in his enchanting language. He is troubled by his feeling of estrangement with his daughter even for a moment due to false sense of pride. When he confides in his childhood friend Colonel Balakrishnan, now Swami Nirmalananda, the confessional statement made by Shivani becomes an ocean an ocean of compassion and motherhood with sorrowing waves. Kunjunni is enlightened by the vision of organic oneness of the cosmic existence. He realizes that separation from it, due to human ego, causes human sufferings. It is thus the advaitic philosophy that is understood in the novel. It is considered one of Vijayan's most significant literary works and has received critical acclaim for its complexity, symbolism, and exploration of various themes.

The title "The Infinity of Grace" can be translated into "The Sea of Gurus" or "The Ocean of Gurus" in English. This novel is known for its intricate narrative structure, which weaves together historical, philosophical, and mythological elements. It delves into the life of the protagonist, Narayana Guru, who was a social reformer and spiritual leader in Kerala during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Narayana Guru played a crucial role in promoting social equality and religious tolerance in Kerala.

"The Infinity of Grace" explores the life and teachings of Narayana Guru, as well as the impact he had on the society and culture of Kerala. The novel also delves into broader themes of spirituality, social justice, and the search for meaning in a complex world.

Vijayan's works often challenged established norms and ideologies, and "Gurusagaram" is no exception. It is celebrated for its poetic and philosophical prose and remains an important piece of literature in the Indian literary canon.

This novel ends with one thrillingly poetical passage in literature. It sums up the theme and subtext of the novel. Kunjunni identifies Kalyani with Suka. Suka and Kalyani become one. And Kunjunni becomes another grieving Vyasa. Cosmic nature hearkened to his cry. He heard millions of leaf-voices, rivers and mountains were full of speech. Trees and plants, crystal springs and dumb stones answered reverberantly in Kalyani's voice. At the end of the novel, all identities merge into a singularly unified movement, even the dumb stone speaks in Kalyani's voice.

Sweet is the Music (Madhuram Gayathi)

"Madhuram Gayathi" is published in a year 1990, Vijayan's exploration of abstract ideas by blending mythology with ecology. This lyrical novel serves as an allegory for the struggle of both natural and human spirits to survive in a mechanized world. The banyan tree takes on the role of the protagonist, while Sukanya is the heroine, and their relationship embodies a complex, visionary love.

Vijayan intertwines the worship of nature with mystical narratives, illustrating the connections between humans and nature, humanity and machinery, nature and science, as well as the contrasts between rural and urban life, spirituality and materialism, and the internal conflicts that arise. The depiction of Kerala's culture expands to encompass broader Indian and global contexts, weaving together the stories of three generations on a grand scale.

The Path of Prophet (Pravachakante Vazhi)

"The Path of Prophet" is published in a year 1993. reflects the author's continued fascination with the metaphysics of guru grace. The novel underscores the idea that intuition is eternal and consistent across time. It suggests that the revelations experienced by all prophets share a fundamental unity. Vijayan's deep spiritual education was shaped during a time of tragedy when a community suffered in the aftermath of a leader's murder in Delhi.

Generations (Thalamurakal)

Vijayan's latest novel, "Generations" (Thalamurakal), published in 1993, is both autobiographical and historical, exploring the collective experiences of a family in search of self-awareness amidst a painful subculture. This quest is particularly significant given the strong clan identity that emerges from their bitter experiences. The narrative spans four generations of the Ponmudi family from Palakkad village in Kerala.

Vijayan reconnects with his roots in Malabar and his Ezhava community, fictionalising elements of his own family history. The Ezhavas, Kerala's largest community and classified as Other Backward Classes (OBC), have faced significant caste discrimination. Despite this, many have achieved prominence as landlords, scholars, and ayurvedic doctors, with figures like the social reformer Sri Narayana Guru among them. Historically, the Ezhavas were Buddhist converts to Hinduism around the 6th century CE, and they play a crucial role in Kerala's social fabric, even as they have their share of aristocratic families.

“Generations” follows the decline of the Ponmudi house, loosely based on Vijayan's own ancestry, revealing a history marked by both sordid and heroic elements. The central character, Chamiyarappan, is a deeply flawed patriarch, often seen through the perspective of his grandson, Chandran, who serves as Vijayan's alter ego. The novel includes a mystical element, such as the disembodied head of an ancient magician, Kandath Nair, who foretells the family's decline, fitting the mysterious atmosphere of Malabar.

The narrative delves into the obsession with caste among the Ponmudi landlords and their struggles with the legacies of their Aryan and Dravidian pasts. The ancestral deities, known as Adi Dravid as, haunt the descendants, revealing some of Hinduism's darker secrets. Ezhava landlords strive for Brahmin status through various means, including the story of Krishnan Soma Yagi, who borrows a sacred thread from a Namboodiri friend and attempts to become a scholar in Banaras, ultimately discarding a palm leaf copy of the Manusmṛiti into the Ganges.

Other ancestors take different paths, such as purchasing Brahmin women as mistresses. The novel also explores themes of caste and religion against the backdrop of the Temple Entry movement in the 1930s. Chamiyarappan leads a march to a temple but, after being severely beaten, converts to Christianity, adopting the name Theodore, though he identifies more as an agnostic. His nephew Gopalan travels to England for higher studies, converts to escape caste, and marries a Jewish woman, Jessica Bloom, but ends up jailed and likely executed by the Nazis for his refusal to denounce her.

The narrative includes threads of waiting for political change, a critique of the ideologies of Vijayan's youth—rationalism and Marxism—and a shift toward a spiritual understanding. The novel's breadth allows for varied interpretations: nationalists may see a deep love for the homeland, religious readers may perceive the consequences of a lack of faith, Marxists might view the end of feudalism, while feminists could focus on the family's sins against women.

Though "Generations" is a flawed masterpiece—marked by loose ends and a rushed conclusion the arrival of Chandran and Rosemary's child, Theodore Vel Wagner, as a supposed synthesis of Aryan and Dravidian, feels unsatisfying. Nonetheless, it stands as a significant work with immense merit, unparalleled in the scope of regional literature.

1.3 Literature Review

- **Singh, Ravindra (2015)** disclosed that 'The Saga of Dharmapuri' the inhabitants are primarily characterized as pimps, prostitutes, corrupt ministers, and unscrupulous officials. The story is rich in political symbolism and themes, revealing a clear picture of social and political decline. Right from the beginning, the novel depicts a noticeable breakdown of manners and decency in public conduct, emphasizing the disintegration of traditional values.
- **Selvalakshmi, S and Jayant (2016)** discussed that O.V. Vijayan is regarded as a pioneer of Malayalam literature, profoundly connecting with the people of Kerala through his compelling novels. In the early stages of his career, his writing was characterized by energy and sharp wit. His novel 'The Legends of Khasak' was groundbreaking in that it introduced characters with complex inner lives. As he aged, his writing became more introspective. This novel is filled with vivid depictions of nature, traditional folk practices, examinations of caste distinctions, and a rich array of dialects. Vijayan successfully explores the key features of a marginalized society in this work.
- **Jayan, K. Nimisha (2016)** stated that 'The Legends of Khasak' stands as a distinctive and unmatched work in Malayalam literature. No examination of this literature would be complete without acknowledging O.V. Vijayan and his landmark novel. With a postmodern style, it signifies the dawn of a new chapter in Malayalam literary history. Khasak is a land shaped by myths and folklore, cut off both geographically and culturally from the civilized world, where its people lead a primitive existence. The story delves into the intricate connections between humans and the natural world.
- **Rajan, Maria (2017)** unfolded that 'The Saga of Dharmapuri' by O.V. Vijayan is a Set in the imagined country of Dharmapuri, which could symbolize India or another newly independent nation in the post-colonial era, O.V. Vijayan's novel presents a dystopian fantasy. Through Grotesque Realism, he portrays the political, social, and economic landscape of India in the 1970s, especially during the emergency period. Like other

dystopian tales, "The Saga of Dharmapuri" is prophetic in foreseeing some of the social issues that persist today.

- **Kumar, Amit (2017)** revealed that O. V. Vijayan's 'The Saga of Dharmapuri' The novel is a sharp political satire set in the fictional post-independence state of Dharmapuri, exposing the insidious manipulations of state power and those who wield it. While professing progress and liberalism, these leaders continue the legacy of exploitation and oppression of their citizens. As such, it serves as an allegorical commentary on the political realities of contemporary post-independent sovereign states.
- **Selvalakshmi, S and Jayant (2018)** remarked that O.V. Vijayan's characters are intricately connected to nature and reality, particularly evident in the depiction of sexual instincts. The narrative's tone and structure enrich the reading experience, leading to a transformation in the language employed. Vijayan has undeniably crafted a magical world, allowing readers to gain a deeper understanding of human existence and the mysterious forces that make life possible on this planet.
- **N.P, Rajendran (2018)** stated that philosophy of literature is taken in the third sense. The writer may write books to prove a point. But in the hands of a consummate writer, philosophical themes can be refreshingly enduring effect on the readers. Vijayan's artistic endurance was essentially philosophic, but he never sacrificed artistic excellence for that. O.V. Vijayan began his writing and intellectual career as a communist and materialist. It has been rightly said that the depth of the inner being of an author gets reflected in his literary expressions. Mutation occurring and consciousness during the intellectual life an author can have strong bearing on his works. But gradually, Vijayan evolved into a spiritualist. It was an evolutionary process from a youthful existential angst to a realization of the organic oneness of the cosmos.
- **Solanke, R.S (2018)** discussed that the frustration of modern man which results in the lack of communication and misunderstanding in human relationship. The novel explores the crucial issues such as polity, power, and identity failure of democracy, fear, anguish, political chaos, and corruption.
- **Gupta, Neerja (2019)** disclosed that O.V. Vijayan emerged as one of the most imaginative authors in Indian writing in English, with a style regarded as groundbreaking, broadening the language's use and employing allegories to explore the mysteries of a post-apocalyptic world. "The Legends of Khasak" instigated a

revolutionary shift in Malayalam fiction, liberating it from traditional constraints. The narrative is rich in fictionalized accounts, emphasizing verifiable experiences while allowing themes of self-discovery and individuality to take a backseat, presented without embellishment.

- **V.P, Akhil and Senthilkumar Geetha (2019)** remarked that a typical village in Kerala just like Khasak presented by O.V. Vijayan in ‘The Legends of Khasak’ is run by its traditions influences of folklore, myths, legends and religious practices. The politics of such villages was bound by such traditional practices and religious percepts. With the advent of the modern era after independence, villages became the warehouse for the entire nation to dump its venerable colonial practices as part of its cosmopolitan growth.
- **Saraswathy, B.V. (2019)** unfolded that ‘The Saga of Dharmapuri’ serves as an allegorical depiction of India, immersed in different shades of darkness. The narrative explores the President's manipulations, using the people's patriotism to maintain power and accumulate wealth, even resorting to the export of cadavers. Amidst this grim setting, Siddhartha, a wandering mendicant, appears to discourage war and violence while promoting love and peace.
- **Ravindram, Ashwathy (2020)** revealed that ‘The Legends of Khasak’ is O.V. Vijayan’s English translation of his debut Malayalam novel, "Khasakkinte Ithihasam." Central to the story is the rural landscape of Khasak, where Vijayan portrays a diverse array of characters and intricately weaves the region's folklore into their lives through his imaginative storytelling. The novel thus showcases the complex perspective of this novelist and cartoonist on both people and places. This paper seeks to analyze the novel from a postcolonial perspective, demonstrating how its various elements—such as character, setting, theme, and narrative techniques—reflect the principles of postcolonial writing, while also embodying aspects of Magic Realism.
- **Hussair, Narghese (2020)** explored that O.V. Vijayan, a remarkable Malayalam writer known for his spiritual ideologies and intellectual depth, was also a political commentator, cartoonist, columnist, and a Sahitya Akademi award-winning novelist. It took him twelve years to complete "Khasakkinte Ithihasam" (The Legends of Khasak). The narrative unfolds in the semi-real town of Khasak, which is based on Thasarak, a small village in the beautiful Palakkad countryside where Vijayan spent time while his sister taught at a school. Like Macondo, Khasak is a timeless village with minimal connection to the outside world.

- **N.P, Aasha (2020)** disclosed that Vijayan's novel 'The Legends of Khasak' evokes the feeling of "an interminable journey, mystic and wonderful." Vijayan breathes vibrant life into the narrative, with both the characters and their natural (and even supernatural) surroundings vividly portrayed. Now five decades old, the book still enjoys a devoted readership and continues to wield significant influence. The various experiences and incidents woven throughout the story create a complex web of emotions. Notably, these incidents may serve as reflections of the characters alter egos and their inner struggles. Ravi's self-imposed alienation, his social standing, his past, and life in Khasak contribute to a broader conflict. It is these subtle and enigmatic tensions that elevate this work to a masterpiece.
- **Sasi, Sruthi (2021)** highlighted that Vijayan employs various vivid images throughout the text. Dragonflies, which symbolize memories of the past, frequently appear in connection with Appukili, who enjoys catching them. The image of Ravi's mother sitting on the veranda, pointing out the stars in the sky, evokes a mother's affection for her child. However, the sky and stars also remind Ravi of his loneliness and lost innocence. The snake, once sought after by Nizam Ali and ultimately seen biting Ravi, serves as a metaphor for one's entrapment in Khasak. Additionally, the image of lice emerges as another significant symbol used by the author.
- **Jangle, K. Jagdish (2022)** stated that Vijayan was an exceptional writer with a remarkable breadth of creativity. When he crafted his first brilliant work of fiction, 'The Legends of Khasak' he chooses to remain apart from the overwhelming expanse of history.
- **Vadacke, (2023)** disclosed that O.V. Vijayan's *The Legends of Khasak*, there's a deconstructive analysis that examines the protagonist Ravi's complex attitude toward Western education. Previous studies have focused on exploring Ravi's sexuality in relation to morality.
- **Dalvin, (2023)** explored that "Legends of Khasak, the clever manipulation of a myth by an individual named Nizam Ali. He seizes upon the instability inherent in a myth to elevate himself to the position of 'Khazi' in the novel. Nizam Ali, initially an ordinary man, suddenly gains power and dominance by appropriating the myth of Khasak. His motive is to escape imprisonment and attain authority.

The Present literature review highlighted that the novels of O.V. Vijayan have focus on multiple themes that include, but are not limited to women issues, voice of Marginalized,

familial issue, Personal and professional problems, identity crisis, emotional problems, loneliness, alienation, and more. Moreover, literature review found that the characters in the novel are live, vivid, and simple and yet effective, impactful and impressive.

O.V. Vijayan's novels are deeply rooted in the socio-political context of Kerala, India, and they often explore complex themes related to religion, politics, and society. While it's essential to read his novels to understand his beliefs and perspectives. In the select novels of O.V. Vijayan, the exploration of background and beliefs emerges as a central and powerful theme, offering readers a profound insight into the intricacies of human existence. Vijayan masterfully depicts the dynamic interplay between individual histories, cultural backgrounds, and deeply ingrained beliefs.

Vijayan's novels often reflect his commitment to secularism and religious tolerance. He believed in the co-existence of various religious and cultural traditions and criticized religious fundamentalism and intolerance. This theme is particularly evident in his novel "The Legends of Khasak," where characters from different religious backgrounds interact and coexist in a fictional village. Vijayan was deeply critical of the social and political issues of his time. He often used his novels to critique the oppressive systems, corruption, and power structures prevalent in Indian society and politics. His works shed light on the struggles of the marginalized and dispossessed. Existentialist themes, such as alienation and the search for meaning in life, can be found in Vijayan's novels. His characters often grapple with questions of identity and purpose in a rapidly changing world.

Vijayan explored the concept of cultural identity, particularly the tension between preserving one's cultural heritage and embracing modernity. This theme is evident in his novel "The Saga of Dharmapuri," which delves into the conflict between tradition and progress. Vijayan was known for his humanistic outlook. His novels often emphasize the importance of empathy, compassion, and human connection in a world marked by divisions and conflicts.

Vijayan's works frequently challenge authoritarianism and totalitarianism. He was critical of political leaders who abused their power and infringed upon individual freedoms. He often blurred the lines between myth and reality in his storytelling. He used myths and folklore to comment on contemporary issues and explore timeless human dilemmas. Vijayan was also known for his narrative experimentation and innovative use of language. His novels often employ unique narrative structures and linguistic creativity.

To Conclude it can be said that Vijayan's thematic exploration serves as a poignant reminder of the enduring significance of background and beliefs in shaping human destinies. His novels invite readers to engage in a reflective journey, contemplating the intricate dance between individual narratives and the collective human experience. Through his literary craftsmanship, Vijayan leaves behind a legacy that transcends time, inviting readers to ponder the profound question of what it means to be human in the context of one's background and beliefs.

Objective(s) of the Research Study

The core objectives of the Present Research Study are:

- to explore and understand the Significance of Background and Beliefs in the select novels of O.V. Vijayan.
- to study and understand, themes, setting, style and technique in the select novels of O.V. Vijayan.
- to study the types of characters and discuss their role in the select novels of O.V. Vijayan.
- to analyse the concept of beliefs, as shown in the select novels of O.V. Vijayan.

Research Methodology

- The present research work was based on both primary and secondary sources of data. The original works by the select novels were used as primary sources. The secondary sources included the use of Library, Research journals, Magazines, Internet and the like.
- The major focus of research study was to have a complete analysis of the select novels including the central theme of the novels.
- In this research work descriptive and comparative study were applied.
- The research work was mainly based on the analysis of novels – its plot, characters, themes, techniques, and moreover background and beliefs.

Limitations of the Research

- Despite of covering all the major aspects of the present research study there are a few limitations to the present study such as time constants.
 - The research has to be completed to be stipulated time perceived there is also scarcity of secondary translated references books even in the libraries, secondary sources based on the select topics are very less.
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CHAPTER - 2

UNRAVELLING EXISTENTIAL PURSUITS, SELF- REALISATION AND FREEDOM OF SELF

2.1 Quest for Self-Realisation

2.2 Identity Crisis

2.3 Search for Freedom

CHAPTER-2

UNRAVELLING EXISTENTIAL PURSUITS, SELF REALISATION AND FREEDOM OF SELF

Concepts and Terms: Existential Pursuits

Existential pursuit can be defined as the quest in a person's life as an individual or in a group where one or more persons are seeking meaning, purpose and knowledge in their existence especially under the tenets of existentialism-an important philosophical movement which began in the 19th and well into the 20th century. It focuses on individual decisions, liberty, and existence of the world and human being which is filled with essences of sheer meaninglessness. In the realm of existential pursuit, individuals grapple with fundamental questions about their existence. In the realm of existential pursuit, individuals grapple with fundamental questions about their existence, such as:

Freedom and Responsibility:

In the Context of existentialism freedom means that a person has certain capabilities of being able to choose, to make certain decisions and thus make his/her own meaning of the life that he/she is living. It focuses more on the lack of any plan or drive in life which is why people get to decide on their own sake. This includes accepting the consequences of one's action and taking ownership of one's existence. Basically, existential freedom refers to freedom of choice and responsibility is owning up to a decision made and molding one's existence around that freedom.

Authenticity:

Authenticity in the context of existential pursuit refers to living in accordance with one's true self, values, and beliefs. It is characterized by authenticity, integrity, and self-responsibility it means that one has to be truthful to himself and also for the action that one takes. Existentialists emphasize the importance of authenticity as a way to navigate the complexities of existence and find meaning in a world without predetermined purpose or external validation. Authenticity can be described as a condition in which people have the opportunity to explore what they want and who they are and who they want to be and do instead of be compelled by circumstances to be somebody else.

Anxiety and Alienation:

In the context of existential pursuit, anxiety refers to the feeling of unease or dread that arises from the awareness of one's freedom and responsibility. According to existentialists, this anxiety comes from understanding the fact that life is not inherently meaningful, and an individual will have to make something meaningful out of it on his / her own. This existential anxiety can manifest as a fear of making the wrong decisions or a sense of being overwhelmed by the weight of one's freedom and responsibility.

Alienation, on the other hand, refers to the feeling of being disconnected or estranged from oneself, others, or the world. Existentialists believe that alienation arises from the realization of one's fundamental separateness and uniqueness in the world. This sense of alienation can lead to feelings of isolation, loneliness, or a sense of not belonging. Existentialists often explore the experience of alienation as individuals grapple with the tension between their desire for connection and their recognition of their own distinctiveness and autonomy. Both anxiety and alienation are seen as inherent aspects of the human condition in existential philosophy, and they play significant roles in shaping individuals' experiences as they navigate the pursuit of meaning and authenticity in their lives.

Existential pursuit often involves introspection, philosophical contemplation, and a search for personal values and authenticity. It can manifest in various forms, such as philosophical inquiry, artistic expression, spiritual exploration, or even through personal crisis and moments of reflection. Existential thinkers like Jean-Paul Sartre, Albert Camus, and Søren Kierkegaard have explored these themes extensively in their works, contributing to a deeper understanding of the human experience and the quest for meaning in an inherently uncertain world.

Existence is to establish, indicate, yearning, a desire to exist in a locality with one's own identity. And to achieve a level of Independence, to fulfill the inner desire, and to exist in society. Existential relates to human existence in a more concrete way, it is regarded as a philosophy that emphasizes individual existence, freedom, and choice. In existential humans define their meaning of life, and try to make their own decisions, it is believed that individual is free to take their responsibility. Existential deal with the occurrence, personal concern, dedication, and oneness of the individual.

Thinkers believe that people are in search of their existence and identity. The term "Existentialism" (French Existentialism) was coined by the French Catholic philosopher "Gabriel Marcel" in the mid-1940s.

According to “Merriam Webster” since 1828, “Existential is something of relating to, or affirming existence”.¹

According to “Collins Dictionary” “Existential means relating to human existence and experience”.²

According to western Concepts identity means your being should be personified in the society in which you live. According to psychology identity self-denotes the consciousness of men. Consciousness shows that how a man establishes his oneness in the society that he inherited from his worth. Thus, self - question of identity with a specific physical yearning and the way to be followed show something different. From the collective psyche of society, where a person comes in clash with the collective psyche of society and individual sense as a self which is also known as consciousness. They began turtle between men-women society, man is a being who lives, eats, and works.

Existentialism and existentialist writing are primarily Western concepts that emerged in Germany following the outbreak of the First World War. From there, existentialist philosophy spread to various European countries, including France and Italy, before reaching other parts of the world. After the Second World War, this philosophy became widely prevalent, even in the coffee houses of Europe where writers and intellectuals congregated, gaining significant influence during that time. A notable shift in post-independence fiction can be observed by examining existentialist novels, which highlight a transition from external to internal conflicts. Many novelists and short story writers showcased a strong existentialist undercurrent, a trend that is also reflected in the regional literatures of that period.

Vijayan’s “The Legends of Khasak” is a prime example of existential theme. Ravikumar says: “As part of this (modernist) development a group of short story writers emerged. O.V. Vijayan from the Previous decade itself produced modernist or existentialist writing and hence, joined this group”.³

In “The Legends of Khasak” Vijayan delves into the existential struggles of Ravi, the protagonist, as he moves to the remote village of Khasak in Kerala, India. Ravi grapples with questions of identity, purpose, and the meaning of life as he becomes entangled in the lives of the villagers. The novel is replete with existential elements as Ravi confronts the isolation of Khasak, the mysteries of existence, and his own internal conflicts.

Existentialism is a philosophical movement that often focuses on individual freedom, choice, and the search for meaning in an otherwise indifferent or absurd world. Vijayan's exploration of these themes in “The Legends of Khasak” and his other works has earned him recognition for his engagement with existential philosophy in his storytelling. His novels often provide a deep introspective look into the human condition, making them important contributions to Indian literature.

It is important to note that existentialist themes are not explicitly central to “The Saga of Dharmapuri” as they might be in some other literary works. However, like many great novels, it does touch upon existential ideas and themes indirectly through its characters and narrative.

This novel itself is centered around the problematic relationship between the characters and themselves; however, it also touches upon some of the realistic problems of the society and politics of modern Kerala. This can be seen as a reflection of the human condition and the challenges individuals face in a rapidly changing world, which is a common theme in existential literature. It is also possible to trace some of the existential themes like the feeling of isolation or alienation within certain characters of the novel.

While “The Saga of Dharmapuri” may not be primarily classified as an existentialist work, it does contain elements and themes that resonate with existential philosophy, offering readers a rich and complex exploration of the human experience and the choices individuals make in the face of challenging circumstances. Vijayan works often explore existential themes, human nature, and the intricacies of life. Let's delve into how existential pursuits are portrayed in some of his notable novels.

“The Legend of Khasak” Vijayan presents the life of Ravi, a young teacher who moves to the remote village of Khasak. Through the character of Ravi and his experiences and perceptions of the villagers, the novel depicts themes such as loneliness, desolation and insignificance of the human existence as people try to look for meaning in a seemingly and senseless world. Ravi's existential journey is marked by his struggle to find purpose in a place that is detached from the mainstream society. His attempts to bring education and change to Khasak reflect his existential pursuit of creating meaning in his life.

“The Saga of Dharmapuri” continues to explore existential themes as it follows the life of Govindan Nair a man who rises from a humble background to become a successful politician. The novel delves into the complexities of power, ambition, and identity. Govindankutty's existential pursuit is tied to his quest for power and the compromises he makes along the way.

It examines how individuals navigate their existence in a world driven by political and social forces.

“The Infinity of Grace” is less well-known compared to the others it also touches on existential themes. The story revolves around the character of Govindkutty a sensitive and introspective individual. His experiences in a changing society lead him to question the nature of reality and the existence of a higher power. Susheelan existential journey revolves around his spiritual and philosophical reflections, as he grapples with questions about the existence of God and the meaning of life.

“Generations” novel explores the lives of multiple generations of a family, tracing their experiences through the socio-political changes in Kerala, India. Vijayan uses the backdrop of history to reflect on the existential pursuits of individuals in the context of their times. The characters in this novel grapple with issues of identity, tradition, and progress, which are central to their existential quests. The novel portrays how different generations cope with the challenges of their era while searching for meaning and purpose.

In all these novels, the essence of O. V. Vijayan’s writing lies in exploring life to its absolute, tapping into issues from the realm of philosophy. He really loves to portray his figures in a situation of a philosophical concern of life, where one is in search of the identity amidst what seems like absurdity. Both the characters encountered in their respective journeys present certain existentialist aspects in their strivings towards viable meaning and true identity.

2.1. Quest for Self Realisation

The quest for Self-Realisation is a deeply personal and introspective journey aimed at gaining a profound understanding of oneself, one's purpose in life, and one's true potential. It often involves a search for inner peace, happiness, and fulfillment. The quest for self-realization is a timeless and universal theme that has permeated literature across cultures and centuries. This enduring motif captivates readers by exploring the fundamental human desire to understand oneself, to find purpose, and to forge a meaningful existence. In literary texts, the journey towards self-realization often serves as a narrative backbone, guiding characters through trials and tribulations as they navigate the complexities of their inner worlds and external realities.

At its core, the quest for self-realization is a deeply personal and introspective journey. Characters grapple with questions of identity, grappling with questions such as: Who am I? What do I value? What is my purpose? These existential inquiries drive characters to embark

on journeys of self-discovery, often propelled by inner conflicts, external pressures, or transformative experiences. As they traverse the landscapes of their own minds and the worlds around them, they confront obstacles, confrontations, and revelations that shape their understanding of themselves and their place in the world. Literary texts offer a diverse array of narratives that explore the quest for self-realization through various lenses and contexts. Some stories focus on the internal struggles of individuals as they confront their fears, desires, and insecurities. These narratives delve into the intricacies of the human psyche, probing the depths of consciousness and the subconscious mind. Other tales frame the quest for self-realization within larger social, cultural, or historical contexts, highlighting how external forces shape individual identity and agency.

Throughout literature, the quest for self-realization is often depicted as a transformative journey marked by growth, enlightenment, and empowerment. Characters evolve as they confront their inner demons, overcome obstacles, and embrace their true selves. Along the way, they may experience moments of epiphany, self-awareness, or catharsis that illuminate their path forward. These moments of realization are often depicted as pivotal turning points in the narrative, signaling the character's progression towards a deeper understanding of themselves and their place in the world. Moreover, the quest for self-realization in literature serves not only as a vehicle for individual character development but also as a reflection of broader human experiences and existential dilemmas. Readers resonate with these narratives because they mirror their own search for meaning, identity, and fulfillment in life. Through the trials and triumphs of fictional characters, readers glean insights, empathy, and inspiration for their own journeys of self-discovery.

In conclusion, the quest for self-realization is a central and enduring theme in literature, weaving its way through the tapestry of human experience. Through the lens of narrative fiction, authors explore the complexities of identity, purpose, and existence, inviting readers to embark on transformative journeys of introspection and enlightenment. Whether set in distant realms of fantasy or grounded in the realities of everyday life, these literary explorations of the self-resonate with readers, offering solace, guidance, and a deeper understanding of what it means to be human.

O.V. Vijayan, in his works in Malayalam literature, had a profound and multifaceted vision regarding the quest for self-realisation. His writings often explored themes of identity, self-discovery, and the human condition. Vijayan's works frequently delve into the complexities of

individual identity. He believed that self-realisation begins with a deep exploration of one's own identity, including cultural, social, and personal aspects. Through his characters and narratives, he often depicted the struggle of individuals to understand themselves better and come with their unique identities. Many of Vijayan's writings incorporate elements of spirituality and philosophy. He was shown to think that self-realization mainly entails self-transcendence – the process of seeking for a soul, religious purposes in life. That focus on the spiritual and the philosophical is easily seen from his novels as well as the short stories. He explored how societal norms, political systems, and historical events can impact an individual's journey towards self-realisation. His works often critiqued the injustices and inequalities in society, suggesting that addressing these issues is crucial for personal and collective self-realisation.

Vijayan believed in the power of artistic expression as a means to self-realisation. He saw art as a way to reflect upon and make sense of the world, as well as a tool for individuals to explore their own inner landscapes. Through his cartoons and literature, he encouraged introspection and self-expression. Many of Vijayan's characters go through experiences of suffering and redemption on their paths to self-realisation. He believed that facing adversity and overcoming challenges were essential components of personal growth and self-discovery. Redemption often played a central role in his narratives, suggesting that individuals could find meaning and purpose in their lives through transformative experiences.

Vijayan's vision of the quest for self-realisation encompassed themes of individual identity, spirituality, social and political context, artistic expression, and the journey from suffering to redemption. His works continue to be studied and appreciated for their exploration of these themes and their deep insights into the human condition.

“The Legends of Khasak” explores various themes, including the quest for self-realisation. The story is set in the fictional village of Khasak follows the life of its protagonist, Ravi. Ravi is a complex character who is searching for meaning and self-realization in his life. The theme of self-realisation is another related concept that demonstrates how this individual's journey towards discovering himself is interweaved with the tales and fates of the characters he meets in Khasak. Below are some aspects that demonstrate the theme of the search for the individualization of self in “The Legends of Khasak”.

Ravi embarks on a spiritual and philosophical journey to find meaning in his life. He grapples with existential questions and seeks to understand the nature of existence, the self, and the

divine. This quest leads him to explore various religious and philosophical traditions, including Sufism, Hinduism, and Buddhism. It was Vijayan who released Malayalam fiction writing from the chains of tradition. “The Legend of Khasak” shot him into fame as a legendary storyteller, the harbinger of a version of modernism that heralded a radical change of sensibility in Malayalam”.⁴

Throughout his time in Khasak, Ravi interacts with a wide range of characters, each with their own stories and struggles. These interactions challenge his preconceived notions and help him gain insights into the human condition. He learns from the experiences of others and gradually comes to a deeper understanding of himself. The natural surroundings of Khasak play a significant role in Ravi's journey. The village is positioned in a desolated beautiful geographical area and this geographical feature supplemented by vegetation, rivers and wild wildlife give a background image to Ravi's thinking and transformation. A notable theme of the novel is the interconnectedness of the natural world with the spirit. It is on record that Khasak is a multicultural and pluralistic society that hosts people of different faiths, cultures, colors, and race. By visiting these traditions, Ravi is shown an aspect of enriched diversity whenever the multiple beliefs are related to one another. This exploration assists him in his journey of finding himself and in searching for the truth in order to reconcile what he knows and understands with what others know and understand. Symbolism and erotology are well-developed in the novel which enrich the staking of Ravi's spiritual experience. Various events and characters in the story symbolize different aspects of human existence and spirituality. These symbols invite readers to engage in their own reflections on the quest for self-realisation.

“The Legends of Khasak” explores the multifaceted nature of the human quest for self-realisation. It delves into the complexities of identity, spirituality, and the search for meaning in a world filled with diverse influences and experiences. Through Ravi's journey, the novel invites readers to contemplate their own paths toward self-discovery and enlightenment. Vijayan's novel "The Saga of Dharmapuri" explores the quest for self-realisation through the lens of its protagonist, Govindan Nair. The novel is a complex and multi-layered narrative that delves into various aspects of human existence, including identity, spirituality, and the search for meaning in life.

Govindan Nair, the central character, suffer with an identity crisis throughout the novel. He is caught between his rural, traditional upbringing and the allure of urban modernity. His journey is a quest to understand who he truly is and where he belongs. Govindan Nair's journey takes

him to Dharmapuri, a place steeped in spirituality and mysticism. Here, he encounters various spiritual leaders and experiences moments of profound introspection. His interactions with these spiritual figures push him towards a deeper understanding of himself and his purpose in life. As much as Govindan Nair escalates through the different levels of conflict as depicted in the story's events, the character also undergoes a transformation. He feels discontent with the standards of living, wondering about the meaning of life and the nature of the world. Thus, this internal journey thrusts him on a search of self – his strengths and weaknesses, his needs and wants – making him become more 'awake'. One might note that the events and circumstances in the novel imply conflicts – both intrapersonal and interpersonal; that is, conflicts which Govindan Nair has to tackle. These conflicts force him to confront his own values and beliefs, pushing him towards self-realisation as he seeks to find resolutions to these challenges.

"The Saga of Dharmapuri" is known for its rich symbolism and allegorical elements. The novel contains various characters and actions, which can be regarded as allegorical to the internal human world and the process of finding oneself. These symbolic elements add depth to the exploration of the theme.

At the same time, the novel also portrays Govindan Nair's search for his 'self' within the framework of the struggle between the traditional and the progressive in the social life of Indian society. His struggle to reconcile these conflicting forces serves as a microcosm of the broader societal transformation taking place around him. "The Saga of Dharmapuri" weaves the theme of self-realisation into its narrative. Govindan Nair's journey is one of inner exploration, spiritual awakening, and the search for meaning in a rapidly changing world. The novel invites readers to reflect on their own quests for self-realisation and the complexities of human existence.

"The Infinity of Grace" explores the quest for self-realisation in the context of Indian spirituality and the human condition. The novel delves into the complexities of human existence and the eternal search for meaning and transcendence. The protagonist, Govindankutty's, embarks on a spiritual journey to find meaning and purpose in his life. His quest is not merely a physical one but also a metaphysical and philosophical exploration of the self and the universe.

This journey mirrors the traditional Indian concept of self-realisation or "*moksha*," which is the ultimate goal of life. Govindankutty's encounter various challenges and conflicts on his path to self-realisation. He grapples with doubts, both about his own abilities and the spiritual

teachings he encounters. This reflects the common struggles faced by individuals seeking self-realisation, as they must confront their own limitations and uncertainties. Throughout the novel, Govindankutty encounters different spiritual masters and gurus who impart wisdom and guidance. These characters represent the diversity of spiritual paths and philosophies in India. Each guru offers a unique perspective on the quest for self-realisation, reflecting the richness and complexity of Indian spirituality.

“The Infinity of Grace” suggests a juxtaposition of the infinite and the finite. This theme is central to the novel's exploration of self-realisation. Govindankutty seeks to transcend the limitations of his finite existence and connect with the infinite, symbolized by the concept of grace. Vijayan uses symbolism and allegory to convey deeper philosophical and spiritual ideas. The novel is replete with rich imagery and metaphors that invite readers to contemplate the nature of reality, the self, and the divine. While the novel primarily focuses on the spiritual quest for self-realisation, it is also set against the backdrop of social and political turmoil in India. This context adds depth to the exploration of the human condition and the search for meaning, as it acknowledges the challenges and distractions of the external world.

Govindankutty's undergoes a profound transformation throughout his journey, which is a common theme in stories of self-realisation. His experiences, encounters, and reflections lead him to a deeper understanding of himself and the universe. In “The Infinity of Grace” Vijayan weaves a narrative that intertwines the personal and the universal, the finite and the infinite, and the spiritual and the worldly. Through the protagonist's quest for self-realisation, the novel invites readers to ponder the timeless questions of existence, identity, and the ultimate purpose of life.

Vijayan's novel “Generations” is a complex and multi-layered work that delves into various themes, including the quest for self-realisation. This novel is based in the social realistic setting of the village in Kerala, India during the lives of multiple generations within one family. In his entire narrative, Vijayan compels the reader to take a closer look at the characters in quest of an identity, purpose of living, and their role in a society that is in a process of transformation.

The novel is deeply rooted in the socio-political context of Kerala, a state in South India known for its rich cultural heritage and tumultuous political history. The characters grapple with their roles in this changing society, and their quest for self-realisation is often intertwined with their response to political events and ideologies.

One of the central themes in the novel is the generational divide and the tension between traditional values and modernity. The older generation clings to their customs and beliefs, while the younger generation seeks to break free from these constraints and find their own paths to self-realisation. This generational conflict is a reflection of the broader societal changes happening in Kerala during that period. Several characters in the novel embark on spiritual and existential journeys in search of self-realisation. They grapple with questions of existence, purpose, and the nature of reality. These quests often lead them to confront their own inner demons and spiritual dilemmas.

The novelist employs various narrative techniques, including allegory, symbolism, and magical realism, to explore the inner lives of his characters. This allows readers to delve deep into the psyche of the characters as they navigate their personal quests for self-realisation. The novel provides detailed character studies of its protagonists, showcasing their personal struggles, conflicts, and inner turmoil. Through their experiences, readers witness the evolution of these characters as they strive to understand themselves better and find their places in the world.

“Generations” by Vijayan is a rich and complex novel that explores the quest for self-realisation within the context of a changing society. The characters journey reflects the broader societal changes happening in Kerala, and their personal struggles serve as a microcosm of the larger human quest for meaning and identity.

2.2. Identity Crisis

Identity clashes, also known as identity conflicts or identity crisis, refer to situations in which an individual experiences inner turmoil or confusion about their sense of self, values, beliefs, and identity. These conflicts often arise when there is a disconnect or incongruence between different aspects of a person's identity, or when external factors challenge or contradict one's self-perception. Identity clashes can manifest in various ways and can be triggered by a range of factors. When Individuals from different cultural background or heritage struggle to reconcile their original cultural identity with the expectations and norms of a new cultural leading to a sense of cultural dissonance, it is called Cultural Identity crisis.

Cultural, gender, religious, professional, sexual, political, relationship, and adolescence identity clashes are multifaceted dynamics that can arise from the interplay of various personal and societal factors. These clashes occur when individuals navigate conflicting aspects of their identities, such as cultural traditions conflicting with professional expectations, or religious

beliefs conflicting with sexual orientation. Gender identity clashes may arise from societal expectations conflicting with personal expression. Political identity clashes can stem from differing ideological beliefs within families or communities. Relationship identity clashes may occur when individuals prioritize personal desires over societal norms or family expectations. Adolescence identity clashes often emerge as young people explore and define their identities amidst societal pressures and expectations. These clashes underscore the complexity of human identity and the ongoing process of self-discovery and negotiation within diverse social contexts.

Identity clashes can be emotionally challenging and may result in feelings of confusion, anxiety, and self-doubt. Resolving these conflicts often involves introspection, seeking support from trusted individuals, and sometimes making difficult decisions to align one's identity with their true values and beliefs. Therapy and counseling can also be beneficial for individuals experiencing identity clashes, providing a safe space for exploration and growth.

Vijayan's works often delved into the complex issues of social and cultural identity, particularly in the context of a rapidly changing India. He was known for his keen observations of the diverse cultures and traditions within the country, and his writing often reflected the tensions and conflicts that arose when different identities clashed or coexisted. India is a country with a rich tapestry of regional languages, cultures, and identities. Vijayan's works frequently explored the tension between regional identities and the broader national identity. He was known for celebrating the unique cultural aspects of his home state Kerala while also commenting on the broader Indian identity.

In his novels and stories, Vijayan often delved into the individual's struggle to reconcile their personal identity with the collective identity of their community, religion, or nation. This inner conflict could lead to powerful narratives of self-discovery and transformation. Vijayan was deeply engaged with political and social issues in India. He was critical of various ideologies and often used his writing to comment on the ideological clashes that occurred within the country. These clashes sometimes intersected with questions of identity, as different ideological groups sought to define and impose their vision of India. He explored the theme of identity clashes in the multifaceted context of Indian society. His works are still widely read and studied for their insights into these themes and their impact on individuals and communities.

Identity clashes are a central theme in “The Legends of Khasak” The central character Ravi, represents a different cultural and linguistic background compared to the people of Khasak. His arrival in the village brings about a clash of cultures and languages. He struggles to understand and adapt to the customs, beliefs, and traditions of the villagers, and they, in turn, view him as an outsider. Khasak is a place where multiple religions coexist, including Hinduism, Islam, and Christianity. The characters in the novel grapple with their religious identities and beliefs. Ravi, who is a non-religious person, encounters various religious practices and rituals in Khasak, which challenge his own beliefs and identity.

Ravi himself undergoes an identity crisis as he grapples with his past mistakes, failed relationships, and his sense of purpose in life. He struggles to find his place in the world and comes to question his own identity. This novel also explores traditional gender roles and how they affect the identities of the characters, particularly women in the village. It delves into the societal expectations placed on women and the challenges they face in asserting their individual identities. Vijayan delves into the lives of the characters in the fictional village of Khasak, and several of them grapple with identity conflicts.

Ravi is the protagonist of the novel, and his identity clash is central to the story. Ravi struggles to fit into the traditional and superstitious environment of Khasak while also trying to hold on to his own modern and rational beliefs.

Appukkili is another important character in the novel who faces identity conflicts. He is a marginalized and oppressed member of the Pulaya community, and he grapples with his social status and the discrimination he faces. His identity is shaped by his caste and economic background, and he strives for a better life. Madhavan Nair, the headman of Khasak, is a character who embodies the clash between tradition and modernity. He represents the traditional, superstitious values of the village, and his interactions with Ravi highlight the clash between their worldviews and identities. Kareem is a Muslim character in the novel, and his identity clash arises from the religious tensions and divisions in the village. His interactions with the Hindu and Christian communities in Khasak highlight the religious and cultural clashes in the region. The novel is rich in character development and explores how individuals' identities are shaped by their cultural, social, and historical contexts. The clashes between these identities form a central theme of the novel, making it a compelling exploration of human nature and society.

“The Legends of Khasak” is known for its rich use of myths and legends. Such myths or legends contribute to acts as symbols that represent different aspects of characters’ personality and their needs, meaning that there is the additional layer of the theme concerning identity. “The Legends of Khasak” by O.V. Vijayan is a complex and multi-layered novel that explores various forms of identity clashes and the ways in which individuals and communities grapple with their identities in a culturally diverse and spiritually rich setting.

“The Saga of Dharmapuri”, the novel deals with various themes, including identity clashes, in the context of a changing society and political landscape. While the novel is known for its complex narrative and multifaceted characters. One of the central identity clashes in the novel revolves around the cultural and regional identities of the characters. The story is set in Dharmapuri, a fictional town in South India, and the characters come from diverse backgrounds, each with their own distinct cultural and regional identities. This leads to clashes and tensions as they interact and try to find common ground. Religion is another significant aspect of identity in the novel. The clashes and conflicts between different religious groups are explored in the narrative, highlighting the complexities of religious identity in a pluralistic society.

“The Saga of Dharmapuri” is a bold inquiry onto the operations of power in the modern post-colonial situation. It is shaped by his confrontation with in the Indian politics and his general critique of the fascist tendencies manifesting in the third world countries in the post-colonial era”⁵. The novel is set against the backdrop of political turmoil and social change in India. The characters have different political affiliations and ideologies, and their political identities often clash. The story portrays the challenges and conflicts arising from political differences and the impact of political events on individual lives.

Social identity, including caste and class, plays a crucial role in the novel. The characters come from different social backgrounds, and their social identities intersect with other aspects of their identity, leading to tensions and conflicts. Issues related to social inequality and discrimination are also explored. Beyond cultural, religious, political, and social identities, the novel delves into the personal identities of the characters. Each character grapples with their own inner conflicts and struggles to define who they are amidst the changing circumstances and pressures of society.

Gender identity is another dimension explored in the novel. The characters' roles and expectations based on their gender often clash with their desires and aspirations, leading to

conflicts and challenges related to gender identity. The novel tells the story of the protagonist, Kunjupillai, and his journey through life in the fictional town of Dharmapuri. Dharmapuri is a town in the southern Indian state of Kerala, and the novel delves into the cultural and regional identity of the characters. Kunjupillai grapples with his identity as a Malayali and the expectations and traditions associated with his culture. The clash between traditional values and modern influences is a recurring theme. The novel also explores issues related to socio-economic identity. Kunjupillai, who comes from a lower-middle-class background, faces challenges and discrimination because of his social and economic status. This conflict between different socioeconomic classes is a central theme in the story. Kunju Pillai's personal identity undergoes significant changes as he navigates the complexities of life in Dharmapuri. He questions his own beliefs, desires, and aspirations, leading to a conflict within himself about who he truly is and what he wants from life.

“The Saga of Dharmapuri” is set against the backdrop of political turmoil and change in India. Kunju Pillai gets involved in political activism, and his political identity evolves throughout the novel. The story explores the clash of ideologies and political movements of the time. The novel portrays the changing face of Indian society, with urbanization and modernization challenging traditional values and norms. This societal transformation leads to identity conflicts not only for Kunjupillai but also for other characters in the story. The characters are grounded with their cultural, socio-economic, political, and personal identities, making the novel a rich exploration of these themes.

Throughout the novel, the characters are confronted with a rapidly changing world, both in terms of societal and personal changes. Their efforts to adapt to these changes and maintain their identities in the midst of transformation form a significant part of the narrative. “The Saga of Dharmapuri” offers a nuanced exploration of these themes within the context of South India and the broader Indian socio-political landscape.

This work is broadly related to “The Infinity of Grace”; it deals with different topics such as identity clashes which are one of the key parts of the plot. The social and political conflicts of the novel also portray the entangled and conflicted lives of the characters highlighting the social and political problems emerging in the period of the novel, that is the 70s and 80s in Kerala.

The novel delves into the clash between traditional and modern values in Kerala society. The characters grapple with their cultural identities, as they are torn between the rich, ancient traditions of the region and the influences of modernization and globalization. The novel set

against the backdrop of political movements and societal changes in Kerala. “The Infinity of Grace” highlights the clash between different political ideologies. It portrays the tensions between various political groups and individuals who have differing visions for the state's future.

Religion plays a significant role in the lives of the characters, and the novel explores how religious beliefs and practices impact their identities. It examines the tensions between different religious communities and the ways in which religion can be a source of both conflict and solace. The novel addresses issues related to caste, class, and social hierarchies. It portrays the struggles of marginalized and oppressed communities in Kerala and the challenges they face in asserting their identities and seeking social justice. The individual characters in the novel Struggle with their personal identities, including their roles as parents, spouses, and citizens. Their personal journeys are intertwined with the larger societal conflicts, adding depth to the narrative.

Many characters in the novel may interwoven with questions related to their cultural or regional identity. This could involve a tension between traditional values and modernity, or it could explore the impact of globalization on individual identities. Characters may face conflicts between their personal desires and societal expectations. They may be torn between conforming to societal norms and pursuing their individual dreams or desires. The characters might also struggle with their political identities. This could involve ideological conflicts, activism, or resistance against oppressive systems.

“The Infinity of Grace” is known for its philosophical depth, so characters might confront with existential questions, searching for meaning in their lives, or questioning their spiritual beliefs. Gender identity and sexual orientation can also be sources of conflict in literature. Characters may struggle to accept their true selves or face discrimination and prejudice. Some characters might lead double lives, concealing aspects of their identity from others. This can create tension and conflict as they navigate these dual identities.

The novel's characters and their identity conflicts are often symbolic and metaphorical, representing broader themes and philosophical ideas. To fully appreciate the depth of these identity conflicts in the novel, readers may need to delve into the text and analyze the interactions and journeys of the characters. “Generations” is a novel by the acclaimed Indian writer O.V. Vijayan. Published in 1985, it is a powerful and complex work of fiction that explores various themes, including identity clashes, within the context of Indian society and

politics. The novel portrays the tensions and conflicts between different generations of a family, particularly between the older, conservative generation and the younger, more progressive one. This clash of values and worldviews reflects broader generational divides within Indian society during the 20th century.

“Generations” is set against the backdrop of significant political upheaval in India. It delves into the clashes between different political ideologies, such as communism and nationalism. The protagonist, Sethu, grapples with his own political identity and experiences internal conflicts as he navigates the complex political landscape. The novel also explores cultural identity clashes, especially in the context of India's diverse cultural landscape. It touches upon issues related to language, religion, and regional differences. These clashes highlight the complexities of identity formation in a multicultural and multi-religious society like India.

Sethu, the central character, undergoes a personal journey of self-discovery and identity formation. He struggles to reconcile his personal beliefs and desires with the expectations and demands of his family, society, and political ideologies. This inner conflict adds depth to the exploration of identity in the novel.

The novel primarily deals with the theme of identity conflict in the context of the socio-political landscape of Kerala, India. The story revolves around the life of Sethu, the protagonist, who represents the younger generation of the time. Sethu's character embodies the confusion and identity crisis faced by many young people in Kerala during the mid-20th century when the state was undergoing significant social and political changes.

The novel is set against the backdrop of Kerala's transition from a feudal society to a more modern, politically aware state. This transformation leads to a clash of identities, as traditional values and customs collide with new ideas and ideologies. The conflict between different generations is a central theme. Sethu's struggle to find his identity is exacerbated by the generation gap between him and his parents, who hold onto traditional values and customs. It also explores the influence of political ideologies on individual identity. Sethu, like many of his peers, is drawn to leftist ideologies, which were prevalent in Kerala during that period. His political beliefs shape his identity and lead to conflicts within his family and society.

Kerala is known for its diverse religious and cultural practices. The novel delves into how religious and cultural identities can be at odds with political and social ideologies, further contributing to the identity crisis faced by the characters. Sethu's personal identity and desires often clash with the collective identity and goals of the political and social movements he

becomes a part of. This tension highlights the complexities of identity in a society undergoing rapid change.

Sethu's journey is marked by a sense of alienation and isolation as he grapples with his evolving identity. He often feels disconnected from his family, friends, and society at large due to his changing beliefs and aspirations. O.V. Vijayan's narrative style is known for its complexity and symbolism. He uses allegorical elements and surrealism to represent the psychological and emotional struggles of the characters as they navigate their identities in a changing world. It delves into the clash between tradition and modernity, personal and collective identities, and the influence of political ideologies on individual lives, all of which contribute to the complex and thought-provoking narrative of the novel.

2.3. Search for Freedom

Quest for freedom is a journey or pursuit in search of personal liberty, autonomy, or the ability to make choices without undue restrictions or constraints. Freedom can take many forms, including political freedom, economic freedom, personal freedom, and creative freedom. People embark on quests for freedom for various reasons, and these quests can manifest in different ways depending on the context. The first step in any quest for freedom is recognizing that one's current situation or circumstances are limiting their freedom in some way. This could be political oppression, economic hardship, social constraints, or personal limitations. After identifying the limitations, individuals or groups must clearly define what freedom means to them. This could involve articulating specific rights, opportunities, or conditions they wish to achieve. Establishing concrete goals and objectives is crucial for a successful quest for freedom. These goals can serve as a roadmap for the journey ahead.

Creating a well-thought-out plan and strategy is essential to overcome obstacles and challenges along the way. This may involve legal actions, advocacy, education, or other means, depending on the nature of the quest. Gaining support from like-minded individuals or organizations can be instrumental in achieving freedom. Forming alliances, coalitions, or movements can amplify the quest's impact. A quest for freedom often involves taking direct action. This can range from peaceful protests and civil disobedience to legal actions, negotiations, or grassroots organizing. The path to freedom is rarely straightforward, and setbacks are common. Adaptability and persistence are key qualities for those on such a quest. Learning from failures and adjusting the approach is crucial. Drawing attention to the cause is often essential in a quest for freedom. This can involve media campaigns, public speaking, storytelling, or art to engage a wider

audience. Vijayan writings spanned various themes, including social and political commentary, it is essential to understand his vision regarding the quest for freedom in the context of his literary contributions.

Vijayan's vision of the quest for freedom can be understood through his exploration of the individual's search for liberation from various forms of oppression, both external and internal. His works often delve into the complexities of human existence and the struggles individuals face in achieving personal and societal freedom. Vijayan's writings frequently touch upon issues of social and political significance. He was critical of societal norms, hierarchies, and oppressive systems, including caste-based discrimination and political authoritarianism. His characters often grapple with these issues, seeking freedom from societal constraints and injustice.

He also delved into the psychological aspects of freedom. His characters often undergo internal struggles and transformations as they seek to break free from their inner demons, fears, and insecurities. The quest for psychological freedom is a recurring theme in his works. Some of Vijayan's works explore the quest for spiritual or metaphysical freedom. Characters in his novels may embark on journeys of self-discovery, seeking answers to existential questions and striving for a deeper understanding of themselves and the universe. Vijayan was deeply connected to his South Indian roots, and his works reflect a concern for preserving and celebrating cultural identities. He often highlighted the importance of cultural freedom and the need to resist cultural homogenization.

As a cartoonist and writer, Vijayan understood the significance of artistic freedom. He used satire and art as tools to critique society and provoke thought, advocating for the freedom of expression as a means to challenge oppressive systems. O.V. Vijayan's vision of the quest for freedom encompassed a multidimensional exploration of freedom at various levels, including social, psychological, spiritual, cultural, and artistic dimensions. His works often depicted individuals and communities striving for liberation from different forms of oppression and searching for a sense of autonomy and authenticity in their lives.

A quest for freedom can take many forms and be applied to various aspects of life, from individual personal growth and development to collective struggles for social justice and human rights. Regardless of the context, it is often a journey filled with challenges, sacrifices, and triumphs, driven by the fundamental human desire for autonomy and self-determination.

The quest for freedom is a central theme in “The Legends of Khasak”. The novel explores the complex and multifaceted nature of freedom, both on a personal and societal level.

Ravi, seeks personal freedom and liberation from the constraints of his past and societal norms. He moves to Khasak to escape his troubled past and start a new, hoping to find a sense of freedom and purpose in this remote village. Khasak is a place that exists outside of time and tradition. It is a place where people have the freedom to live on their own terms, free from the strictures of mainstream society. Ravi is drawn to this environment as it offers him a chance to break free from the conventional norms and expectations of society. The novel also delves into spiritual and philosophical themes, exploring the idea of spiritual freedom and enlightenment. Ravi's encounters with various characters and the mystical elements of Khasak lead him on a spiritual journey towards self-realization and inner freedom.

The people of Khasak are equally biased with different norms, cultures and values that are quite peculiar to the community. They stay detached from society, and this seclusion empowers them to have some measure of desire or cultural liberty. But there are conflicts and wars when such outsiders as Ravi enter into their world and join them.

Ravi, is a young teacher who arrives at the remote village of Khasak. He is in search of freedom from his past, which is haunted by guilt and tragedy. His journey to Khasak represents his quest for a fresh start and a new life. Appukkili is a marginalized and oppressed character in the village who desires freedom from the social and economic constraints that have kept him down. His rebellion against the traditional norms of the village and his eventual escape represents his quest for personal freedom. Maimoona, a mysterious woman who lives on the outskirts of Khasak, is in search of emotional and spiritual freedom. She challenges societal norms and lives on her terms, away from the judgmental eyes of the village. The village priest, Kunjunni Mash, has his own quest for freedom, which is a struggle against the rigid religious beliefs and rituals that have dominated his life. He seeks a deeper understanding of spirituality beyond the confines of tradition. Nizam Ali an outsider who comes to Khasak, is in search of economic freedom and opportunities. His arrival disrupts the traditional way of life in the village and represents a clash between the old and the new.

“The Legends of Khasak” explores the concept of freedom from various angles. It portrays the quest for freedom as a deeply personal and transformative journey, and it examines how individuals and communities navigate the tensions between tradition and the desire for

liberation. The novel has been celebrated for its lyrical prose, rich symbolism, and thought-provoking themes, making it a significant work in Indian literature.

Throughout the novel, Vijayan uses these and other characters to explore the concept of freedom in various forms, whether it be personal, social, spiritual, or economic. The characters' quests for freedom often lead to conflicts and tensions within the community.

“The Saga of Dharmapuri” explores various themes, including the quest for freedom. Set against the backdrop of the socio-political landscape of Kerala, India, during the mid-20th century, the novel delves into the struggles and aspirations of its characters, reflecting the broader struggle for freedom and justice.

The novel follows the life of its protagonist, Kunhikuttan, who seeks personal freedom and liberation from the constraints of society and tradition. His journey is a reflection of the desire for individual autonomy and self-realization. It delves into the socio-political context of Kerala during the period, touching upon issues of caste discrimination, political oppression, and the fight for social justice. Characters in the novel are often engaged in various forms of activism and resistance as they strive for a more equitable society. “The Symbols and metaphors are both instruments of symbolization. They promise to tell more but also lead us in opposite directions. The symbols lead us back to a posited and given reality while the metaphor stands for the hope of future possibilities”.⁶

Another protagonist of the novel, Ravi Varma, is a freedom fighter who has spent many years in prison for his involvement in the struggle for India's independence. His quest for freedom is twofold. Firstly, he seeks political freedom for his country from British colonial rule. Secondly, he yearns for personal freedom from the traumatic experiences he endured in prison. His journey is a metaphor for the broader struggle for freedom in India.

Ravi Varma's wife, Lakshmi, also plays a significant role in the novel. She seeks freedom from the constraints of traditional gender roles and societal expectations. Her journey reflects the evolving role of women in the fight for independence. The fictional town of Dharmapuri itself represents the collective quest for freedom. The town is a microcosm of India, and its residents, like Ravi Varma, are striving for independence, both from British rule and from their own internal conflicts and prejudices.

Raman Menon is a complex character who is torn between his desire for personal freedom and his loyalty to the British colonial authorities. He represents the ambivalence and moral

dilemmas faced by individuals during the struggle for freedom. Throughout the novel, various characters are engaged in the struggle for freedom, each in their own way. Their commitment to the cause reflects the broader nationalistic fervor and the quest for political autonomy.

Even the British colonial authorities, while representing the oppressive colonial regime, have their own aspirations for freedom from the burden of maintaining control over India. Their perspective provides a nuanced view of the struggle for freedom.

All the characters in the, “The Saga of Dharmapuri” by Vijayan are presented in their endeavours for a free life where the author paints a very realistic picture of the colonial India and shows how freedom is not a singular value but one which is infused with various layers of Colour and meaning. The novel explores not only political freedom but also personal and psychological freedom, making it a profound and thought-provoking work to disclose the theme of freedom.

O.V. Vijayan’s parable of post-colonialism- in India a world of folly, corruption, lies and ancient languor is an excremental satire, Swiftian in its savage hatred for the Indian body politic”.⁷

Vijayan's work often contains elements of existentialism and philosophical inquiry. The quest for freedom in the novel extends to questions of existential and spiritual freedom, with characters grappling with the meaning of life and existence. His novel also explores the creative process and the pursuit of artistic freedom. The characters in the novel, including the protagonist Kunhikuttan, engage in various forms of artistic expression as a means of self-expression and catharsis.

“The Infinity of Grace” is considered one of his most significant works and is known for its complex narrative and deep philosophical themes. The novel explores various themes, including the quest for freedom. One of the central themes of the novel is quest for individual freedom, and journey to discover identity and freedom. The novel is set against the backdrop of India's struggle for independence and the subsequent political landscape. It delves into the political ideologies and movements of the time.

In “The Infinity of Grace” characters grapple with questions of meaning, purpose, and the nature of existence. The quest for freedom is not just external but also internal, as characters seek to understand and liberate themselves from the constraints of their own minds.

Ravi is the central character of the novel. He is a young artist who embarks on a journey to find true freedom. Ravi's quest for freedom is not just physical but also philosophical and spiritual. He seeks to break free from societal norms and constraints. Kali is a tribal woman who becomes a crucial companion on Ravi's journey. She represents a connection to nature and a more primal form of existence. Kali's presence in Ravi's life symbolizes the idea that freedom can be found by embracing a simpler and more unadulterated way of living. Appan Menon is a retired bureaucrat who serves as a mentor figure to Ravi. He provides Ravi with intellectual and philosophical guidance on the quest for freedom. Appan Menon's character represents the pursuit of knowledge as a means of attaining freedom. The novel also touches upon spiritual and metaphysical themes. Ravi's journey takes him to various spiritual and mystical experiences, where he seeks a deeper understanding of life and existence. This spiritual quest is intertwined with his pursuit of freedom.

“Infinity of Grace” is known for its rich and multi-dimensional characters, each of whom contributes to the exploration of freedom in different ways. Here are some of the key characters in the novel and their roles in the quest for freedom. Kochu Thomas is a laborer who joins Ravi and Kali on their journey. His character embodies the struggle for economic freedom and social justice. Through Kochu Thomas's experiences, the novel explores the challenges faced by the marginalized in their quest for freedom.

Krishna Kurup is a priest and a symbol of religious orthodoxy. His character highlights the tension between traditional values and the desire for personal freedom. Ravi's interactions with Krishna Kurup challenge conventional religious beliefs. Govindan Nair is a fisherman and a friend of Ravi's. His character represents the connection between man and the sea, and his experiences mirror the yearning for freedom in the face of nature's power.

These characters, each with their unique backgrounds and perspectives, contribute to the exploration of freedom in novel. The novel delves into the multifaceted nature of freedom, encompassing physical, intellectual, spiritual, and societal dimensions. Through the interactions and experiences of these characters, Vijayan examines the complexities and challenges of pursuing true freedom in a diverse and ever-changing world.

Vijayan weaves a complex narrative that explores these various dimensions of freedom. The novel's themes are not presented in a straightforward manner but are interwoven with symbolism, allegory, and a rich tapestry of storytelling. It invites readers to contemplate the multifaceted nature of freedom and the challenges individuals face in their quest to attain it.

“Generations” explores various themes, including the quest for freedom, which is a central motif in the story. The novel is set in the backdrop of the political and social turmoil in Kerala, India, during the mid-20th century. It portrays the lives of several generations of a family and their struggles for freedom, both on a personal and societal level.

The quest for political freedom is a prominent theme in “Generations.” The story takes place during a period when India is undergoing significant political changes, with the fight for independence from British colonial rule and the subsequent formation of the Indian state. Characters in the novel are deeply involved in political movements and ideologies, and their desire for political freedom is a driving force in their lives.

The novel also delves into the idea of social freedom, particularly in the context of caste and class divisions in Kerala. It highlights the struggles of marginalized communities and individuals to break free from the constraints imposed by society. The characters in the novel grapple with issues of social justice and equality, seeking to attain freedom from social discrimination and oppression. The quest for personal freedom is intricately woven into the lives of the characters. They face personal challenges and conflicts that restrict their individual freedoms, such as traditional family expectations, personal ambitions, and emotional entanglements. The characters’ journeys involve a constant struggle to break free from these personal limitations.

The novel also explores spiritual and philosophical dimensions of freedom. Characters engage in philosophical debates and spiritual quests in their pursuit of a deeper understanding of freedom and existence. These intellectual and spiritual explorations contribute to their overall quest for freedom. The quest for freedom is indeed a central element in this novel, and it is reflected in the characters and their struggles. Kutti Menon is one of the central characters in the novel. He is a freedom fighter who has been imprisoned for his involvement in the Indian independence movement. His quest for freedom is not just physical but also philosophical. He seeks freedom from the oppressive colonial rule and also from the social and cultural constraints that limit individual liberty. The members of Kutti Menon’s family, including his wife and children, also represent the quest for freedom. They endure hardships and sacrifice as a result of his political activities, and their struggles reflect the broader struggle for freedom in India.

Kali Pillai is another significant character who embodies the theme of freedom. He is a social outcast and an untouchable, and his story revolves around his quest for social and personal freedom in a deeply hierarchical and caste society.

Unni Nair, a young and idealistic character, represents the aspirations of the younger generation for political and intellectual freedom. He is deeply influenced by the ideas of Marxism and seeks to challenge the existing social and economic order. The colonial authorities in the novel are portrayed as the oppressors who deny the people of India their political and cultural freedom. Their presence and actions serve as a constant reminder of the struggle for independence.

The novel “Generations” by O.V. Vijayan explores the multifaceted nature of freedom, encompassing political, social, and personal dimensions. The characters in the novel are caught in the web of these different forms of oppression and their quests for freedom serve as a powerful commentary on the complex issues facing society during that time. Through the lives and struggles of the characters, the novel offers a profound exploration of the different dimensions of freedom, both within the individual and in the larger context of a changing society and nation.

To conclude it can be said that, O.V. Vijayan's novels are a captivating exploration of existential pursuits, self-realizations, and the quest for freedom of self. Through intricate storytelling and deeply introspective characters, Vijayan delves into the fundamental questions of human existence. His narratives often depict individuals confront with the complexities of life, seeking meaning and purpose amidst societal pressures and personal struggles. In navigating through existential crisis and moments of profound realization, his characters ultimately strive to break free from the shackles of conformity and societal expectations, embracing the freedom to define themselves on their own terms. His works delve deep into the psyche of individuals striving for self-awareness and autonomy, often navigating through personal and collective traumas to attain a sense of authenticity. Vijayan's novels serve as poignant reflections on the human condition, inviting readers to contemplate the intricacies of identity, agency, and the pursuit of existential truths in the face of adversity.

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CHAPTER – 3

IMPACT OF SOCIO-CULTURAL NORMS

3.1 Urban V/s Rural Sensibilities

3.2 Traditional V/s Modernity

3.3 Social Consciousness

CHAPTER-3

IMPACT OF SOCIO-CULTURAL NORMS

Society and culture are interrelated and complex concepts that encompass the ways in which individuals interact, organize, and express themselves within a particular group or community. Society means a number of persons who live in one area, adhere to the same culture, single or similar beliefs, and may have a political or community system. It refers to social braces, relative, formalities, and corporations responsible for guiding and controlling the conduct, anticipations, and responsibilities of the members in that society. A society may be very large or small, it may encompass so many activities or a few, it may be diverse or homogenous depending on the people's background.

Culture encompasses the shared beliefs, customs, practices, language, arts, values, and ways of thinking that are characteristic of a particular group of people or society. It is learned and passed down from one generation to the next, influencing the behaviour, attitudes, and worldview of individuals within that culture. Culture can be seen as the lens through which people perceive and interpret the world around them.

Culture therefore refers to the beliefs and practices in a community which framing a particular society. It affects the nature of interaction that characterizes people, their mode of functioning and how they arrive at decisions. There are other factors that may influence the emergence and transformation of culture such as social and economic milestones of a society/nation. People accomplish culture through different aspects like technology, education, political system plus the economic system among others. Changes in society, such as globalization or advancements in technology, can lead to shifts in cultural practices, values, and beliefs.

Understanding society and culture is crucial for comprehending human behaviour, social dynamics, communication, and the development of societies over time. It helps us appreciate diversity, foster cross-cultural understanding, and navigate the complexities of our interconnected world.

Vijayan's vision regarding society and culture can be understood through his writings, cartoons, and public commentary. Therefore, Vijayan's outlook could be summarised by socio-economic differences, political chaos, the essence of humanity, the off-Bible religions, postmodern society and what it means to be struggling. He always used his works to showcase

how much social injustice occurred and how the suppressed classes, particularly the lower castes and the poor, suffered. He portrayed societal hieratical systems and represented the hard plight of the low-class citizens. He depicted the stark contrasts between different social strata, shedding light on the struggles of the underprivileged.

His writings often reflected his concerns about the misuse of power, lack of accountability, and the erosion of democratic values. He used satire and irony to critique political figures and the state of governance in India. In exploring culture. He celebrated the rich tapestry of India's cultural diversity while also addressing the challenges posed by communalism and cultural divides. He advocated for a pluralistic and inclusive society where different cultural identities could coexist harmoniously.

He delved deep into the human psyche, exploring the complexities, contradictions, and frailties of human behaviour. He often portrayed flawed characters and explored their motivations, desires, and struggles. Spiritual and existential themes were prevalent in Vijayan's works. He explored philosophical ideas and delved into the human quest for meaning, purpose, and spirituality. These themes were interwoven into his narratives, often challenging conventional beliefs.

Vijayan was also concerned about environmental degradation and its impact on society and future generations. He emphasized the importance of sustainable living and the need to protect the environment. Another feature of Vijayan's writing was symbolism and understanding of the work through allegory and magical realism. He painted detailed stories that contained both fiction and pictorial truth that lived beyond the narrative of the actual imagination, social and cultural commentaries.

Vijayan's vision regarding society and culture was multidimensional, addressing social inequalities, political issues, cultural diversity, and environmental concerns. His works often challenged the status and encouraged introspection and societal transformation. His works reflected a deep concern for the human condition and the socio-political realities of his time. Vijayan's views on society and culture can be understood through his literary works and public statements.

Vijayan's works often portrayed a critical view of society, particularly its oppressive and hierarchical structures. He highlighted issues like discrimination, political corruption, social inequalities, and the exploitation of the marginalized. His works are deeply critical of the caste system in India and the associated social inequalities. He often portrayed the struggles and

injustices faced by lower castes in his writings, shedding light on the deeply ingrained prejudices and discrimination present in society.

Through his literary works and cartoons, Vijayan remarked the political landscape of India. Some of his topics include, autocracy, corruption in leadership, political indifference and the decay of democracy. His novel "The Legends of Khasak" is seen as a symbolic representation of societal and political decay. Cultural issues, the changes of the social construct, and personal identity were somewhat common in Vijayan's work. He ventured into introspecting about the confrontation of tradition and modernity that was seen to represent the dynamic growth of the Indian society and culture. It also touched on themes including the human character, the idea of self-identity, purpose in life as well as life, and death. Most of the roles that he portrayed represented individuals who were struggling with issues of life and existence and the realities that come with being human.

He also touched on religious and philosophic themes in his works, criticizing classic practices and rituals. He looked at the capabilities and liabilities of religious and spiritual belief in society and the effect it has on the society and its members. Vijayan used Humour and satire, especially in his cartoons, to critique various aspects of society, politics, and culture. His sharp wit and keen observations were aimed at exposing societal flaws and prompting introspection. It is important to engage with Vijayan's works directly to gain a deeper understanding of his nuanced views on society and culture, as his writings are rich with layers of meaning and social commentary.

"The Legend of Khasak" is a complex and multilayered novel that delves into various aspects of society, culture, religion, and the human psyche. Vijayan portrays the rigidity of the caste system and its impact on the lives of the characters. The discrimination, prejudices, and injustices faced by lower-caste individuals are vividly depicted, shedding light on social inequalities. Khasak is a place where various religious beliefs and practices coexist, including Hinduism, Islam, and indigenous folk beliefs. The novel explores the syncretism of these religions, demonstrating how individuals often merge elements from different faiths to create their own spiritual beliefs. This religious diversity is central to the cultural fabric of the society portrayed in the novel.

The overriding superstitions and other firmly held beliefs provide the strong undertones in the lives of the characters. Vijayan illustrates how superstitions and irrational beliefs govern their actions, decisions, and relationships. These beliefs are often deeply rooted in the culture and

tradition of the community. The novel also addresses the patriarchal nature of the society, showcasing the limited roles and expectations imposed on women. Gender discrimination and the struggle for agency are depicted through various characters, shedding light on the oppressive societal norms. The socio-economic conditions of the village and its impact on the lives of the inhabitants are explored in the narrative. The struggles of a predominantly agrarian community, their dependence on the land, and the economic disparities are depicted, providing a glimpse into the challenges of rural life.

While not overtly stated, the influence of colonial history and its aftermath can be inferred in the novel. The remnants of colonialism, especially its impact on culture, society, and governance, shape the backdrop against which the story unfolds. The novel was written during a period of social and political upheaval in India. The discontent and dissatisfaction with the existing societal structures and the desire for change are subtly reflected in the narrative. The novel can be seen as a reflection of the political and social milieu of that time. "The Legend of Khasak" is a rich tapestry that weaves together these elements of society and culture, providing a nuanced portrayal of a community grappling with its traditions, beliefs, and evolving societal norms.

The novel provides insight into the detailed features of the Khasak community, with its pieties, practices, and culture. The story paints a picture of Khasak as a conservative, a hard-core, agriculturist and community tightly bound by culture and traditions. Superstitions, caste systems and religious clones are the various societal realities which are depicted usually. Another theme that is seen in the novel is the caste system within Khasak establishing the order in which people are regarded in society. The caste discrimination and the fight against its limitations are wholly identified themes, which represent the extensive topics in the present Indian society.

"The Legends of Khasak" showcases the religious diversity within the community. It portrays a syncretic blend of Hinduism and Islam, highlighting the coexistence and integration of different religious practices and beliefs in the region. Characters in the novel often experience feelings of isolation and alienation, either due to their personal circumstances or their attempts to challenge societal norms. The narrative examines the emotional and psychological struggles of individuals in this closed-knit community. The natural surroundings, particularly the lush landscape of Khasak, play a significant role in shaping the lives and experiences of the

characters. The descriptions of nature evoke a sense of mysticism and enchantment, often paralleling the characters' emotional states.

Vijayan's novel courageously addresses issues of sexuality and societal taboos related to it. Characters grapple with desires, attraction, and societal expectations, providing a glimpse into the conservative social attitudes prevailing in the Khasak community. The colonial past and its lingering influence on the community and individuals is subtly woven into the narrative. It examines how historical events and foreign rule have impacted the psyche and social structures of the Khasak region.

“The Legends of Khasak” stands as a compelling exploration of societal intricacies, human emotions, and cultural amalgamation, all wrapped in a captivating narrative that continues to resonate with readers across generations. The novel portrays the traditional gender roles and expectations prevalent in the society it represents. The characters, especially the women, grapple with societal expectations and restrictions placed upon them based on their gender. The novel explores the challenges and constraints faced by women in this cultural context. The protagonist, Ravi, moves to the remote village of Khasak, which is culturally isolated from mainstream society. The villagers follow their own unique customs, traditions, and beliefs. Ravi grapples with adapting to this unfamiliar cultural setting and struggles to find his place and identity within it. The village of Khasak is deeply rooted in Islamic traditions, and the characters' lives are shaped by these beliefs. The customs and practices of Islam affect their behavior, relationships, and daily lives. N.V. Krishna stated that:

The Legends of Khasak is a meaningful turning point in the history of Malayalam fiction. It is the Legends of Khasak that proved for the first time in a Convincing manner in Malayalam that novel can be valuable expression of the inner experience of man rather than a continuous story of the external incidents”.¹ The impact of society and culture on characters in "The Legend of Khasak" is profound, influencing their beliefs, behaviors, relationships, and the overall trajectory of their lives. The novel explores the interplay between tradition and modernity, and how individuals navigate their identities within a specific cultural and social context.

“The Saga of Dharmapuri” is a powerful and multi-layered narrative that delves into various aspects of society and culture, particularly within the context of Kerala, a state in southern India. It offers a critical examination of the social, political, and cultural milieu prevalent in the region during the time it was written.

The novel reflects on the deep-rooted caste system and social hierarchies that have historically been prevalent in Kerala and much of India. It examines the implications of caste-based discrimination, oppression, and the struggle for social justice. “The Saga of Dharmapuri” also portrays the political landscape of Kerala, showcasing the influence of politics and power dynamics on society. It delves into the intricacies of political maneuvering, corruption, and the impact of political decisions on the lives of ordinary people. Kerala is known for its religious diversity, and the novel likely explores the coexistence, conflicts, and tensions between different religious communities. It might shed light on religious practices, beliefs, and how they shape the social fabric of the society portrayed in the novel. The novel could also touch upon gender roles, patriarchy, and the status of women in the society it portrays. It may depict the challenges faced by women and the prevailing societal norms that perpetuate gender-based inequalities. Economic disparities and the struggle for livelihood may be another theme discussed in the novel. It might portray the economic conditions of various strata of society and the impact of economic policies and systems.

The novel delves into the cultural traditions, customs, and values specific to the region. It could provide insights into the rich cultural heritage of Kerala and how it shapes the lives and identities of the characters in the story. socio-political themes of the novel, it might explore the concept of human rights, social justice, and the fight for equality and dignity. This could involve discussions on activism, movements, and individuals striving for a more just society.

“The Infinity of Grace” delves into various themes, including politics, spirituality, and the human condition. Society and culture play a significant role in shaping the narrative and the characters in the novel. The novel is set against the backdrop of the political turmoil in Kerala, India. Vijayan uses the political context to explore the impact of political ideologies, power struggles, and the resulting social dynamics on individuals and communities. The societal unrest and political ideologies prevalent during the time are intricately woven into the fabric of the story. Vijayan highlights the societal hierarchies and injustices that prevail in the region. He brings attention to caste discrimination, economic disparities, and the marginalization of certain groups. Through his characters and their experiences, he exposes the deep-rooted inequalities in society and the struggles faced by the marginalized.

The novel delves into the interplay of religious beliefs and spirituality in the lives of the characters. Vijayan explores the diverse religious landscape of Kerala and its impact on individual beliefs, behaviors, and the society at large. He often uses allegorical and symbolic

elements to convey deeper spiritual and philosophical ideas. The clash of modernity with traditional values is also a recurring theme, reflecting the evolving cultural dynamics. Society and culture, as depicted in the novel, influence the characters' psychological states and their existential dilemmas. The characters grapple with the societal expectations, moral dilemmas, and the search for meaning in their lives within the given social and cultural contexts.

In “The Infinity of Grace” Vijayan uses the backdrop of society and culture to shed light on the human condition, examining how individuals navigate their lives and make choices amidst the complex interplay of social, political, and cultural forces. The characters' experiences are a reflection of the broader societal dynamics, offering readers a deeper understanding of the human psyche and the society in which they live.

“Generations” described by Vijayan, is multifaceted in the sense that it carries many layers of insights about the society and culture. In the Indian context and especially in Kerala, the caste system essentially has formed the framework of the society. The caste system must also play a role of a significant concern describing how people relate, what they can do and their experiences as portrayed in Vijayan’s novel. The characters and their experiences could include how issue of caste influences their relations and what they desire to become. He had keen interest on politics and they are featured widely in most of his works. “Generations” might show the political scenario of Kerala concerning the characters and their lives. It could include subjects such as ideologies, power and effects that various political decisions may have on different groups that form society. Vijayan's novel could showcase the clash between traditional values and modernity. It might depict characters grappling with societal expectations, family traditions, and the evolving cultural landscape. Kerala is known for its religious diversity, with a significant presence of Hindus, Muslims, and Christians. Vijayan's novel could explore the interplay of different religious communities, their practices, and how religion influences individual beliefs and communal dynamics.

Society's expectations and treatment of women could be a theme in the novel. Vijayan might highlight the challenges faced by women in Kerala, addressing issues related to gender roles, patriarchy, and the evolving roles of women in society. Vijayan's novel may shed light on the economic conditions of different characters, reflecting the broader societal and economic inequalities prevalent in Kerala. The novel often explores the tension between traditional values and the encroachment of modernity. Characters confronted with the changing social fabric and the erosion of traditional customs and values in the face of modern influences. The novel might

explore the significance of language and its connection to cultural identity, especially in the context of Kerala, which has a rich linguistic and literary tradition. It could delve into how language shapes people's identities and influences social interactions.

“Generations” is likely to intertwine these themes and more, using the narrative to critically analyze and depict the various layers of society and culture in Kerala during the time it is set. The characters and their experiences would serve as a lens through which these themes are examined and understood. Certain characters reflect on existential themes, contemplating the meaning of life, the nature of existence, and the futility of human pursuits. They grapple with feelings of despair and nihilism in the face of societal challenges.

Characters discuss and reflect on the evolving sense of cultural identity and nationalism. They contemplate what it means to be part of a nation and how culture is shaped by historical, social, and political forces. Some characters critique the capitalist system and the exploitation of labor and resources. They question the disparities in wealth and power and advocate for a more equitable and just society.

The “Generations” is a multifaceted work, and the characters’ attitudes have connections with the author’s ambitious idea with the representatives of society and culture, and then a multi-layered view of the improved world and human faith. Each character represents a unique viewpoint, contributing to the richness and depth of the novel's exploration of society and culture.

3.1. Urban V/s Rural Sensibilities

Urban sensibilities refer to the perspectives, attitudes, values, and ways of life prevalent in urban or city settings. Urban areas often symbolize modernization, technological advancement, and progress. Urban sensibilities may reflect a focus on development, industrialization, and technological innovations. Urban life often emphasizes individual freedoms, autonomy, and the pursuit of personal goals and ambitions. Urban sensibilities may prioritize individual success and self-expression.

Cities are often melting pots of diverse cultures, beliefs, and practices. Urban sensibilities may encompass an appreciation for multiculturalism, diversity, and openness to different ideas and lifestyles. Urban life can be associated with a greater focus on material possessions, consumerism, and the pursuit of a higher standard of living. Urban sensibilities may value material success and the acquisition of goods and services.

Rural sensibilities, on the other hand, pertain to the perspectives, values, and ways of life prevalent in rural or village settings. Rural areas often emphasize community ties, collective decision-making, and a strong sense of belonging to a community. Rural sensibilities may prioritize collective well-being and cooperation. Rural life often preserves traditional values, customs, and practices. Rural sensibilities may value conservation of traditions, nature, and sustainable living. Rural living may be associated with a simpler lifestyle, less materialism, and a focus on essentials. Rural sensibilities may prioritize frugality, contentment, and a balanced approach to life. Rural areas are typically closer to nature and often have a deeper connection to the land and natural surroundings. Rural sensibilities may reflect a respect for nature, sustainability, and a harmonious relationship with the environment.

Vijayan, through his works, often delved into the complexities and interactions between these urban and rural sensibilities, exploring how they influence individuals and societies. His narratives may offer insights into the contrasting worldviews, challenges, and dynamics that arise from these differing ways of life.

“The Legends of Khasak” the novel explores various themes and aspects of life, society, and spirituality in the fictional village of Khasak, set in the backdrop of rural Kerala, India. The story and characters in the novel provide a rich background through which one can discern contrasting urban and rural sensibilities.

Khasak is portrayed as a remote, rural village with a slower pace of life. The people of Khasak lead a life closely tied to nature, agriculture, and traditional practices. Their routines are often dictated by the cycles of farming and nature. Urban life, on the other hand, is often associated with a faster pace, influenced by technology, career demands, and a more structured lifestyle. The urban characters in the novel may face the pressures of modernity, consumerism, and a rat race. The villagers in Khasak often adhere to traditional belief systems, folklore, and spirituality deeply rooted in their culture. They are closely connected to the land and its mystical elements, and their beliefs are often influenced by animism and local deities. Urban areas generally tend to have a more diverse set of belief systems, ranging from traditional religious beliefs to atheism, agnosticism, or a blend of various spiritual and philosophical ideologies.

In rural settings like Khasak, there is a strong sense of community and interconnectedness. Relationships are often deeply ingrained in the community fabric, and people rely on each other for support and cooperation. Urban areas often exhibit a more fragmented and individualistic

approach to life. Relationships may be more transactional, and the sense of community can be diminished compared to rural areas.

Change is often slow and gradual in rural settings like Khasak. People are more resistant to abrupt changes and tend to hold on to traditional ways of life. Urban areas witness rapid changes due to technological advancements, globalization, and exposure to diverse cultures. Change is often embraced more readily, and adaptation to new trends and ways of living is common. The characters in the novel embody distinct urban and rural sensibilities, reflecting the broader societal and cultural dynamics.

Ravi is a central character who embodies urban sensibilities. He moves to Khasak from the city and brings with him a modern, educated perspective. Ravi grapples with the clash between his urban upbringing and the traditional, rural way of life in Khasak. His struggle to reconcile these contrasting worlds is a key aspect of the narrative. Appu, like Ravi, is an urbanite who comes to Khasak seeking solace and a new start. He brings urban sensibilities, influenced by his experiences in the city. His interactions with the villagers and his attempts to find meaning in the rural landscape highlight the clash of urban and rural cultures. Maimoona, a mysterious woman, embodies a blend of urban and rural sensibilities. She carries an air of urban sophistication, having lived in the city, but she is deeply connected to the land and the traditions of Khasak. Maimoona's character bridges the gap between the two worlds, embodying the complexity of cultural identity. Nizam Ali is a religious leader in Khasak and represents traditional rural sensibilities. His beliefs, rituals, and way of life are deeply rooted in the rural ethos, reflecting the conservative and religious aspects of the village community.

The interplay between urban and rural sensibilities is a central theme in “The Legends of Khasak” It delves into the clash of cultures, the impact of modernity on traditional communities, and the struggle of individuals like Ravi and Appu to navigate the complexities of transitioning between these contrasting worlds. This exploration adds depth and richness to the novel, providing insight into the cultural and societal dynamics of the time and place in which the story is set. “The Legends of Khasak” intricately weaves these contrasting sensibilities into the narrative, providing a nuanced exploration of how these dynamics influence the characters and the evolving story within the rural setting of Khasak. The novel explores various themes and societal dynamics, including the contrast between urban and rural sensibilities.

In “The Saga of Dharmapuri” urban sensibilities are often depicted as modern, fast-paced, and influenced by industrialization and technological advancements. The urban characters may prioritize materialism, ambition, and individualism. They are often surrounded by issues such as consumerism, social stratification, and the loss of traditional values due to rapid urbanization.

The characters who were from rural areas remain humble, and they cherish simplicity and manner of living that embraces people from all regions. Culture in this context is relatively conservative, and people are inclined to follow traditional practices, maintain close-knit social groups, and embrace the land. Vijayan stated that, “I feel a Purgatorial effect after writing The Saga of Dharmapuri, If I had not written it, I might have been crushed to carry it in me like a decaying foetus”.²

In the narrative, these contrasting sensibilities are likely explored to highlight the cultural and societal gaps between urban and rural life. The clash between these two worlds may drive the plot, character development, and thematic exploration throughout the novel. The characters from urban and rural backgrounds might find it challenging to understand and adapt to each other's lifestyles and worldviews, leading to conflicts or misunderstandings that drive the storyline. These conflicts can provide a lens through which societal issues, cultural changes, and the impact of modernization on traditional values are examined. The novelist presents a live narrative that delves into the contrasting sensibilities and realities of urban and rural life, reflecting the socio-political and cultural dynamics of the time.

The novel portrays the clash of these cultural values as characters navigate the urbanized society with its evolving norms, contrasting with the traditional, rural values they may have grown up with. Urban areas are often associated with a more pronounced class divide, with disparities in wealth, education, and social opportunities. The novel might explore how urban settings intensify these social hierarchies and the struggles faced by individuals from rural backgrounds to integrate or compete within the system. Kaanchanmala remarks about Siddhartha that “A great Benediction has come upon Dharmapuri”.³

Characters in the novel may encounter with their identity and sense of belonging as they transition from rural to urban environments. The urban setting might present a challenge to their traditional identities, forcing them to adapt and negotiate their values, ethics, and ways of life. The novel could depict the power dynamics that come into play as rural communities are either assimilated into the urban landscape or resist urban influence. This could manifest in

conflicts over land, resources, and political representation, reflecting broader socio-political tensions. Urban areas often offer different economic opportunities compared to rural regions. The novel might illustrate how characters grapple with the lure of better economic prospects in the urban setting while weighing it against the loss of their rural roots and traditional livelihoods.

Vijayan's "The Saga of Dharmapuri" showcase explores these themes in depth, providing a nuanced commentary on the interplay between urban and rural sensibilities and their influence on individuals and society.

"The Infinity of Grace" is set in the context of rural and urban sensibilities, exploring the complexities of human life and society. In many of Vijayan's works, including "The Infinity of Grace" the dichotomy between urban and rural sensibilities is a prominent theme. Rajshekaran discussed that. "Infinity of Grace, which raises the fearful question about the fate of our earth, is a rare experience in our Malayalam Language. The novel presents to us a kind of reason unknown to us, it is the reason of humanism which is beyond the reason of science. The novelist searches into the secrets of life by mixing dream and myth".⁴

Vijayan often portrays urban life as fast-paced, competitive, and often detached from nature and traditional values. Urban characters may ground with materialism, consumerism, and a sense of alienation. The urban landscape is often depicted as a complex web of relationships and aspirations, where individuals strive for success and recognition but may feel isolated and overwhelmed by societal pressures. Rural life, on the other hand, is typically portrayed as rooted in tradition, close to nature, and characterized by a sense of community and simplicity. The rural setting is often seen as a place where people maintain strong bonds with their families, traditions, and the natural world. The pace of life is slower, and people often have a deep connection with their cultural heritage and environment.

The interaction or clash between urban and rural sensibilities is a recurring theme in Vijayan's works. Characters from urban backgrounds may encounter a cultural shock when exposed to rural life, and vice versa. This clash often leads to a reflection on values, social norms, and the impact of modernization on traditional ways of life. Through these portrayals, Vijayan often offers a critique of societal values and the impact of urbanization on rural landscapes. He may explore the loss of traditional values in the face of modernization, the erosion of community bonds, or the ecological consequences of urban development. In "The Infinity of Grace" Vijayan delves into these themes, examining the complexities and interplay of urban and rural

sensibilities within the narrative. For a deeper and more specific analysis, referring to literary reviews, academic papers, or the novel itself would be beneficial.

“Generations” delves into sociopolitical themes and the human condition. Rural and urban settings can profoundly shape the characters, plot, themes, and overall atmosphere of a literary work. Rural sensibilities often emphasize traditional values, close-knit communities, and a connection to nature and agriculture. Urban sensibilities may focus on modernization, individualism, technological advancements, and the complexities of urban life.

Characters from rural backgrounds might be depicted as rooted in traditions, deeply connected to their land and community, and influenced by age-old customs. Urban characters may be portrayed as more cosmopolitan, exposed to diverse cultures, and dealing with the fast-paced, competitive nature of urban life. Conflicts in the novel could stem from the clash of these contrasting sensibilities, perhaps reflecting larger societal issues or personal struggles faced by the characters. The language and narrative style might mirror the distinct dialects, mannerisms, and expressions prevalent in rural and urban areas, adding authenticity to the characters and setting. Rural and urban settings can serve as symbolic representations, with rural areas symbolizing simplicity, authenticity, and stability, while urban areas symbolize change, progress, and complexity. M.K. Ganju stated that “Generation Gap may be interpreted as the differences in attitude, aims, beliefs, and complexes between old & young in any given culture”.⁵

In “Generations” characters might embody a mix of both rural and urban sensibilities, especially if the storyline involves characters transitioning from a rural to an urban setting or dealing with the clash of these different lifestyles and values. The characters' backgrounds, experiences, and the setting of the novel will shape their sensibilities and influence how they navigate the challenges and opportunities presented in the story.

3.2. Traditional V/s Modernity

“Traditional V/s Modernity” entails weighing of traditional aspect against modern aspect where traditional can be defined as; tradition: Conventional customs, beliefs, and practices of a society. It incorporates many aspects of society, customize, technology, economy and even lifestyle. Values and Civilization. O.V. Vijayan, interplay between traditional and modern values emerges not merely as a backdrop but as a critical force shaping the lives of characters, the narrative structure, and the thematic essence. Vijayan, with his profound narrative prowess,

crafts stories that serve as a canvas reflecting the tumultuous and often contentious transition from deeply entrenched traditions to the rapidly encroaching forces of modernity. This juxtaposition is not only central to understanding the individual and collective psyche of his characters but also pivotal in exploring the broader socio-cultural transformations within Indian society. Vijayan's novels, such as "The Legends of Khasak" and "The Saga of Dharmapuri" are seminal works that encapsulate the agony and ecstasy of this transition, presenting a nuanced exploration of how traditional and modern values coexist, conflict, and catalyze change in the existential and social realms of their worlds.

The significance of traditional versus modern values in Vijayan's work cannot be overstated. It operates on multiple levels, from the personal to the collective, and from the spiritual to the political. In "The Legends of Khasak" for instance, the protagonist, Ravi, embodies the conflict between modern existential dilemmas and the search for traditional spiritual fulfillment. Vijayan uses Ravi's journey to highlight the dissonance between the rational, secular world and the mystical, timeless landscape of Khasak, imbued with folklore and superstition. This juxtaposition serves as a metaphor for the broader societal struggles between modernity and tradition, where modern education, science, and rational thought vie with age-old beliefs, rituals, and a sense of community. Similarly, in "The Saga of Dharmapuri," Vijayan critiques the mechanisms of modern political power and corruption, juxtaposed against a backdrop of traditional moral and ethical values. Here, the distortion of traditional values in the face of modern political expedience speaks to the erosion of societal ethics and the loss of innocence.

The significance of traditional and modern values in Vijayan's novels thus transcends the narrative to evoke a reflective examination of one's place within this continuum. Vijayan's work remains a seminal exploration of the existential and ethical dilemmas faced by individuals and societies at the crossroads of tradition and modernity, making his novels enduringly relevant in the discourse on cultural and societal dynamics.

"The Legends of Khasak" a complex and multilayered work that delves into various themes, including the clash between traditional and modern ways of life. The novel portrays traditional ways of life prevalent in the rural, agrarian society of Khasak. The village is steeped in customs, rituals, and beliefs deeply ingrained in the culture. The characters in the novel often adhere to these traditional values, practices, and superstitions. The agrarian lifestyle, communal living, and reliance on nature are integral parts of this traditional setup. The protagonist, Ravi, initially gets absorbed into this traditional environment.

As the story progresses, the influence of modernity starts to seep into the village. Ravi, an educated man, introduces modern ideas and education to the village, challenging the traditional beliefs and practices. The clash between the old and new ways of life becomes apparent, highlighting the tensions and conflicts arising from this transition.

The clash between tradition and modernity is not portrayed as a clear-cut battle but rather as a nuanced exploration. The characters surrounded by their beliefs, desires, and societal expectations, leading to inner conflicts and ambiguities. The tension between holding on to traditional values and adapting to modern influences creates a sense of ambiguity and complexity in the narrative.

The tension between individual desires and communal expectations is another aspect related to traditionalism versus modernity. Traditional societies often emphasize community and collective decision-making, whereas modernity often champions individuality, personal aspirations, and autonomy. This tension is reflected in the characters' struggle to balance their personal desires with societal norms. The novel delves into the complexities of tradition and modernity, highlighting the clash and integration of these two contrasting forces in the lives of the characters. Ramakrishnan stated that. "The Symbolic value of Khasak derives from its heretic function in Malayalam fiction. But no, such slot in the realm of restricted cultural fiction, Vijayan's Avant Garde text slides into a nameless limbo where its function is not critical but celebratory".⁶

The novel portrays a traditional, agrarian society deeply rooted in customs, rituals, and superstitions. The villagers of Khasak adhere to traditional beliefs, folklore, and religious practices. These traditions shape their worldview and provide a sense of identity and purpose. Khasak is depicted as an isolated village, distant from urban centers and modern influences. This isolation preserves and intensifies traditional values and practices, fostering a conservative outlook among the villagers.

As the story unfolds, the arrival of Ravi, a young teacher from the city, introduces modern ideas and thoughts to the conservative society of Khasak. Ravi's presence and his interactions with the villagers challenge their traditional beliefs and practices, creating a conflict between tradition and modernity. Various characters in the novel confront with the conflict between tradition and modernity. Ravi represents the forces of modernity, advocating for education, progress, and social change. On the other hand, the villagers, deeply entrenched in tradition, resist change and struggle to adapt to the evolving world.

The novel showcases the diversity within the traditional framework itself. Different characters embody various aspects of tradition and modernity, highlighting the complex and multifaceted nature of culture and societal norms. “The Legends of Khasak” presents a rich background of tradition and modernity, exploring the interactions and tensions between these two forces and the impact on the lives of the characters in the village of Khasak.

He masterfully weaves these themes throughout the narrative, providing readers with a profound exploration of the clash between tradition and modernity and the complexities that arise from this interaction. In the novel, the characters encounter with the dichotomy between traditional beliefs, practices, and societal norms on one hand and the forces of modernity, progress, and change on the other. Here are a few key characters and their representations of this clash.

Ravi is one of the central characters in the novel who embodies the struggle between tradition and modernity. Ravi confronts with the clash of his urban, modern experiences and education with the traditional beliefs and practices of the villagers. Appu is another central character who represents the traditional way of life in Khasak. He is deeply rooted in the customs, superstitions, and rituals of the village. His perspective clashes with Ravi's modern outlook, leading to conflicts and tension.

Nizam Ali is a religious figure in the village, representing traditional religious beliefs and practices. His interactions with Ravi and others showcase the clash between traditional religious views and the evolving modern interpretations of spirituality. Kuppu Achan is a wise, elderly character who is deeply entrenched in the traditions of the village. He embodies the wisdom of the past and often imparts traditional knowledge to the younger generation. His interactions with Ravi and other characters highlight the tensions between tradition and progress.

Through these characters and their interactions, the novel explores the complexities and nuances of the clash between tradition and modernity, shedding light on the challenges individuals face in reconciling their roots with the changing world around them. The characters' struggles and experiences serve as a microcosm of the broader societal transformation happening in rural India during that time and provide insights into the evolving cultural and social landscape. “The Saga of Dharmapuri” explores various themes, including the clash between traditional values and modernity. The novel presents a critical perspective on the

socio-political landscape of Kerala, India, and delves into the tensions and transformations brought about by modernization.

The novel depicts the traditional way of life in Dharmapuri, a fictional village, which embodies age-old customs, beliefs, and societal norms. Traditional values are deeply rooted in the community, encompassing religious practices, caste system, and patriarchal family structures. These values often provide a sense of stability and continuity to the villagers, defining their roles and expectations within the society. As modernity and urbanization encroach upon Dharmapuri, a clash between traditional values and modern influences becomes evident. Modernity brings in new ideas, technologies, education, and a shift towards a more liberal and progressive outlook. This clash leads to conflicts, resistance, and a struggle to reconcile traditional beliefs with the changing world. The novel portrays how the influx of modernity disrupts the traditional social fabric. This disruption is accompanied by changes in economic structures, social hierarchies, and power dynamics. The younger generation, exposed to education and urban influences, often challenges the traditional norms and questions the established order. Characters in the novel confronted with their own internal conflicts, torn between their adherence to traditional values and the allure of modernity. These struggles are reflective of the larger societal dilemma faced by the community. The clash often manifests in the characters' aspirations, ambitions, and relationships.

In the novel, various characters represent different perspectives on tradition and modernity. Dharmapuri embodies the clash between tradition and modernity. He is caught between the traditional values and beliefs of his ancestors and the rapidly changing modern world. Dharmapuri's struggle to navigate this clash forms a significant aspect of the novel. The Older Generation, Represented by Dharmapuri's parents, grandparents, and other elderly characters in the novel, this group holds traditional views and values. They are deeply rooted in the customs, beliefs, and practices of their community and find it challenging to adapt to or accept the changes brought by modernization.

Characters in Dharmapuri have exposure to modern education and urban lifestyles embody the embrace of modernity. They often question traditional beliefs and practices, seeking progress and change. The novel also portrays political figures and authorities who play a role in shaping the clash between tradition and modernity. Their policies, decisions, and ideologies can either promote or challenge traditional values and practices. Through these characters, O.V. Vijayan explores the complexities and conflicts arising from the collision of traditional norms and

modern advancements. The novel delves into the societal, cultural, and personal implications of this clash, providing a thought-provoking narrative that reflects the broader changes and challenges faced by Indian society during the time the novel was written.

Vijayan uses satire and humor to critique both the traditional and modern aspects of society. Through witty and incisive writing, he sheds light on the absurdities, contradictions, and hypocrisies present in both systems, ultimately highlighting the need for a balanced approach that respects the essence of tradition while embracing the benefits of progress. “The Saga of Dharmapuri” offers a multifaceted exploration of the conflict between traditional values and modernity, providing insights into the evolving dynamics of Indian society during the period in which the novel is set.

“The Infinity of Grace” is known for its complex narrative and exploration of various themes, including the clash between tradition and modernity. The novel depicts the struggle and conflict between traditional beliefs, customs, and values on one hand, and the emerging modern perspectives on the other. It delves into the tensions and transformations that occur when traditional, often rural, ways of life and thoughts encounter the forces of modernization, urbanization, and globalization.

The novel portrays traditional values deeply rooted in Indian society, especially in the Kerala context where the story is set. It explores the influence of religious beliefs, customs, and social norms on the characters and their lives. The characters often grapple with adherence to age-old customs and societal expectations.

The novel also sheds light on the modernization sweeping through society. It highlights the impact of technology, education, industrialization, and globalization on the lives and perspectives of the characters. The clash between traditional agricultural society and the emerging industrialized world is a recurring theme. The tension between traditional and modern values creates conflict within the characters. They find themselves torn between embracing their roots and adapting to the changing world. This duality is a central aspect of the character development and plot progression. The novel weaves the socio-political context into its exploration of tradition and modernity. It portrays the struggle for independence, political ideologies, and the influence of a changing political landscape on the characters' lives.

The characters in the novel are deeply affected by the transition from traditional to modern ways of life. Here are some key characters and their experiences with tradition and modernity in the novel. Ravi Varma is a central character who represents the conflict between traditional

values and modern aspirations. He encounters with his roots and heritage while being drawn to the ideas and influences of the modern world. His struggle embodies the tension between staying true to traditional beliefs and embracing a more progressive outlook.

Rukmini Amma is a character who embodies traditional values and beliefs. She is deeply rooted in the traditional customs, rituals, and family values. Her worldview is shaped by the conservative norms of her time, and she often finds it challenging to adapt to the changing dynamics of the modern society. Kamal is another character who represents the clash between traditional and modern ideologies. He is influenced by the revolutionary ideas of the modern world and becomes an active participant in movements advocating for change and progress. Kamal's character embodies the urge to break free from the shackles of tradition and challenge the existing social and political order. Sarojini, a pivotal character, is caught between traditional gender roles and the desire for personal freedom and empowerment. She confronts with societal expectations placed upon women while yearning for modern opportunities and the ability to make choices beyond traditional roles. The interplay of these characters and their experiences highlight the tensions, conflicts, and challenges arising from the clash between traditional values and the forces of modernity.

O.V. Vijayan skillfully navigates these themes, presenting a nuanced portrayal of a changing society and its impact on individuals. And employs rich imagery, symbolism, and allegory to depict these themes. The novel might not present a clear-cut preference for either tradition or modernity, but rather it invites contemplation and discussion about the evolving Indian society and the multifaceted challenges it faces during a period of transformation. The characters in the novel often serve as representatives of broader societal shifts, embodying the clash and fusion of traditional and modern values.

In the novel “Generations,” the tension between tradition and modernity is evident through the portrayal of characters and their experiences in a changing socio-political landscape. The narrative likely explores the conflict between age-old customs, beliefs, and societal structures, juxtaposed against the forces of modernization, progress, and technological advancements. The novel might depict characters or aspects of society that hold on to traditional values, practices, and beliefs. These could include customs, rituals, family structures, and the moral fabric of the society rooted in long-standing traditions. The older generations in the novel might represent this traditional way of life. On the other side, the novel likely showcases the impact of modernization and the challenges it poses to traditional values. This can manifest in various

forms such as urbanization, industrialization, globalization, technological advancements, and changes in societal norms. The younger generations may embody this modern way of life. “The Theme of Generation Gap has always been one of the most discussed themes in the field of world literature”.⁷

The clash between generations becomes a central theme, highlighting the differences in ideologies, aspirations, and lifestyles between the older and younger characters. This generational conflict can serve as a microcosm of the larger societal struggle between tradition and modernity. Vijayan, through this theme, might provide social commentary on the transformations happening in Indian society during the period the novel is set. This could encompass the societal upheavals, changing roles of men and women, the impact of political and economic changes, and the struggle to find a balance between preserving cultural heritage and embracing progress. The novel's narrative structure or character arcs might also symbolize the transition from traditional to modern. For instance, a character's growth or change throughout the novel could reflect a personal journey from adherence to traditional values towards a more modern outlook.

The clash between traditional and modern values leads to generational conflicts within families and communities. The older generation may struggle to comprehend or accept the changing attitudes and behaviors of the younger generation, and vice versa. This conflict is symbolic of the broader societal shift occurring during the period when India was undergoing significant transformations post-independence.

The novel showcases how societal changes influenced by the struggle for independence and the subsequent period of nation-building have a profound impact on individuals and families. The characters in the novel confront with the evolving political, economic, and cultural landscape of India, reflecting the broader shifts happening in the country during that time.

Vijayan's “Generations” thus provides a literary exploration of the interplay between traditional and modern values, illustrating how these influences shape individuals and families across different generations, particularly against the backdrop of a changing India. The novel explores the complex interplay between tradition and modernity, using characters and their experiences to shed light on the tensions, conflicts, and adaptations that arise in a rapidly evolving society.

3.3. Social Consciousness

Social consciousness refers to an individual's awareness and understanding of the societal issues, challenges, and dynamics that impact various groups and communities within a society. It can be defined as a person's level of perception of social context, the problems, and the processes that exist in a society or a part of it and affect people who belong to different groups or communities. It covers understanding people's interdependence and appreciation of the diverse roles and positions people and groups assume in society. Understanding and being informed about prevalent social problems such as poverty, inequality, discrimination, environmental degradation, and human rights violations. Feeling and understanding the emotions and experiences of others, especially those who may be marginalized or disadvantaged, and having a desire to alleviate their suffering or improve their circumstances.

Recognizing the influence of social systems, institutions, and cultural norms on individuals and communities. This includes understanding power dynamics, privilege, and oppression. Taking action to address social issues and injustices through various means, such as activism, volunteering, advocacy, or supporting organizations that work towards positive social change. Valuing and respecting the diversity of culture, background, perspectives, and identities within society, and promoting inclusive practices that ensure equal opportunities and treatment for all.

Acknowledging personal and collective responsibility for the well-being of society and being accountable for one's actions and their impact on others and the broader community. Engaging in critical analysis of social issues and fostering open and respectful dialogue to promote understanding, empathy, and collaboration in finding solutions. Social consciousness involves being proactive and engaged in creating a more just, equitable, and harmonious society by addressing social disparities and advocating for positive change.

Vijayan's novels present the theme social consciousness, which involves a deep awareness and understanding of social issues, inequalities, injustices, and the human condition. Vijayan's literary works often reflect his concern for societal problems and his desire to create awareness and provoke thought among readers. Vijayan often portrays the harsh realities of societal inequalities, caste discrimination, economic disparities, and other forms of social injustice. His novels highlight the struggles of marginalized individuals and communities, shedding light on the need for social reform and equality.

Vijayan's works often critique political systems, corruption, abuse of power, and the consequences of totalitarianism. He uses his writing to voice his concerns about the misuse of authority and the impact it has on society, urging readers to be aware and active in the political sphere. Themes of human rights, dignity, and the value of every individual's life are prevalent in Vijayan's novels. He emphasizes the importance of treating all people with respect and understanding, regardless of their background, caste, or socioeconomic status.

Vijayan explores the impact of cultural identity and traditions on society. He delves into the complexities of preserving cultural heritage while adapting to the changing times and challenges presented by globalization. In some of his works, Vijayan addresses environmental issues and the importance of sustainable living. He expresses concerns about environmental degradation and its consequences on society, urging readers to be more conscious of their actions and their impact on the environment. Vijayan often contemplates existential themes, moral dilemmas, and the essence of being human. His characters are embedded with questions about life, purpose, and morality, encouraging readers to reflect on their own beliefs and values.

Vijayan's novels serve as a powerful medium for highlighting the importance of social consciousness, urging readers to engage with and critically evaluate the society they live in, and motivating them to strive for a more just and equitable world. "The Legends of Khasak" explores various themes, including social consciousness. The novel delves into the caste system and social hierarchies prevalent in the region. It portrays the discriminatory practices and prejudices that exist in the society, shaping the lives of the characters in Khasak. Caste plays a significant role in determining social interactions, relationships, and opportunities.

"The Legends of Khasak" also reflects the syncretic and diverse religious fabric of the region. It explores the coexistence of multiple religious beliefs and practices, including Hinduism and Islam. The novel emphasizes the need for understanding and tolerance among different religious communities. The narrative highlights the exploitation faced by the marginalized and economically weaker sections of society. It sheds light on the struggles of the poor and dispossessed, often resulting from economic policies and land disputes that lead to displacement and further marginalization.

The novel subtly addresses environmental issues and the impact of human activities on the natural surroundings. The characters' interaction with nature and the consequences of their actions serve as a metaphor for the broader environmental challenges faced by society. The novel critiques traditional gender roles and societal expectations placed on individuals based

on their gender. It explores the challenges and restrictions faced by women in a patriarchal society and questions these norms. The narrative underscores the importance of education and awareness in challenging existing societal norms. Characters express their desire educate themselves and their communities, advocating for a broader understanding of social issues and collective progress.

The central character in the novel is Ravi, a teacher who comes to Khasak seeking solace and redemption from his troubled past. Throughout the narrative, Ravi confronts with the social and existential aspects of life, reflecting on the complexities of human existence and the society he finds himself in. The novel delves into the psyche of its characters, including Ravi, to portray their thoughts and contemplations on social consciousness, morality, spirituality, and the human condition. Their reflections and actions contribute to the overarching exploration of these themes within the story. The characters in the novel exhibit social consciousness in different ways, reflecting the intricacies of the society they live in. Appukkili is another significant character who symbolizes the downtrodden and oppressed in society. He represents the Dalits, who face discrimination and societal prejudices. Through Appukkili experiences and struggles, the novel sheds light on social injustices and the need for social reforms.

The novel's portrayal of these characters and their interactions with the societal fabric of Khasak serves as a lens to explore various social issues, including caste discrimination, poverty, gender roles, and the clash between tradition and modernity. The characters' experiences and the challenges they face shed light on the need for social awareness and reform in a rapidly changing world. "O Tiger, we cannot goddess strictly forbade any quarrel between Hindu and Muslim gods; these gods were the natives of Khasak, we cannot set up the gods against themselves. We cannot let them brawl".⁸ "The Legends of Khasak" provide a rich tapestry of social consciousness, inviting readers to reflect on complex social issues prevalent in the fictional world of Khasak and, by extension, in society at large.

"The Saga of Dharmapuri" is a significant work of literature that delves into various socio-political and cultural aspects of the society it portrays.

The novel addresses the deep-rooted caste discrimination prevalent in Indian society. It portrays the lives of marginalized communities and highlights the inherent unfairness and prejudice they face. The characters in the novel are often victims of this discriminatory system, and the narrative underscores the need for social reform and equality. Another theme prevalent in the novel is political corruption and the abuse of power. The story delves into the murky

world of politics, exposing the corrupt practices and power struggles that adversely affect the lives of ordinary people.

The protagonists in the novel are often engaged in a struggle for justice and truth against the prevailing social and political injustices. This struggle is a reflection of the broader societal fight for truth and righteousness, highlighting the need for collective action to bring about positive change. The novel also emphasizes the importance of upholding human rights and preserving human dignity. Characters in the story face violations of their basic rights, and the narrative underscores the need to protect and respect the rights of every individual.

The story is set against the backdrop of historical and social events, providing a commentary on the times it portrays. This helps readers understand the broader context and the factors that shape the lives of the characters in the novel. The people of Dharmapuri are affected by a rigid social structure that determines their roles, interactions, and opportunities in life. The narrative explores the discrimination and marginalization faced by individuals from lower castes, reflecting the prevailing social consciousness regarding caste-based prejudices.

The novel illustrates how the people of Dharmapuri are influenced by the political power structures in society. It delves into the corruption, power struggles, and exploitation that are characteristic of the political landscape. The social consciousness highlights the impact of political decisions on the lives of ordinary people and the ways in which power can be abused. The introduction of modernization and its effects on the traditional values and way of life in Dharmapuri is a central theme. The people confront with the changing socio-economic landscape, technological advancements, and the erosion of traditional cultural norms. This transformation reflects a clash of values and a struggle to adapt to a rapidly changing world, showcasing the evolving social consciousness in the face of modernity. The social consciousness depicted in the novel underscores the need for individuals to challenge societal norms and fight for their rights and dignity.

Through the experiences of the characters, the novel brings to light the pervasive oppression and injustices faced by various segments of society. This narrative of injustice shapes the collective social consciousness of the people, instigating discussions and actions aimed at challenging and addressing these issues. Vijayan's "The Saga of Dharmapuri" thus serves as a significant literary work that raises awareness about the societal issues prevalent in the Indian context, ultimately urging readers to reflect on the need for social change and progress towards a more just and equitable society.

“The Infinity of Grace” portrays a vast canvas of human existence and society, intertwined with myth, history, and contemporary politics. It incorporates elements of magic realism, making it a unique and captivating work. The novel critically examines the social fabric of Kerala, a state in southern India. It brings to light the complex issues and inequalities prevalent in society. The narrative reflects on the disparities related to caste, class, politics, and power structures. The author uses the novel as a platform to critique these aspects and raise social awareness.

“The Infinity of Grace” is no exception, as it critiques the political system and its impact on society. The novel delves into corruption, power struggles, and the erosion of traditional values due to modern politics. The novel also explores spiritual and mythological themes. It weaves in elements of Indian mythology, folklore, and spirituality, showcasing how these aspects influence the lives of the characters and the society they inhabit. The infusion of spirituality adds a layer of depth and symbolism to the narrative.

It delves into the struggles, sufferings, and challenges faced by individuals in society. These struggles are depicted as part of a larger societal context, highlighting the need for empathy and understanding. Vijayan's narrative style in “The Infinity of Grace” is intricate and richly layered. He employs symbolism, allegory, and metaphors to convey deeper meanings and insights. The novel's structure and use of symbolism contribute to the overall theme of social consciousness and the interconnectedness of various aspects of life. In the novel social consciousness is a significant theme explored through the lens of the characters and their interactions with society. The characters in the novel represent different strata of society and grapple with their own understanding and awakening to social realities. Sankarankutty, the protagonist, embodies the social consciousness theme in the novel. His experiences, encounters, and evolution throughout the narrative shed light on the socio-political realities of the time. He navigates through a society marked by caste divisions, political ideologies, and the struggle of the commoners. The novel portrays the entrenched caste system and class struggles prevalent in society. Sankarankutty's experiences with caste discrimination and the social prejudices faced by marginalized communities highlight the need for social reform and awareness. The characters in the novel, including Sankarankutty, are seen battling with political ideologies and their impact on society. The narrative critiques the political landscape, exposing corruption, power dynamics, and the disillusionment experienced by those striving for a just society.

The novel also explores spiritual themes, intertwining spirituality with social consciousness. The characters' quest for meaning and transcendence provides a nuanced understanding of the role of spirituality in challenging and transforming societal norms. The novel engages in intellectual discourse through various characters, reflecting on the broader socio-cultural and political issues of the time. These dialogues and debates underscore the importance of critical thinking and analysis to foster a more conscious and informed society. The novel intricately weaves the theme of social consciousness into its narrative, presenting a multifaceted exploration of society, politics, caste, spirituality, and the human condition. Through the characters and their experiences, Vijayan provokes readers to reflect on the pressing issues of society and envision a more equitable and enlightened world.

“The Infinity of Grace” is a thought-provoking work that delves into social consciousness, politics, spirituality, and the human condition. Through its intricate narrative and use of various literary techniques, the novel presents a critical examination of society and raises important questions about the human experience.

In the novel “Generations” delves into various complex themes, including social consciousness, politics, history, and the human condition. Social consciousness is a central theme in the novel, highlighting the evolution of society, politics, and human behavior over generations. The story spans several generations and offers a critical examination of the societal changes and political transformations that took place in Kerala, India. Vijayan uses the narrative to dissect the impact of colonialism, casteism, feudalism, and modernization on society and individuals. “It was my father, my grandfather, my uncle and me, my entire family history that inspired me to write the novel *Generations*”.⁹

The novel presents a vivid portrayal of the caste system and its influence on the lives of people in Kerala. It depicts the discrimination, oppression, and social hierarchy that exist within the society, shedding light on the deeply ingrained prejudices and biases. Vijayan uses characters and their interactions to illustrate the complexities of caste dynamics and the struggle for social justice and equality. Additionally, “Generations” delves into political consciousness, exploring the influence of political ideologies and movements on the lives of the characters and society as a whole. Vijayan's narrative provides a critical analysis of political ideologies prevalent during that time, including communism and socialism, and the impact they had on the socio-political landscape of Kerala. The novel also touches upon historical events and their repercussions on the present, emphasizing the interconnectedness of the past, present, and

future. Through this lens, Vijayan prompts readers to reflect on the larger socio-political and historical contexts that shape our lives and attitudes.

“Generations” demonstrate varying degrees of social consciousness and engagement. The characters in the novel are situated in different historical periods, from the pre-independence era to the post-independence period in India. The story provides insights into the social and political changes that occurred during these times, including the struggles for independence, caste dynamics, and evolving social norms.

The novel delves into the caste system prevalent in Kerala and how it influences the characters' lives. The characters are affected by their caste identity and societal expectations related to caste. The narrative raises questions about caste discrimination and the need for societal reforms. The impact of British colonialism on Indian society is also explored in the novel. Characters encounter the changes brought about by colonial rule, the influence of Western ideas, and the consequences of colonial exploitation. Some characters in the novel display political awareness and involvement. They participate in political activities and movements, advocating for social justice and change. Their actions reflect their commitment to larger societal causes.

The novel also touches on gender dynamics and the evolving roles of women in society. It portrays the struggle of women in a patriarchal society and highlights the need for gender equality and women's empowerment. Through the characters' experiences and dialogues, the novel offers a critical commentary on various aspects of society, including corruption, bureaucracy, inequality, and social prejudices. It encourages readers to reflect on these issues and consider potential solutions. “Generations” is a thought-provoking novel that explores social consciousness by examining the societal, political, and historical dimensions of Kerala, shedding light on the intricacies of casteism, political ideologies, and the evolution of society over generations. O.V. Vijayan provides a multifaceted exploration of social awareness through its characters and their experiences, shedding light on the societal realities and challenges faced by different generations in Kerala, India.

To conclude it can be said that, in the novels of O.V. Vijayan, one discovers a profound examination of socio-cultural dilemmas that extends beyond storytelling to probe deeply into human existence. Vijayan skillfully merges traditional and modern elements, presenting a vivid portrayal of a society entangled between its historical roots and contemporary challenges. His narratives vividly capture the essence of rural life, where ancient customs intersect with the

rapid advancements of urbanization. This contrast serves not only as a narrative backdrop but also as a thematic foundation, encouraging readers to ponder the complexities of reconciling tradition with progress.

Vijayan's exploration lies a profound social awareness that permeates every aspect of his storytelling, urging readers to confront societal injustices and disparities. Whether portraying the struggles of marginalized communities or unmasking the hypocrisy of the elite, his novels serve as potent tools for critique and introspection. However, amid the shadows of adversity, there exists a glimmer of hope—a belief in the resilience of the human spirit and the potential for positive change through collective effort. Through his adept blending of urban and rural perspectives, traditional values, and modern challenges, Vijayan emerges not merely as a chronicler of his era but as a visionary whose words continue to resonate, compelling us to confront with the complexities of our shared human experience.

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CHAPTER - 4

SIGNIFICANCE OF SOCIAL BELIEFS

4.1 Psychological Impact

4.2 Influence of Social Taboos

4.3 Emergence of New Generation

CHAPTER-4

SIGNIFICANCE OF SOCIAL BELIEFS

Social beliefs refer to a set of commonly held ideas, attitudes, values, or convictions within a particular society or social group regarding various aspects of life, including but not limited to culture, politics, religion, ethics, and social norms. These beliefs shape how individuals perceive the world around them, interact with one another, and make decisions.

Social beliefs are typically shaped by a variety of factors, such as cultural heritage, historical events, upbringing, education, media influence, and interpersonal interactions. They often serve as the foundation for societal norms and behaviors, influencing how individuals relate to one another, engage in social institutions, and participate in collective actions. Examples of social beliefs may include notions about gender roles, the importance of family, the right to free speech, the value of democracy, attitudes towards diversity and inclusion, or opinions on various social issues like healthcare, education, poverty, or environmental sustainability. These beliefs can vary significantly across different societies, cultures, and time periods, reflecting the diversity of human perspectives and experiences. Vijayan's works often reflected a deep understanding of the societal fabric and the prevailing beliefs within it.

Vijayan's work was mainly reaction to society and its norms and usually concentrated on such aspects as politics, religious faith, caste systems and domination. He was creating philosophical stories that put people into cognitive dissonance while raising the issue of the current cultural and social paradigm. Vijayan was an antagonist to numerous political practices that he saw as oppressive for the society; religious fundamentalism, social injustices and administrative corruption. Often, he spoke on matters of social justice such as Dalit discrimination, communalism, and an overhaul of the society. He employed the power of the pen to address these societal issues and was able to challenge the mind set of his readers.

Vijayan's works often carry a strong element of social critique and satire. He uses satire to comment on social norms, politics, bureaucracy, and the human condition. His satirical approach often challenges prevailing social beliefs and highlights their absurdities. Caste and class dynamics are recurring themes in Vijayan's works. He explores the complexities and injustices associated with the caste system and class hierarchy prevalent in Indian society. These themes are often depicted through the experiences of his characters and their struggles. Vijayan's writings often address religious diversity and the challenges of maintaining religious

harmony. He explores the interplay of various religions and religious beliefs in society, shedding light on the importance of tolerance and understanding. Vijayan's works often highlight political corruption, social injustices, and the abuse of power. He criticizes the systems and structures that perpetuate inequality and discrimination, aiming to raise awareness and provoke thought.

One of the issues presented by the novel is the abundance of superstitions and traditions in every though rather simple village. The phenomena of characterization also reveal characters quite influenced by regional fairy tales, traditions, and rites. These beliefs dictate their actions and adoptions they include the impact of tradition on the society. These themes are often interwoven with social beliefs and the impact of societal norms on an individual's existence. Vijayan's writings frequently give voice to the marginalized and oppressed sections of society. He portrays their struggles, aspirations, and challenges in a society that often marginalizes them based on caste, class, or economic status.

Vijayan's works often encompass a rich exploration of social beliefs, critiquing existing norms, and shedding light on various societal issues prevalent in the Indian context. His writing style involves using satire and fiction to provoke thought and encourage readers to question established beliefs and systems. "The Legend of Khasak" is known for its intricate narrative, rich symbolism, and exploration of various social, cultural, and philosophical themes.

The novel delves into the syncretic and pluralistic religious beliefs prevalent in the village of Khasak. It portrays a unique blend of Hinduism, Islam, and indigenous beliefs. The characters in the novel often navigate and negotiate their faith and religious practices, showcasing a coexistence of diverse religious beliefs within the community. The caste system and social hierarchy prevalent in rural Kerala are depicted in the novel. The characters grapple with the discrimination and societal expectations associated with their respective castes, highlighting the entrenched social structures and inequalities within the community.

The novel portrays the prevalence of superstitions and traditional beliefs among the villagers. Characters are deeply influenced by local folklore, customs, and rituals. These beliefs often shape their actions and decisions, reflecting the influence of tradition on the social fabric of the community. It addresses traditional gender roles and the patriarchal nature of the society it portrays. It examines the expectations placed on men and women, and how these roles influence their interactions and behaviour within the community.

The protagonist, Ravi, experiences a sense of social isolation and alienation. His experiences and interactions with the villagers shed light on the theme of loneliness and the struggle to belong within a tight-knit community, reflecting broader social dynamics. The novel explores the experiences of marginalized individuals and outsiders who come to Khasak. It delves into the challenges they face in integrating into the society, reflecting on the dynamics of acceptance and assimilation.

Social beliefs play a significant role in shaping the lives and experiences of the people of Khasak. The village of Khasak is deeply entrenched in religious beliefs and practices, primarily Hinduism and Islamic Sufism. The characters in the novel are profoundly influenced by these beliefs, which dictate their actions, rituals, and interactions with others. The caste system is a prevalent social belief in Khasak. The characters' lives are impacted by their caste and the societal expectations associated with it. The higher castes often discriminate against the lower castes, affecting their opportunities and social standing.

The villagers of Khasak hold various superstitions and beliefs in supernatural entities. These beliefs influence their daily lives, decisions, and the way they perceive events and occurrences in their community. Gender roles and expectations are deeply ingrained in the society of Khasak. Traditional beliefs dictate the roles of men and women, affecting their behavior, opportunities, and relationships within the community. The social beliefs and customs in Khasak foster a sense of community cohesion and solidarity. The villagers come together for various rituals, celebrations, and events, reinforcing their shared beliefs and values.

The social fabric of Khasak is woven with taboos and stigmas. Characters face societal judgment and discrimination due to behaviours that are deemed unacceptable according to prevailing social norms and beliefs. Prejudices based on caste, religion, and social standing impact the characters' interactions and relationships. These biases influence how individuals perceive and treat one another within the village. The novel portrays the influence of superstitions and traditional folk beliefs on the characters. These beliefs often drive their actions, decisions, and interpretations of events in their lives. The village culture is rich in folklore, legends, and traditional rituals. The importance of community and communal harmony is highlighted in the novel. The characters are shown to rely on their community for support, guidance, and social interactions. The bonds within the community are crucial in times of celebration, crisis, and day-to-day life.

The novel reflects traditional gender roles and the influence of patriarchy in the society it portrays. Gender expectations and societal norms influence the behaviour and treatment of both male and female characters. The novel explores the clash between traditional beliefs and the influence of modernization and colonialism. The characters are engulfed with changing social and cultural norms as they interact with the modern world and its impact on their traditional way of life. Beyond specific social beliefs, the novel delves into existential and philosophical themes. Characters contemplate life, death, meaning, and the nature of existence, adding depth and complexity to the narrative.

“The Legends of Khasak” delves into the complexities of the social and cultural milieu of a remote Indian village, highlighting the impact of traditional beliefs and customs on the lives of its characters. The narrative provides a window into how these beliefs shape their actions, relationships, and ultimately their destiny. It is a complex and nuanced novel that weaves together various social beliefs and norms, offering a profound commentary on the intricate tapestry of human society and culture. “The Saga of Dharmapuri” delves into various social and political themes, providing a critical commentary on society, politics, and human nature. social beliefs are often associated with O.V. Vijayan's works, which might be reflected in “The Saga of Dharmapuri”.

“The Saga of Dharmapuri” is likely to reflect his critical view of the social and political landscape of India. This might include commentary on corruption, power dynamics, social inequalities, and the impact of politics on ordinary people. Vijayan often addresses caste-based discrimination and its pervasive influence on society. In “The Saga of Dharmapuri,” he might highlight the deep-rooted caste system, caste-based prejudices, and the resultant social disparities. According to P.K. Rajan “Dharmapuri a land of soulless people who have sold their freedom to a degenerate tyranny Dharmapuri has entirely forgot its own glorious tradition of the freedom struggle against the Feringhee empire”.¹

Religious tolerance as a major common theme is easily identified in many of Vijayan's works and he always seems to call on different religious factions to learn to accept one another. He may develop various aspects like interaction of different religions, strains between two religions and the influence of religion on people in the novel.

The novel explores social aspects of people's life and culture in the region, as they are in different historical stages. The caste system perhaps forms part of themes in the novel because it is a reprehensible system of social stratification that began in India many centuries ago. The characters of the novel might have to deal with the issues such as casteism, prejudice, and the dynamics of coming out of the restrictions that are laid by the caste system.

O.V. Vijayan uses satire and irony to critique societal norms and behaviour. "The Saga of Dharmapuri" might employ these literary devices to convey his social beliefs and commentary. The novel is set in the historical and mythical backdrop of Dharmapuri, a region in present-day Kerala, India. It explores various social, political, and cultural aspects of the society during that time.

The novel delves into the social beliefs and practices prevalent in the region during different historical periods. The novel likely delves into the caste system, a social hierarchy that has been deeply entrenched in Indian society for centuries. The characters in the novel may confront with caste-based discrimination, prejudices, and the challenges associated with breaking free from traditional caste roles.

The novel may explore religious beliefs and practices prevalent during that time. This could involve discussing rituals, customs, and the influence of religion on the characters and society. It may touch upon traditional gender roles and the challenges faced by women in a patriarchal society. It could explore themes of empowerment, oppression, and the struggle for gender equality. The novel may depict characters or groups of people resisting oppressive social norms and systems, showcasing their struggle for justice, equality, and change. It explores spiritual and philosophical beliefs prevalent in the society, presenting characters who encounter with existential questions and seek deeper meaning in life.

Vijayan often delves into existentialist themes, contemplating the human condition, existential angst, and the search for meaning in life. "The Saga of Dharmapuri" may reflect these philosophical inquiries through its characters and plot. Vijayan was also known for his concern about the environment and the exploitation of natural resources. The novel may touch upon environmental degradation and its impact on society and human lives.

Vijayan often critiqued the societal and political systems, highlighting issues such as caste discrimination, political corruption, social injustices, and power dynamics. These themes are likely to be present in "The Infinity of Grace" as well. Vijayan often delved into the complexities of the human condition, exploring the struggles, existential crisis, and moral

dilemmas faced by individuals within society. He portrayed characters surrounded by with their beliefs, desires, and the consequences of their actions.

Many of Vijayan's works were deeply rooted in Indian culture and mythology. He explored the impact of traditional beliefs, rituals, and religious practices on individuals and society. These cultural elements might be reflected in "The Infinity of Grace" as well. Vijayan was known for using metaphorical and symbolic storytelling techniques. He often used allegorical elements to convey deeper meanings and commentaries on various social and political issues. He often depicted characters striving for personal, social, or political freedom, and his works sometimes conveyed the need for liberation from oppressive systems. "Generations" is known for its intricate narrative style and its exploration of complex human relationships within the broader societal framework. While I can provide a general overview of the social beliefs.

"Generations" often explores the pervasive influence of the caste system and social hierarchy in Kerala. Caste-based discrimination, inequalities, and the struggle to break free from the constraints of caste form an essential theme in the novel. The novel might discuss the remnants of the colonial past and how it influences the socio-economic and cultural aspects of society in Kerala. The characters and narrative may engage with the historical consequences of colonization.

Vijayan's work frequently addresses the political climate in Kerala and India. The novel may reflect on issues related to governance, power struggles, political ideologies, and their impact on society. "Generations" is known for its intricate narrative style and its exploration of complex human relationships within the broader societal framework. While I can provide a general overview of the social beliefs. It might depict the clash between tradition and modernity, as society confronted with changing norms, technologies, and evolving belief systems. It may explore how these changes impact individuals and communities.

The novel could delve into the coexistence of various religions and religious beliefs, highlighting communal harmony or discord. Economic disparities and issues of social justice may be reflected in the novel, showcasing the struggles of marginalized communities and efforts to bridge the gap between different socioeconomic strata. These themes and beliefs offer a glimpse into the societal context that Vijayan portrays in "Generations". The novel often touches upon the deeply ingrained caste system in Kerala society. It explores how caste influences relationships, opportunities, and interactions among the characters. The hierarchical structure and associated prejudices play a significant role in the characters' lives and decisions.

The novel portrays a narrative of progress and development, both at the individual and societal levels. It examines the aspirations of the younger generation and their desire for a better life, contrasting with the older generation's perspective rooted in tradition. The novel delves into gender dynamics, traditional gender roles, and the changing roles of women in society. It examines the challenges and expectations faced by women and the evolving nature of relationships and family structures. It explores the socioeconomic disparities prevalent in Kerala society. It sheds light on how these disparities affect the characters' lives, opportunities, and interactions, contributing to a nuanced understanding of the social fabric. “Generations” by O.V. Vijayan provides a rich tapestry of social culture, examining the complex interplay of caste, politics, family, modernization, and tradition within the context of Kerala society.

4.1. Psychological Impact

Psychological significance refers to the importance, meaning, or relevance of a particular psychological phenomenon, finding, concept, or event within the context of psychology and human behavior. It involves understanding and interpreting the implications, effects, and applications of psychological principles and research in various aspects of human life. Psychological significance involves understanding how a particular psychological concept or finding helps explain, predict, or understand human behavior. For example, understanding the psychological significance of classical conditioning helps explain how people learn associations between stimuli and responses.

Thus, the aspect of psychological significance might relate to the effects of psychological aspects of one's life, including feelings, thoughts, personality, and interpersonal relations on mental health. It is therefore important for the Design of interventions and therapies to enhance mental health. As the name implies, it discusses the manner in which psychological concepts and theories or theories within the field of psychology hold water within different cultures and societies. Thus, the meaning and the psychological connotations of a concept may depend on the culture of a society. The psychological significance of a concept may vary based on cultural norms, beliefs, and practices. It involves identifying the practical applications of psychological knowledge in various domains, such as education, healthcare, organizations, and public policy. For instance, understanding the psychological significance of motivation is vital for designing effective motivation strategies in the workplace. Psychological significance includes evaluating the importance of research findings and theories for advancing the field of

psychology. It helps determine the contributions of a study to the existing knowledge and its potential to influence future research and theories.

It involves understanding the psychological processes related to development, growth, and change across the lifespan. This understanding is crucial for facilitating healthy development and addressing challenges at different life stages. Psychological significance involves comprehending the meaningfulness and impact of psychological concepts, theories, research findings, and events on human behaviour, mental health, society, and overall understanding of the human mind.

His writings often delve into the human psyche, exploring various psychological and existential dimensions. Vijayan's works frequently delve into the complexities of the human mind and emotions. He often portrays characters grappling with inner conflicts, desires, fears, and anxieties, offering a deep exploration of the human psyche. Vijayan pays attention to the development of characters and their psychodynamics. He meticulously constructs characters with multifaceted personalities, revealing their motivations, traumas, and interpersonal dynamics. This allows readers to analyze the psychological intricacies of each character.

Vijayan uses symbols and allegory to elucidate psychological notions and ideas. In his works, symbols convey latent meanings related to the hero's psyche, social observation, or the meaning of life. This builds up an approach that introduces to readers other connotations in a psychological interpretation. Thus, adopting themes and motives of psychoanalysis, He introduces subconscious meanings into the narratives. There he demonstrates dreams or fantasies or some intermediate events for embracing the inner structures of his characters to the audience.

Existential issues such as the purpose of life, loneliness and the purposelessness of humanity are some of the issues which are depicted in Vijayan's works. These themes he applies to make the audience think and analyze the state of being human from the psychological point of view. Post traumatic stressful experiences and the theme of memory are two popular aspects that are often portrayed in Vijayan's works. He discusses how past traumas are thus are reflected in a person's personality, actions as well as their view of reality. A main theme in many of the narratives he build involve the relationship between memory and psychological health. This man observes the world through the prism of psychology and makes remarks regarding various aspects of life, politics, and culture. He often talks about norms or structures of society and the effects that they inflict on the mind and morale of people, the psychological look at society.

The protagonist, Ravi, experiences a profound sense of isolation and alienation throughout the novel. His move to Khasak, a remote village, exacerbates his feelings of being disconnected from society. This causes an introspection and an exploration of the psychology of the main character as he deals with estrangement in the new environment, he finds himself in. Therefore, Khasak can be analyzed as a search for identity and an attempt to find a place in the world for the protagonist Ravi. He tries to fit into the community and has issues regarding his previous life as well as his heritage. This search for identity is very psychological since Ravi moves into dreaming, constructing himself through memories, and interacting with other people. Dreams are present throughout the novel and, more often than not, the line between fantasy and actual events is very fine. Dream sequences and symbols are used by Vijayan to reach the inner world and the feelings of the characters, main and secondary ones. Analyzing these dreams is significant, as they reveal certain aspects of the characters' psychological conditions and desires.

The characters in the novel, including Ravi, confronted with guilt and seek redemption for their past actions and transgressions. This theme delves into the psychological complexities of guilt, remorse, and the human need for absolution. The characters in the novel face existential challenges and grapple with the meaning of life, mortality, and the human condition. The backdrop of Khasak, with its mystical and existential elements, serves as a stage for the characters to confront their existential angst and ponder the purpose of their existence. Ravi is the main protagonist despite not having any physical actions, but plays the psychological aspects of the film such guilt, existentialism and alienation. He Confronts with the compunction which gives him guilt and punishment, and so he forms a continuous cycle of guilt and remorse. That is why existential motifs are felt in conflict over one's identity and the search for belonging in Khasak.

Appu Nair the character who commits suicide portray the toll of psychological pertinacity due to social and relational distress. Lacking coping capacities of culture and the victory of inner conflicts – he ends tragically, emphasizing the need for addressing the issue of mental health and the need for society to accept people with such issues. Another character of the series is Maimoona, a trans-sexual woman, who goes through physiological and social conflict common to those who are Gender Non-Conformity. Through Maimoona's experiences, the aspects of acceptance, identity and the endeavours for love and acceptance in a society that might prejudice and stigmatise is brought to light.

Kunhamina is in fact a protagonist that reflects the costs of the psychology of losing and suffering throughout a lifetime. Their joys and sorrows depict the weight of her loss and grief in the death of her husband and son, the loss of her home. Kuttappan, the character who is an introverted, quirk and often self-isolate, is the portrayal of the mental effects of seclusion to be quirky. He isolates himself and held unconventional views on life which are potential manifestations of the effects of traumatic experiences and the difficulties of successful reintegration into society. Nizam Ali is a character that embodies the struggle for power and control, showcasing the psychological dimensions of ambition and manipulation. The movements made by this character and the reasons for them are indicators of the psychological manifestations of status and power.

“The Legends of Khasak” explores the intricate dynamics of human relationships, including love, loss, betrayal, and redemption. The psychological aspects of these relationships are portrayed through the characters' interactions, emotions, and motivations. Several characters in the novel have experienced trauma, whether it be personal, societal, or cultural. The novel delves into the psychological healing process, showing how individuals cope with trauma, attempt to overcome it, and find solace and redemption through their experiences in Khasak.

Ravi’s childhood memories always began at noon when he would sit alone on the veranda of their hilltop home. The hillside descended into shimmering yellow grass, leading to the coffee valley below, before rising again to a skyline dotted with small pines swaying in a clear mirage. One of his fondest memories was the sky-watching activity he shared with his mother, though she participated infrequently due to her pregnancy. She would tell him stories about the Devas, celestial beings who drank the milk of the Kalpaka fruit, their source of immortality, and tossed the empty husks to the earth. “The noon sky was filled with them. Ravi watched as they glided over shimmering cloud edges, gently passing over pine trees, rocks, and grass. He leaned against his mother’s belly while she rested on a couch”.²

Vijayan embeds psychological significance in his works through in-depth explorations of the human psyche, character development, symbolism, psychoanalysis, existential themes, trauma, and societal commentary. His writings invite readers to engage with complex psychological dimensions and reflect on the nature of the mind and the human experience. “The Saga of Dharmapuri” is a complex and multi-layered work that delves into various themes and explores the human psyche in intricate ways. The psychological significance in the novel can be interpreted through the characters, their motivations, the socio-political context, and the

narrative structure. The novel portrays a range of characters with diverse psychological makeups. The protagonist, Kunhikuttan, undergoes a profound psychological transformation as he grapples with his identity, social roles, and existential dilemmas. His experiences and encounters with the world shape his psyche, illustrating the impact of external factors on an individual's mental state.

The novel explores existentialist themes of alienation, meaninglessness, and the search for purpose. Kunhikuttan's struggles reflect existential angst and his quest for meaning amidst a chaotic and often absurd world. The characters' existential dilemmas shed light on the human psyche's reaction to an indifferent and sometimes hostile environment. The novel reflects the psychological impact of the socio-political context in which it is set. The narrative showcases the effects of political oppression, social inequalities, and power dynamics on the psyche of both individuals and communities. It delves into the trauma and psychological scars inflicted by a repressive society. The novel employs a narrative style that delves into the characters' stream of consciousness, allowing readers to access their inner thoughts, emotions, and psychological struggles. This narrative technique offers insights into the complexities of the characters' psyches and their evolving mental states. "A great deal of psychoanalytic ingenuity has been deployed to prove that libido is the driving cruelty even when the naked eye could not discover such sexual motivations".³

The novel often draws upon mythological elements and archetypes to illustrate psychological concepts. Characters and events may symbolize universal human experiences and subconscious desires, enriching the psychological depth of the narrative. Trauma and healing are recurring themes in the novel. The psychological effects of trauma on the characters, and their subsequent coping mechanisms and attempts at healing, are significant aspects. The novel explores how individuals grapple with and overcome their traumatic experiences.

Govindan Nair is the protagonist and serves as a representative of the common man. His experiences and struggles reflect the psychological turmoil and challenges faced by individuals trying to navigate the complexities of society and politics. This is evident through the character's progression and struggle in terms of the internalization of a corrupt and power-hungry system. Madhavan Nair, known as Dharmapuri, is a powerful and corrupt politician. His character elaborates on the aspects of the human mind related to power, manipulation, and pathologic degeneration of morality inherent in absolute rulers. Different aspects of political aspirations are discussed in the novel and the author exposes the evil side of the human

character when consumed by power, including the deterioration of the principles of what is right and wrong by stressing on the mind. Padmarajan or Pappettan is the close friend of Govindan Nair from childhood and a revolutionary personality. His character taps the aspect of mentality of ideological devotion, self-sacrifice, and disenchantment. In presenting Pappettan's journey, issues to the psychological effects a devotee undergo when facing the realities and constraints of struggle and politics are raised.

The other intimate friend of Govindan Nair is Radhakrishnan Nair, Poonkunnam, who belongs to the thinking section of the contemplative society. His character partly deals with the effects of philosophizing and intellectualizing on the human mind that sets him in opposition to the series' array of political and realistic personalities. Kuttipilla represents the next generation and is the son of Govindan Nair, which has been used to portray the evolution of society and new goals for the youth. His character showcases the psychological conflict between traditional values and modern aspirations, reflecting the broader societal changes occurring during the time the novel is set.

Understanding the psychological intricacies of these characters helps readers grasp the author's commentary on human nature, society, and the complex interplay between power, ideology, and personal struggles. The novel provides a rich exploration of the human psyche in the context of a political and social milieu. "The novel provides it with a structure of counterpoint as a point of view, which has its ideological Implications".⁴

"The Saga of Dharmapuri" by O.V. Vijayan is a literary work rich in psychological dimensions, delving into the minds of its characters to explore existentialism, societal impact, trauma, and healing. It offers a nuanced understanding of human psychology in the face of adversity and societal pressures.

"The Infinity of Grace" projects the expansion of the individual psyche that encompasses a wider psychological dimension. The recognition of the transcendental aspects in the personal psychic arena finds expression in the novel. The construction of a transpersonal identity in the course of a spiritual seeking is realistically portrayed. The novel delineates the development of the protagonist Kunjunni and his psychosomatic evolution into a mature self. Kunjunni, a journalist from Delhi, goes to Calcutta as a war correspondent during the Bangladesh war. He also endeavors to reconnect with his daughter and estranged wife on a concurrent level. Unfortunate circumstances enhance the depth of his personal trauma, but he emerges out of that by overcoming it through a transcendental awareness.

A study of Kunjunni's mental development exposes the various phases in his life as exhibiting a psychic process that enables him to come to an understanding with his self to reach a tranquil state. Kunjunni's mental progression, measured from a transpersonal perspective, lends viability to the fact that there exists a psychological developmental pattern in individuals leading them to the ultimate goal. Kunjunni's mental state shifts from one psychic field to another, and passes through each one of the seven fields according to circumstantial and emotional variations.

At the outset, Kunjunni's reveries form part of the psychological expression of an underlying repository subject matter that endeavors an interaction between the various spheres of his psychic structure. Kunjunni's psyche that transfers his conscious state to a semi-conscious one. This leads him into an altogether non-identical realm that transfigures his psychophysiological being to transcend the habitual construct of his existence.

The psychological significance in "Generations" lies in the way the characters grapple with their personal struggles, aspirations, and the collective trauma of their society. It provides a window into the psyche of characters deeply affected by the political and social climate of their time. The novel delves into the intergenerational transmission of trauma and memories. Characters in the story carry the weight of historical events, and this shapes their thoughts, actions, and relationships. The trauma experienced by earlier generations affects the psyche of the current generation, influencing their choices and perceptions.

The characters' thoughts and behaviours are shaped by the political climate, revolutions, and social changes happening around them. Their responses to these influences shed light on the psyche of individuals living in turbulent times. The novel might describe inner life of the characters and their motivations, feelings, actions in a highly subjective way. The study of psychological elements provides improved knowledge of the behaviour and the possibility of obtaining bigger insights into the problems of human nature and the causes for actions in general.

Cognitive functions in the context of literature pertain to the low or high level of characters and events along with their psychological processes and processes and relations depicted in the story. The three aspects which are psychological, philosophical and symbolic are the other ways to analyse the characters. "Generations" presents the author's patient analysis of the human personality and its functions in the context of socio-political conditions. The social

relations, the characters' inner world and their psychological state are depicted with both the style of the classic English literature and the depth of the psychoanalysis.

4.2. Influence of Social Taboos

Social taboos are unwritten, informal rules or customs within a society that dictate certain behaviors, actions, or topics that are considered unacceptable, offensive, or forbidden. Taboos may be described as social norms within the society that are silent but in force and act as restrictions in certain behaviors, actions, or matters that are considered taboo. These taboos include cultural taboos, community taboos and past taboos, or taboos of a certain time period; these taboos may be a reflection of any society's liberalisms or their morality. Sections of the population might find it unacceptably rude to mock or offend religious views, activities or emblems in various cultures. Stereotyping or discriminating with people with such problems or physical challenges is socially embarrassing in most societies.

Vijayan often delved into various social issues and taboos in his works, shedding light on the complexities and nuances of society. In his novels, Vijayan often highlighted how social oppression and discrimination exists even in modern Indian society. He portrayed the Indian caste system, social class, and the walling off of certain classes of society. These components he uses in his narratives portray the hardship and plight of the marginalized in society.

Vijayan was critical of political oppression and authoritarian regimes. He used his novels to expose the abuse of power, censorship, and the suppression of dissent. Through his storytelling, he highlighted the need for social and political reform, emphasizing the importance of democracy and human rights. He critiqued traditional gender roles, stereotypes, and the subjugation of women. His works explored the challenges faced by women in a patriarchal society and advocated for gender equality and empowerment. Another aspect of Vijayan's novels was also religious and cultural taboos strictly forbidden for discussion. He also ventured in issues concerning religion, which included doctrines, rituals and creeds. Thus, the characters and the stories he created were aimed at disclosing the anti-rationalistic beliefs and prejudices, intolerance in religious matters, and presenting religion as something reasonable and tolerant. Vijayan was quite liberal about issues founded on sex, love, and relationships. He dealt with themes that had social expectations and forbidden topics, showed characters freeing themselves from the conventional moral standards, created subjects for healthy discussion of people's feelings and urges.

Corruption and moral decay in society were recurring themes in Vijayan's novels. He depicted the erosion of ethical values, honesty, and integrity. He pointed out the impact that corruption has on the lives of citizens and the society as a whole, which is why people need to strive for a world based on principles and justice. Vijayan wanted to turn a new page and break the taboos that are imposed, forcing readers into questioning the existing world and striving for change, for a better and a fairer world.

“The Legends of Khasak” is set in the fictional village of Khasak in the state of Kerala, India. It explores various aspects of human life, society, and spirituality. Khasak, the village in the novel, is portrayed as a place with its own set of social and cultural taboos, which play a significant role in shaping the lives and interactions of the characters. Caste plays a crucial role in Indian society, and this is reflected in the novel as well. The characters in the novel adhere to the caste system, and interactions between people from different castes are often restricted due to social taboos associated with caste.

In the novel, inter-caste relationships and marriages are considered taboo. The characters face social pressure and backlash if they engage in relationships or marriages outside their caste. Discussions about sexuality and pre-marital relationships are generally considered taboo in conservative societies like Khasak. The characters in the novel confront with their desires and societal expectations, often facing judgment and condemnation. The novel portrays the strong influence of religious beliefs and superstitions in the lives of the characters. Certain practices or beliefs associated with religion may be considered taboo to question or challenge. Traditional gender norms and roles are also evident in the novel. There are expectations regarding the behaviour and responsibilities of men and women, and straying from these expectations can be seen as taboos.

“The Saga of Dharmapuri” addresses the deeply entrenched caste system in Indian society. It critiques the rigid social hierarchies and the discrimination faced by lower castes. O. V. Vijayan uses the characters and events in Dharmapuri to expose the injustices and biases associated with the caste system. According to T.N. Dhar that “The fact that there has been very little criticism of the post-colonial political scene in the Indian novel in English makes O.V. Vijayan’s the Saga of Dharmapuri a significant work. With commendable sophistication, it employs the mode of allegory and satire to make a bold and provocative statement about newly emergent nations like ours”.⁵

Religious diversity and religious intolerance are central themes in the novel. Vijayan critiques how religion can be manipulated for political gains and how it often leads to conflict and discrimination within society. The story may highlight tensions between different religious communities and the misuse of religious sentiments for vested interests. Like many works of literature, “The Saga of Dharmapuri” likely addresses gender inequalities and the patriarchal structure of society. It may critique the oppression and marginalization faced by women and how traditional gender roles perpetuate discrimination and violence against them. The novel highlights the broader theme of social injustice and exploitation. This might encompass economic disparities, labor exploitation, and the struggles of the marginalized in a society where power and resources are concentrated in the hands of a few.

Another social taboo that could be discussed in the novel is the Influence of media in changes in attitude in the community as well as in propagandist activities. Here Vijayan uses satirical and critical approach to look into these societal parameters while using the imaginary town of Dharmapuri as a microcosm to reflect on broader societal issues in India. The novel aims to provoke thought and encourage readers to reflect on the societal structures and norms that influence the lives of individuals.

“The Infinity of Grace” delves into various social and political themes, often reflecting on the complexities of society. The novel addresses the discrimination faced by the lower castes, particularly the Dalits or untouchables. The novel focuses on the untouchables better known as Dalits or the lower castes that have been isolated from the rest of society. It also points out the various social boycotts concerning the caste system and the brutal treatment of a person based on caste considerations. The major themes that are explored in the novel include political persecution and tyranny of leaders. It deals with the issue of contemplating about political systems and the powers that be, and draws into it the harsh reality.

“The Infinity of Grace” critiques religious dogma, hypocrisy, and the misuse of religion for personal and political gains. It challenges traditional beliefs and practices that perpetuate social inequalities and injustice. The novel touches upon sexual taboos and societal expectations regarding relationships, desire, and morality. It explores the conflicts and restrictions imposed on individuals due to conservative societal norms.

The novel sheds light on the marginalization and oppression faced by various groups in society, including minorities and disadvantaged communities. There is a depiction of social injustice in the novel, given the sufferings that the minority groups as well as socially estranged groups go

through in their daily lives. It questions the social clumsy norms, which continue to put the above marginalized groups in such a status. Vijayan employs a multifaceted narrative to confront and critique these social taboos and issues prevalent in society. Through its vivid portrayal of characters and their experiences.

Vijayan's final novel, "Generations", depicts a traditional Ezhava landlord family navigating their caste identity within the upper-caste-dominated society of Malabar. The novel explores the social structure of Malabar as shaped by the caste system. As a significant social experiment by a remarkable genius, it addresses various aspects of the region's history, including the caste system, renaissance movements, nationalist efforts, the religious conversion of entire communities, migration from Travancore to Malabar, and the rise of the communist movement. In Malabar, land was primarily owned by upper castes and passed down through generations as inheritance, with colonial authorities recognizing landlords as the rightful owners of the land.

In O.V. Vijayan's novel, social taboos are intricately depicted, revealing the intricate layers of societal norms. Vijayan skillfully delves into the themes of caste, religion, and gender, illuminating the deeply rooted prejudices that govern human behavior. Through vibrant characters and vivid settings, he exposes the oppressive structures that uphold inequality. Whether it's the rigid caste hierarchy or the restrictive conventions surrounding gender, Vijayan fearlessly addresses these taboos. His novels serve as mirrors which show people what they do not want to see by presenting the principles they have always taken for granted. Overall, Vijayan in his novel does not only weave a very good literary piece but at the same time provides the society with great enlightenment on its functioning.

4.3. Emergence of New Generation

The phrase "Emergence of New Generation" typically refers to the advent or arrival of a succeeding cohort or group of individuals who are distinct from the previous generation in various ways. This emergence can consist of cultural, technological, social, economical as well as the ideological changes which defines the behaviour, belief and norms of this new group. It is common knowledge that the advanced generations are likely to formulate and embrace their unique cultural practices, beliefs, and relations dealing with the world. Comparing the presented theoretical approaches, it can be stated that these are Historical events. Over and over, technological developments and the integration into communities mark the definition of a new generation. due to technological development, change of the society as well as change

of attitudes. the young people generally possess distinct political views, political opinions that are stronger, and different political participation than that of older generations.

Analyzing the nature of these factors and others enables one to explain the development of a new generation as a means of creating a unique identity and perceptions of the world for individuals from that generation. It is crucial to point out that anything related to generations and generation characteristics is rather relative and may be defined differently, while people of the same generation share certain peculiarities and patterns, they may be quite different in terms of their views and experiences.

Vijayan, known for his profound literary works that often delve into complex themes, including the emergence of a new generation. Analyzing the work of Vijayan, it is possible to point out that he was witnessing the changes in the socio-political structure, generations, and effects of modernity on the society. By and large, the change of generation is depicted in societal changes, politics, sophisticated technology, and the developments of culture by Vijayan. The author describes various struggles and issues that the young people meet with traditional and modern cultural practices.

Vijayan's narratives may depict the clash of ideologies and values between generations, highlighting the struggles faced by the youth in adapting to a rapidly changing world. He may also shed light on the on the generation gap by giving the society's view and understanding of how norms have changed and how the new generation handles these issues. As a writer, Vijayan might decide to write about how the young people are affected by globalization, urbanization and technology since these are pivotal determinants of young people's identities, goals and visions in the society. However, one must remember that Vijayan describes the appearance of a new generation in the context of cultural, social, and political values, thus, his works should be perceived with the said background in mind.

"The Legends of Khasak" centers around the life of Ravi, the protagonist, who comes to Khasak as a teacher. The story delves into the lives, beliefs, and cultural intricacies of the people in the village. It has themes such as loneliness, passion, mysticism, and the vagrancy of live and death. Thus, the social, cultural, and demographic transformation of the region is facilitated by the changes in the novel related to the emergence of a new generation of Khasak's inhabitants. Newer generation thoughts, education and a different perception of life is well depicted in Ravi, from the new generation do not have the old traditional village orthodox

mindset and rigid structure of thinking. He battles with the theme of modernization and traditional customs and this is an aspect evident in the novel.

The emergence of a new generation symbolizes change, adaptation, and the struggle to find one's place in a complex world. It is a reflection of how different perspectives and ideologies collide and coexist, highlighting the evolving nature of societies and cultures over time. The emergence of a new generation is a significant theme in the novel, as it reflects the transition and change in the traditional rural society of Khasak.

The things that Ravi sees and with which he interacts in Khasak and supernatural occurrences in the novel contribute to his subjectivity and the world of the village. The novel traces the changes in the villagers' interactions and the role of the young generation thanks to the protagonist's Ravi's evolution and experiences.

The novel portrays the clash and integration of traditional values and modern influences as a new generation emerges. The young characters in the story, like Ravi and Nizam Ali, represent a break from the older, more conservative ways of life in Khasak. They are introduced to the western education system and the embracing of modernity thus conquering traditions. The young generation in the novel is depicted in full search for knowledge, and this knowledge is from both, the elders as well as the formal education. Ravi as a teacher is emblematic of this need and desire to gain knowledge and make sense of realities outside the village. These two goals of knowledge are inextricably linked with the boys' struggles to find their place and meaning in the world.

The emergence of the new generation often leads to conflict with traditional beliefs and practices. The conflict between the older people and the young people also brings tension as they have different values traditionalists vs adventurers. For example, one can identify that Ravi's journey is marked as a fight against the rules of society. Younger characters of the novel are seen to socially probe into such superstitions and strict religious regimens prevalent in Khasak. They seek a higher rationality of the positions which are occupied by people, and they fight against the fanaticism and blind obedience. This perfectly echoes another significant motif of freeing oneself from the outdated social conventions.

The new generation confronts with the legacy of their ancestors while trying to forge their own path. They are caught between preserving their cultural heritage and adapting to the changing times. The novel explores how this struggle leads to transformation and the redefinition of their identities. The emergence of a new generation in "The Legends of Khasak" represents a shift

in societal and cultural paradigms. It delves into the tensions, conflicts, and evolution that come with the advent of modernity and the changing aspirations and values of the youth.

“The Saga of Dharmapuri” by O.V. Vijayan, the emergence of the new generation is a significant theme. O.V. Vijayan, a prominent Indian writer and cartoonist, often delved into social and political themes in his works. “Vijayan himself has described the novel as a blind search for a civilization alternative”⁵. The novel may present how changes that happen over time socially, politically and economically are embraced in Dharmapuri by the new generation. This could include their ability to embrace any new technologies, changes in their culture and their ability to embrace new things more than tradition. Whenever a new generation enters people’s lives, there are inevitable confrontation between the older, more conservative generation and the young, liberal generation. The novel describes the confrontation of these value systems and conflicts that occurred because of their shifts, especially regarding families and communities.

The new generation in the novel may experience a heightened awareness of socio-political issues, potentially leading to activism, rebellion, or a desire for change. Their experiences and struggles could reflect the broader societal changes and challenges faced by the nation or region. The novel may be aimed at revealing whether the new generation is capable of finding their place in the society and adapted to the newly formed culture.

“The Infinity of Grace” is a complex work that delves into various themes, including politics, society, history, and the emergence of a new generation. The novel highlights the clash of ideologies between the older generation, often entrenched in conservative beliefs and structures, and the new generation, which seeks change and is more open to different worldviews. This conflict leads to tension, debate, and at times, rebellion. The novel portrays a shift in perspective from an older generation to a newer one. The younger generation is often seen as questioning the established norms, ideologies, and traditions upheld by the previous generation. This shift reflects a changing societal ethos and the emergence of new thoughts and ideas. The novel portrays the emergence of young individuals actively engaging in social and political issues. They become a part of various movements and protests, fighting for the rights and freedoms they believe in. This signifies a desire for change and a commitment to creating a better future.

The novel may depict how historical events, movements, or political upheavals shape the worldview of the newer generation. These events can influence their beliefs, motivations, and

aspirations for a different society than the one they inherited. The narrative may focus on the thoughts, actions, and experiences of key younger characters, offering readers insights into their mindset, struggles, and aspirations. Their character development and growth throughout the novel depict the evolving mindset of the new generation.

Vijayan portrays the emergence of a new generation that questions established norms, challenges authority, advocates for change, and engages in social and political activism. The novel provides a nuanced exploration of the evolving perspectives and ideals of this new generation in the face of a changing world.

“Generations” delves into the complex web of societal structures, historical transformations, and individual experiences that shape the lives of people over generations. O.V. Vijayan's writing is known for its depth, wit, and keen observation of human nature. The is considered a seminal work in Indian literature, and it continues to be widely read and discussed for its themes, narrative style, and the thought-provoking questions it raises about the human condition and the society we live in.

The novel follows the story of the Nair family over several generations, spanning from the late 19th century to the post-independence era in India. It delves into the social, political, and cultural changes that occurred during this period and how they impacted the various members of the Nair family. “Generations” examines the clash between traditional values and modernity, reflecting the broader social changes taking place in Kerala during the time. It delves into how societal norms and structures evolved, affecting the lives and choices of the characters. Caste issues mainly with the focus on the Nair's form the backbone of the storyline. The protagonist and secondary characters of the novel demonstrate how the notions of caste determine the characters' roles and future in society. The very word ‘Generations’ in the title implies a more detailed portrayal of generation gap and issues related to it within the scope of a family. How each generation have to face their own problems, ideas, and expectations are also reflected in this portrayal.

O.V. Vijayan's narrative style in “Generations” is known for its complexity and rich symbolism. The novel is highly regarded for its intricate portrayal of characters mutual relations and their role in society, as well as that society's transformation, are depicted by the author in a complex manner, which is why the novel is adored. “Generations” can be attributed as being of immense importance in the sphere of the Indian literature and Vijayan, through the prism of the Nair family, presents the multi-angled view of the history and the society of Kerala.

To conclude it can be said that Vijayan's selected novels, the importance of societal beliefs, their psychological ramifications, the influence of societal taboos, and the rise of new generations are expertly interwoven into his narratives. Vijayan, presents his characters and their significant actions under the societal prism based on the mindset of people of that region, and at the same time exposes the psychological layer of the characters' relations with one another.

Vijayan frequently explores the psychological effects of societal beliefs, portraying characters who confronted with the burdens of societal expectations and cultural indoctrination. Whether it's the central figure in "The Legends of Khasak" navigating the clash between tradition and modernity, or the characters in "The Saga of Dharmapuri" confronting the oppressive structures of caste hierarchy, Vijayan adeptly captures the internal battles and existential dilemmas faced by individuals ensnared in societal conventions. Furthermore, Vijayan's narratives often confront societal taboos head-on, exposing issues such as caste discrimination, political corruption, and religious dogma with unwavering candor. By laying bare the injustices perpetuated by entrenched power dynamics and challenging prevailing norms, Vijayan's works can be considered the reminders of moral landscape of the society where the readers are also asked to check if they have not remained blinded by normalized injustices.

Moreover, Vijayan portrays the emergence of new generations as agents of societal change, presenting youthful protagonists who defy societal conventions and question the established order. Whether it's the rebellious youth in "The Saga of Dharmapuri" or the disillusioned students in "The Legends of Khasak" Vijayan tries to present the role of youth as a force of change in society, which is why the young people of the illustrated stories become the protagonists of creation and change. In expressing the characters' experiences of hardship and achievement, Vijayan bring out the message of intergenerational discussions and engagement for society to achieve positive change.

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CHAPTER – 5

EXPLORING FESTIVALS, BLISS AND HUMAN WELFARE

5.1 The Goal of Life

5.2 Welfare of Mankind

5.3 The Concept of Bliss

CHAPTER-5

EXPLORING FESTIVALS, BLISS AND HUMAN WELFARE

Feasts, fasts, and festivals are integral aspects of human culture, reflecting a myriad of traditions, beliefs, and practices that have evolved over centuries. These all are having its own importance and plays its role in different societies and religions in this world. Festivals are events characterized by lavishness, revelry, and possibly the assembly of people. Family celebrations are mostly represented by dishes that involve food and/or beverages meant to signify fortune, togetherness, and thankfulness. Feasting could be of religious nature or otherwise, can be celebrated every year or can be special occasions that come once in year or during special events or occasions. Even today, celebration centers around the consumption of food hence feeding are a form of bonding, celebration, familiarization, and respect of ceremonies. These events not only involve serving food, but they also are a means of sharing tales and cultural performances such as singing, dancing, among others, contributing to the overall identity of any society.

Conversely, fasts represent periods of abstinence, restraint, and spiritual reflection. Fasting is practiced in various religious traditions worldwide. The motivations behind fasting can vary widely, ranging from penance and purification to self-discipline and solidarity with the less fortunate. The main purpose of the fasts therefore is to foster spiritual strength, refinement and self-control while also seeking healing and wellbeing from physical ailments from bodies that have been disciplined.

Festivals in contrast are a much more generalized conception of semiotic and cultural celebrations involving rituals which include joviality, symbolism, and practices. The cultural significance of festivals extends from the desire to remember events that have occurred in the past and which should be remembered or due to change of seasons, religious practices and/or honoring of special personalities or event. Such occasions may involve religious processions and ceremonies, and outdoor performances, including troupes, bands, and puppet shows. Celebrations always involve exquisite ornaments, attire, foods, and dancing and singing which in most occasions represent the culturally diverse and innate talent of a certain society or nation. In fact, festivals have responsibilities for developing and marketing routes, boosting deserted and uncultured local areas, breaking barriers between different cultures, and creating social intercourse.

In other words, feasts, fasts, and festivals are inevitable aspects of human existence—they portray how unequal and diverse the world is in terms of culture, religion, and identity. Whether through indulgent feasting, disciplined fasting, or joyous celebration, these cultural practices enrich our lives, connect us to our past, and reaffirm our sense of belonging in an ever-changing world.

O.V. Vijayan, intricately incorporates the themes of fasting, feasting, and festivals in his selected novels, infusing them with profound cultural and societal significance. In his masterpiece “The Legends of Khasak” Vijayan portrays a village, Khasak with its inhabitants where fasting, feasting and festivals dominate the comings and goings in the village. Fasts are religious practices which are used as a form of fasting as a way of expressing the individual’s spirituality and a form of discipline where people fasting will do it as a form of penance or cleansing. A sense of guilt is illustrated through characters such as Ravi, who fasts in order to attain spiritual purification for his sins, and the existence of spiritual searching, even in the middle of hardship, is another theme developed by the novelist. On the other hand, feasting in Khasak celebrates collective unity, unity of the village where people dine in style through preparations of sumptuous foods and strengthening ties of consanguinity and fellowship. Feasts symbolize abundance and collective happiness, providing a temporary escape from the challenges of daily life.

In addition, concerning the concept of tradition, festivals in Vijayan’s novels are rather enacted as living and colourful motifs that embrace traditional and mythological aspects along with the existence of today’s society. In “The Saga of Dharmapuri” festivals become arenas of cultural resistance and defiance against oppressive forces. Vijayan skillfully portrays the message about marginalized population groups’ ability to fight for their rights and assert themselves by using festivals and rituals as key capabilities of Vijayan. Socio-cultural experience of the devotees, processions, rituals and performances described by Vijayan gives the reader the spirited feel of the festival as well as its possibilities of subversion of power relations encouraging the creation of new worlds. Therefore, when it comes to food and festivity in Vijayan’s works, it is evident that the concept of fasting, feasting, or even indulging in festivals is not static symbols but a vibrant perspective to culture and community. Through his nuanced portrayal of these themes, Vijayan encourages readers to contemplate the deeper meanings inherent in seemingly ordinary practices, prompting reflections on issues of tradition, identity, and societal change.

5.1. The Goal of Life

“The Legends of Khasak” and “The Saga of Dharmapuri,” Vijayan scrutinizes the purpose of life through experiences and challenges faced by his characters. In “The Legends of Khasak” the protagonist Ravi embarks on a quest for redemption and significance amidst the setting of the fictional village of Khasak. Through Ravi's introspective journey, Vijayan explores themes of spiritual fulfillment and the quest for personal identity. Interactions with the villagers, contemplative moments, and moral struggles all contribute to the overarching theme of life's purpose. Vijayan intertwines elements of Hindu mythology, existential philosophy, and Kerala's cultural landscape to offer a multi-layered exploration of human existence. In “The Legends of Khasak” the annual Onam celebration becomes a backdrop for communal unity and cultural nostalgia, highlighting the cyclical nature of life and the importance of heritage. “Man, who is destined to live a life that ends in death always searches to know whether there is anything beyond death and time. The root cause for the development of human mind is this search. It is from this development that came into existence all the material knowledge and wealth”.¹

In a “The Saga of Dharmapuri” festivals like Ambedkar Jayanti and Dalit Mahasabha gatherings become symbols of resistance and solidarity, showcasing the power of collective action and cultural expression in the face of oppression. Vijayan continues his exploration of life's meaning through the story of Muttulingam, a marginalized Dalit protagonist. Muttulingam's battle against caste discrimination and societal injustices reflects broader themes of dignity, equality, and self-discovery. Vijayan uses Muttulingam's narrative to delve into questions of morality, justice, and the pursuit of a meaningful life, emphasizing the importance of empathy, solidarity, and resilience. In Vijayan's novels, festivals and celebrations are not just cultural occasions but integral components of life, shaping characters' experiences and relationships. Festivals symbolize communal bonding, spiritual renewal, and cultural heritage, enriching the narrative tapestry. Whether it is the vibrant Onam festivities in “The Legends of Khasak” or the Dalit resistance rituals in “The Saga of Dharmapuri” festivals serve as platforms for exploring themes of identity, tradition, and social dynamics.

Vijayan, weaves the culture richness of Kerala in his novels, often incorporating festivals like Onam, Vishu, and Thrissur Pooram to add depth and meaning to his narratives. These festivals hold immense significance in Kerala's cultural landscape, serving as symbols of tradition, spirituality, and community bonding.

Onam, celebrated with grandeur and fervor, marks the homecoming of the mythical King Mahabali, embodying the spirit of prosperity, unity, and egalitarianism. Vijayan often utilizes the festival of Onam as a backdrop to depict the socio-political milieu of Kerala, exploring themes of power dynamics, social inequalities, and the struggle of the marginalized. In his novels, the vibrant festivities of Onam serve as a stark contrast to the underlying tensions and conflicts simmering beneath the surface, symbolizing the paradoxical nature of Kerala society.

Similarly, Vishu, the Malayalam New Year, holds deep-rooted cultural and spiritual significance for the people of Kerala. It is a time of renewal, reflection, and reverence, marked by the ritualistic viewing of auspicious items like rice, fruits, and flowers known as Vishukkani. Vijayan often incorporates the themes of rebirth, redemption, and existential introspection associated with Vishu into his narratives, using the festival as a metaphorical device to explore the complexities of human existence and the search for meaning in a world filled with suffering and uncertainty. Thrissur Pooram, on the other hand, is a spectacle of unparalleled grandeur, characterized by elaborate processions, rhythmic percussion, and majestic displays of caparisoned elephants. As one of the most significant temple festivals in Kerala, Thrissur Pooram holds immense cultural and religious significance, drawing thousands of devotees and tourists alike. Vijayan portrays the essence of Thrissur Pooram in his novels, capturing the electrifying energy and spiritual fervor that permeate the air during the festival while delving into the socio-political dynamics and power struggles within the community.

In essence, through his evocative portrayal of festivals like Onam, Vishu, and Thrissur Pooram, the novelist not only celebrates the rich cultural heritage of Kerala but also uses these cultural touchstones as a lens through which to explore the complexities of human existence, societal dynamics, and the perennial quest for meaning and identity.

Vijayan's most notable works, "The Legends of Khasak" and "The Infinity of Grace" are rich with philosophical themes that resonate with readers on multiple levels. In "The Legends of Khasak" Vijayan represents existential dilemmas, blending elements of magic realism with profound philosophical insights. The novel's protagonist, Ravi, seeks solace in the remote village of Khasak, only to find himself entangled in the intricate web of its inhabitants' lives. Through Ravi's experiences and interactions, Vijayan explores fundamental questions about the nature of reality, existence, and the human condition. The narrative unfolds as a series of vignettes, each offering glimpses into the characters' inner struggles and philosophical musings. One of the central themes in "The Legends of Khasak" are the search for meaning in

a seemingly absurd world. Vijayan portrays Khasak as a microcosm of life's paradoxes, where joy and sorrow, hope and despair coexist in a delicate balance. Through Ravi's journey of self-discovery, readers are confronted with the futility of human endeavors and the inevitability of suffering. Yet, amidst the chaos and despair, there are moments of transcendence, where characters find fleeting moments of grace and redemption.

In “The Infinity of Grace” Vijayan continues his exploration of existential themes, albeit in a different narrative landscape. Set against the backdrop of a dystopian future, the novel follows the protagonist, Maria, as she navigates a world plagued by environmental degradation and social upheaval. Through Maria's quest for truth and justice, Vijayan grapples with issues of power, authority, and the precarious balance between individual freedom and societal order. One of the key philosophical inquiries in “The Infinity of Grace” revolves around the concept of grace – a transcendent force that defies rational explanation yet holds the promise of salvation. Vijayan juxtaposes the oppressive realities of Maria's world with the possibility of spiritual liberation, challenging readers to confront their own beliefs about the nature of divine intervention and human agency. Ultimately, the novel serves as a meditation on the enduring power of hope and resilience in the face of seemingly insurmountable obstacles.

In both “The Legends of Khasak” and “The Infinity of Grace” Vijayan demonstrates a remarkable ability to weave together intricate narratives with profound philosophical reflections. Through his nuanced characters and evocative prose, Vijayan invites readers to ponder life's deepest mysteries and confront the complexities of the human condition with empathy and understanding.

Vijayan's characters confront with life's purpose and their individual aspirations vary widely, encompassing spiritual enlightenment, societal liberation, personal fulfillment, or material success. Festivals and celebrations hold significant sway in their lives, serving as occasions for communal bonding, self-reflection, and the reaffirmation of cultural roots. Within these narratives, characters often find themselves at crucial junctures during festivals and celebrations, prompting deep introspection and contemplation of their goals. For instance, in “The Legends of Khasak” Ravi immerses himself in the rituals of the village, using these moments to ponder existential questions and his place within the community. Festivals offer him a sense of belongingness and respite from his existential quandaries.

Similarly, in “The Saga of Dharmapuri” and “Infinity of Grace” characters utilize festive occasions as opportunities for personal growth and transformation. Whether navigating the

vibrant festivals of Dharmapuri or engaging in spiritual gatherings, they grapple with their pasts and strive for self-discovery. These events serve as catalysts for inner reflection and enlightenment. Vijayan's novels highlight the tension between tradition and modernity through festivals, with characters wrestling with the relevance of age-old customs in a changing world. While some embrace tradition for its comfort and meaning, others question its place in contemporary society, seeking to forge new identities. Festivals thus become arenas where characters negotiate their cultural heritage and aspirations for the future. Overall, festivals and celebrations symbolize the characters' ongoing quest for identity, purpose, and fulfillment amidst life's complexities.

5.2. Welfare of Mankind

Vijayan has explored the welfare of mankind through his select novels, and provided the essence of social, political and existentialism coupled with satire and black Humour. Vijayan weaves plots into epic fictions in “The Legends of Khasak,” along with “The Saga of Dharmapuri” and thus his novels challenge the minds and hearts of his readers through his art. “The Legends of Khasak” depicts the concerns of postcolonial citizens searching for meaning in a remote village in Kerala. Through characters like Ravi, a schoolteacher haunted by his past, and Nizam Ali, a mysterious stranger with a troubled history, Vijayan weaves a shade of human suffering, resilience, and redemption. The novel seeks to express the readers’ feeling of concern on narrow mindedness and fixations of the social and religious institutions in Khasak which suppress the Khasak people.

Vijayan's portrayal of the protagonist Ravi's spiritual journey reflects his concern for the welfare of mankind at a deeper, existential level. Ravi's quest for meaning and transcendence amidst the mundane realities of life resonates with readers, inviting contemplation on the nature of existence and the pursuit of inner peace. The novel is a portrayal of Vijayan’s thought process by his protagonist Ravi and his interactions with various endearing, odd characters that help the reader gain a comparative understanding of human existence on the planet and their collective search for meaning.

“The Legends of Khasak” Vijayan presents a vivid tapestry of human existence in the fictional village of Khasak, where the welfare of mankind is intricately woven into the fabric of the narrative. Another theme of the novel is a concept of justice and the issue of giving voice to the oppressed members of society who are struggling to be heard in the community. Issues of casteism, religious discrimination, and social stratification complemented by characters like

Ravi, a simple man in search of a second chance in life, and Mollakka, an untouchable expelled from his village due to religious prejudice, symbolize the protagonist's fight against social evils. The struggles of these characters underscore the urgent need for societal reform and the recognition of the inherent dignity and worth of every individual for the collective welfare of mankind.

"The Legends of Khasak" delves into the quest for spiritual enlightenment as a means to attain personal and communal well-being. Ravi's spiritual journey serves as a focal point, reflecting the yearning for transcendence and inner peace amidst the harsh realities of life in Khasak. Through encounters with mystical figures and moments of introspection, Vijayan explores the interconnectedness of the human spirit with the divine and the natural world. This spiritual dimension not only enriches the lives of individual characters but also offers glimpses of hope and solace in the face of adversity, highlighting the importance of spiritual fulfillment for the welfare of mankind as a whole. N.V. Krishna Warriar, the distinguished poet-critic of Malayalam, makes the right comment when he says: "The Legends of Khasak is a meaningful turning point in the history of Malayalam fiction. It is The Legends of Khasak that proved for the first time in a convincing manner in Malayalam that novel can be a valuable expression of the inner experience of man rather than a continuous story of the external incidents".²

Moreover, the novel underscores the intricate relationship between humanity and the environment, portraying the ecological landscape of Khasak as both a backdrop and a character in its own right. The destruction of the village's natural resources and the encroachment of modernization symbolize the consequences of human greed and neglect on the welfare of both present and future generations. Through vivid descriptions of the lush forests and vibrant ecosystems of Khasak, Vijayan emphasizes the interconnectedness of all life forms and the imperative of environmental stewardship. The novel makes it clear that the author is somewhat a conservationist and raises the issue of how the well-being of mankind depends on the state of the natural environment and challenges readers to consider themselves as stewards of the planet.

"The Saga of Dharmapuri" confronts the socio-political challenges plaguing contemporary India, particularly the exploitation of the marginalized by the powerful elite. The novel is based on a misrepresented social reality of a fictitious town where the writer reveals various sides of the society's evil, avarice and degeneration by following stories of the variety of characters. Such a concern makes it easy to see that Vijayan only aims at the betterment of mankind by

opening the curtain to worst forms of political manoeuvres and moral decadence. Additionally, through allegory, symbolism and black humor in the narrative, Vijayan draws multidimensionality to his execution of notions of human welfare. Through surreal and often grotesque imagery, he exposes the absurdity of social norms and constructs, challenging readers to question their own assumptions and beliefs. By subverting conventional narrative tropes and defying literary conventions. One significant aspect through which the welfare of mankind is seen in the novel is through the lens of social justice and equity.

Vijayan provides readers with information about the suppression of minority groups as well as other individuals who are inferior to the powerful upper classes. Govindan Nair the protagonist of the novel has to live in a world where there is discrimination based on caste, employers exploiting employees for their own gains and corrupt politics. His journey reflects the struggles of countless others who face similar challenges in their quest for dignity and justice. Through Govindan's experiences, Vijayan underscores the importance of addressing systemic inequalities and advocating for the rights of the oppressed as essential components of promoting the welfare of mankind.

The novel explores the theme of human interconnectedness and solidarity in the pursuit of collective well-being. Despite the adversities they face, the characters in “The Saga of Dharmapuri” often find solace and strength in their bonds with one another. Whether it is through acts of kindness, solidarity in times of crisis, or shared aspirations for a better future, Vijayan underscores the inherent human capacity for compassion and cooperation. These social relations act as a voice of protest against the social oppression illustrated in the novel, and as representation of the interpersonal connections that could thrive and pull through in face of adversity.

Vijayan critiques the commodification of human lives and the dehumanizing effects of modernity on society. In the historical settings and social themes of rapid industrialization and urbanization in the novel, the author paints a picture of a society where people are commoditized, valued only to the extent that they are productive in contributing to the growth of economy. People become treated as commodities, which results in the loss of productivity, opposition, and attack on the community values, and social relations. In this regard, Vijayan speaks of a change in the societal perspective regarding what we value and what we do as a society and calls for changing priorities and taking human beings and human dignity as the most valuable asset in the development process. On this front, he assumes a dissident stance

that seeks to defy the culture of consumerism and egoism to promulgate a notion of progress that should encompass and benefit every member of society.

“The Saga of Dharmapuri” offers a profound exploration of the welfare of mankind through its incisive critique of social injustices, celebration of human solidarity, and advocacy for a more humane and equitable society. Through its richly drawn characters and thought-provoking narrative, the novel resonates with timeless themes that continue to be relevant in contemporary discussions about social justice, human rights, and the pursuit of a more just and compassionate world. The novelist encourages readers to engage critically with issues of social justice and human dignity.

“The Infinity of Grace” examines the welfare of humanity within the context of colonial India. Breaking down its characters and their issues in the book, it transmits messages on oppression, social injustice, and the search for liberation. Another aspect that highlights the poor treatment of colonies and underprivileged people by the British, especially in India. It shows which vices they have to go through and demands a change to the society in order to bring justice to the victims.

“The Infinity of Grace” critiques the abuse of power and selfish pursuits that perpetuate inequality. It underscores the importance of empathy and solidarity in promoting the welfare of society. Through the protagonist's journey of self-discovery, the novel explores human relationships and the search for meaning in a challenging world. It suggests that personal growth and collective progress are intertwined. It does not offer a simple solution for humanity's welfare it prompts reflection on social justice and the interconnectedness of human lives. Through its rich characters and narratives, the novel encourages readers to consider how individuals and communities can contribute to a more equitable and compassionate society.

“The Infinity of Grace” is a poignant exploration of human existence, morality, and the search for meaning amidst the complexities of life. Through its array of characters, Vijayan offers insights into the welfare of mankind, illuminating both the struggles and triumphs of individuals as they navigate the intricacies of their inner lives and external circumstances. One prominent theme in the novel is the quest for redemption and the capacity for personal transformation. The characters in "The Infinity of Grace" grapple with their own moral failings, regrets, and existential dilemmas, yet they also demonstrate resilience and the potential for growth. Whether it is the protagonist, Simon, is facing consequences, or Mary and Joseph, two secondary characters turning to their sins and back again, Vijayan illuminates the frail and

sinful side of human beings but not without hope of penitence. Here, the novel points out that a man's fate combined with the outcome of all mankind depends solely on the desire to admit mistakes, to atone for them and seek for personal and spiritual perfection.

Vijayan explores the interconnectedness of human lives and the ripple effects of individual actions on others. The characters in the novel are connected personally in families or friendships; or randomly in different events, which define their fate significantly. These intertwined stories, which are seen and told through the characters, show how people are interdependent and how they must learn to care in order to survive and grow. In a sense, the characters of "The Infinity of Grace" embody the ways in which shared tender moments, and supportive gestures can influence not only person's life but also society as a whole.

Furthermore, the novel is incorporated with the themes which are focused on the problem of suffering, meaninglessness, and the possibility of transcendental existence. With social unrest and an individual's internal discord in the setting, the characters of "The Infinity of Grace" are faced with the essentials of existence and the soul. This makes them go through a process of searching in an emotional manner until they reach an interval of contemplation and revelation. The novelist suggests that true welfare and fulfillment are not merely contingent on external circumstances but are deeply rooted in our ability to cultivate inner peace, resilience, and a sense of transcendence. Through the characters' quests for spiritual awakening and existential fulfillment, the novel offers a profound meditation on the human condition and the enduring quest for meaning and grace in an uncertain world.

In "The Infinity of Grace" the characters whose experiences and struggles illuminate the multifaceted nature of human welfare. Through their journeys of redemption, interconnectedness, and existential exploration, Vijayan invites readers to contemplate the complexities of the human condition and the enduring quest for meaning, compassion, and transcendence in the face of life's uncertainties.

"Generations" examines the complexities of human relationships, societal structures, and the impact of historical events. Set against the backdrop of post-independence India, the novel delves into themes of power, politics, and the intergenerational transmission of trauma and struggle. One way the welfare of mankind is explored in the novel is through its portrayal of the socio-political landscape of India. The novelist offers a critical perspective on the challenges faced by the country in the aftermath of colonization, including issues of poverty, corruption, and social inequality. Through the experiences of various characters, he highlights

the struggles of ordinary people and the need for systemic change to improve their welfare. “Generations” delves into the personal struggles and conflicts within families, reflecting broader societal tensions. The novel explores how the choices and actions of individuals impact not only their own lives but also those of future generations. It underscores the importance of addressing personal and collective traumas to foster healing and improve the welfare of society as a whole.

Vijayan examines the role of memory and history in shaping identity and understanding of the world. Through the interplay of past and present narratives, the novel emphasizes the interconnectedness of generations and the enduring impact of historical events on contemporary society. By confronting the legacies of colonialism and other forms of oppression, the novel suggests pathways towards a more just and equitable future. “Generations” offers a nuanced exploration of the welfare of mankind by scrutinizing the complexities of individual and collective experiences. Through its rich characters and intricate narratives, the novel invites readers to reflect on the ways in which societal structures, historical legacies, and personal choices intersect to shape the well-being of humanity.

In “Generations” Vijayan presents a nuanced exploration of various facets of human nature and the pursuit of collective well-being. One of the central themes of the novel is the struggle against oppression and injustice. The characters in “Generations” are often caught in the webs of power dynamics, whether it be political, social, or economic. Through their trials and tribulations, Vijayan highlights the importance of standing up against tyranny and fighting for the rights of the downtrodden. Some of the characters effectively capture this search for the betterment of mankind such as Kuppu Achan with invested passion in social justice through depiction of an expectant giant and Subhash Chandra Bose signifying struggle and revolution against colonialism. Their action provokes other people to get involved and pull through in the fight and these are some of the tactics that can help to improve society.

Vijayan portrays the interconnectedness of human lives and the ripple effects of individual actions on society. Each character in the novel, no matter how seemingly insignificant, plays a part in shaping the collective destiny of mankind. Whether it is the seemingly innocuous decisions of a village elder or the revolutionary fervor of a young activist, every action has consequences that reverberate through generations. Through this intricate web of interconnections, Vijayan emphasizes the importance of collective responsibility and solidarity in the pursuit of the greater good. By highlighting the ways in which individual choices can

impact the welfare of mankind, the novel serves as a powerful reminder of our shared humanity and the need to work together for a better future.

“Generations” basically lies in the hardworking and determination of the human being in spite of suffering. Still, the characters depicted in the novel as struggling through different hardships show quite a lot of tenacity and commitment to build a more tolerant world. Whether it’s the oppressed freedom fighters, the brave woman bucking against tradition or the spirited child soldier, Vijayan has boldly put pen to paper and penned characters that are capable of the strength that defines the human race, capable of rising above their circumstances to meet the brighter tomorrow. Through their triumphs and failures, the novel celebrates the enduring spirit of hope and resilience that fuels the ongoing pursuit of the welfare of mankind. In doing so, it offers a poignant reflection on the indomitable nature of the human spirit and its capacity to bring about positive change in the world.

Vijayan's select novels offer profound insights into the welfare of mankind by addressing a wide range of social, political, and existential concerns. Through richly layered narratives, complex characters, and a unique narrative style, Vijayan challenges readers to confront the injustices and inequalities that afflict society while advocating for compassion, empathy, and social change. His literary legacy continues to inspire readers to reflect on the human condition and strive for a more just and equitable world.

5.3. The Concept of Bliss

Bliss epitomizes a state of existence surpassing mere happiness, embodying profound contentment, fulfillment, and harmony with oneself and the surrounding world. It represents the apex of emotional experience, where every aspect of one's being resonates with joy and tranquility. Within the realm of bliss, worries dissipate, and the mind finds solace amidst life's complexities. It is a state often pursued in spiritual practices, meditation, and personal growth endeavors, symbolizing a glimpse of the ultimate fulfillment attainable by humans. Fundamentally, bliss is deeply personal, shaped by individual experiences, beliefs, and values.

‘Bliss,’ within the Indian framework, signifies a state of profound joy and spiritual satisfaction that surpasses mere worldly pleasures. It embodies a deep sense of contentment and fulfillment, stemming from the recognition of one's true self and a harmonious union with the divine. In Hindu philosophy, bliss is depicted as the natural condition of the soul when it acknowledges its inherent connection with the ultimate reality. This acknowledgment fosters a profound inner

peace and boundless happiness, independent of external circumstances. It's not merely the absence of suffering but a profound sense of completeness derived from aligning with the divine essence within.

Sachidananda, a cornerstone of Vedantic thought, comprises three integral elements: These three aspects of Reality are *Sat* (practical consciousness), *Chid* (emotional consciousness), and *Ananda* (mental bliss). Ananda means the flight inherent to existence and the consciousness discerning the oneness of existence. It originates from within, as the ancient tie between the spirit within, and the divine spirit above. Sachidananda believes that sat, chit and ananda together make the ultimate reality that cannot in any way be distinguished. It follows that the end or goal of those who follow the Way is not mere happiness or pleasure, but a state which is more basic than transience, and, indeed, is the eternal substrate of the phenomenon of samsara.

Satyam also symbolizes the fundamental essence of creation beyond existence and non-existence, which leads people towards the right path of righteous and spiritual life. Shivam represents the divine mercy, which pours down to shower the blessings of love, tenderness and an empathetic heart upon the devotees. Sundaram signifies divine beauty inherent in the creation through this purpose emphasizing on religious aspects of reverence and awe. Altogether, these attributes act as guiding principles of values for the quest of spiritual enlightenment regarding the state and purpose of existence in presenting a path in terms of understanding the nature of the cosmos as well as our relation to it.

It might manifest as euphoria during moments of deep connection with loved ones for some, while others might find it in accomplishing significant goals or uncovering a sense of purpose and meaning. Despite its triggers, bliss encapsulates a profound sense of unity and congruence, where life's disparate elements blend into a harmonious. It transcends the fleeting pleasures of daily life, offering insight into the limitless potential for joy and fulfillment inherent in each person.

In essence, bliss represents the ultimate destination of humanity's pursuit of happiness and fulfillment. It serves as a state of being that transcends the transient fluctuations of ordinary life, offering glimpses into the timeless and indescribable beauty of the human spirit. Whether experienced fleetingly or enduringly, moments of bliss enrich life's journey, infusing it with a profound sense of purpose, connection, and awe.

Vijayan, delves deep into the human psyche, often exploring profound themes such as existentialism, political turmoil, and the quest for meaning. Within the realm of his select novels, Vijayan presents a nuanced portrayal of bliss, intertwining it with the complexities of life and human nature. In novels like “The Legends of Khasak” and “The Saga of Dharmapuri” are all encompassing, hence holds hidden layers of joy underneath the harshness of the existence. While describing the creature’s life, Vijayan contrasts the sweetness with the feeling of hopelessness and the process of decay – it underlines the ephemeral nature of happiness greatly. In “The Legends of Khasak” the protagonist, Ravi, finds solace in the tranquil landscapes of the fictional village of Khasak, experiencing fleeting moments of bliss amidst the tumultuous events surrounding him. However, these moments are ephemeral, overshadowed by the weight of loss, longing, and the inexorable passage of time. Vijayan skillfully portrays the transient nature of bliss, emphasizing its impermanence and the constant struggle to grasp onto it amidst the chaos of life.

“Though The Legends of Khasak has the flavour of death, it doesn't have death as its ending. The story ends in the beginning of another voyage. The fire that is the serpent's poison is extinguished by primeval rain. Rain is death, also it is herb and regeneration. We must be able to experience these three-fold states in one life span itself, in our inner life. The story of sorrow ends. Yet, in the primeval humility, it looks forward to salvation”.³

Vijayan explores the paradoxical relationship between bliss and suffering, suggesting that true enlightenment often arises from the crucible of pain and adversity. Vijayan suggests that true bliss lies not in the pursuit of hedonistic pleasures but in the acceptance of life's inherent imperfections and the cultivation of inner peace amidst turmoil. Vijayan underscores the role of perspective in shaping one's experience of bliss, highlighting the subjective nature of happiness and the power of perception to transform reality. In both “The Legends of Khasak” and “The Saga of Dharmapuri” characters navigate through their own existential crisis, interwoven with questions of identity, purpose, and the pursuit of happiness. Through their journeys, Vijayan illustrates the transformative potential of shifting one's perspective, finding meaning and fulfillment in the most unexpected places. Ultimately, Vijayan's exploration of bliss in his select novels transcends mere moments of euphoria, delving into the complexities of human existence and the timeless quest for inner peace and enlightenment.

“The Legends of Khasak” where the concept of bliss is intricately woven into the lives of its characters amidst the backdrop of the remote village of Khasak. Vijayan's characters confront

with their desires, aspirations, and the search for meaning in their lives, often finding moments of fleeting bliss amidst the trials and tribulations of existence. Ravi, seeks solace and redemption in the simplicity of Khasak after a troubled past, hoping to find belonging and inner peace amidst the rural surroundings. Despite facing numerous challenges, he occasionally finds bliss in his interactions with nature and acts of kindness towards others, providing him with temporary relief from his inner turmoil. Similarly, Nizam Ali, a wandering mystic, embodies a pursuit of spiritual enlightenment and happiness beyond societal norms. Despite his unconventional lifestyle, Nizam Ali emanates a sense of contentment and inner harmony, inspiring those around him to reevaluate their own definitions of happiness and fulfillment.

Furthermore, the geographical location, the “natural” beauty of Khasak also sensually materializes and becomes positively enchanting at moments in the novel, symbolizing episodes of bliss for the protagonists. The nature becomes a locus for introspection and contemplating, which leads characters to various instances of epiphany and the renewal of their relation to the surroundings. Thus, it can be stated that “The Legends of Khasak” presents the idea that happiness is connected with interpersonal and with the external environment, including the process of their spiritual ascent above the earthly plane and disclosure of their true essence.

“The Saga of Dharmapuri” the concept of “bliss” assumes a multifaceted significance among the characters, transcending mere happiness to embody a profound state of contentment, fulfillment, and spiritual enlightenment. Set against the backdrop of a tumultuous socio-political landscape, the characters in Dharmapuri grapple with the elusive pursuit of bliss amidst the chaos and uncertainty of their lives. For some, bliss manifests as a fleeting moment of joy or tranquility amidst the trials and tribulations of everyday existence, while for others, it represents a deeper, more transcendent state of being that transcends the material world.

Throughout the novel, characters such as Govindan Nair and his wife Saraswathi are depicted as striving for moments of bliss amidst the challenges they face, whether it be through their pursuit of political ideals, artistic expression, or personal relationships. Yet, Vijayan also delves into the darker aspects of bliss, exploring how it can become a source of obsession, delusion, and ultimately, downfall. Characters like the enigmatic mystic Bhuvanachandran and the ruthless politician Shankaran Nambiar are driven by their own twisted interpretations of bliss, leading them down paths of self-destruction and moral decay. Through these contrasting portrayals, Vijayan offers a nuanced exploration of the complexities of human nature and the elusive nature of true happiness and fulfillment. “The Saga of Dharmapuri” serves as a

profound meditation on the nature of bliss, inviting readers to contemplate its meaning and significance in their own lives.

“The Infinity of Grace” the concept of bliss is intricately interwoven with the fabric of the narrative, presenting a rich tapestry of spiritual exploration and existential contemplation. Set against the backdrop of a fictional spiritual commune called Gurusagaram, the novel delves deep into the lives of its diverse inhabitants, each grappling with their own interpretations and pursuits of bliss. At its core, the novel portrays bliss not merely as a state of transient happiness. One of the central themes of the novel is the search for spiritual enlightenment and liberation from the shackles of worldly existence. Through the characters of the novel Vijayan explores various paths to achieving this ultimate state of bliss, ranging from austere asceticism to ecstatic devotion. Each character embarks on their own personal quest, driven by a deep yearning to transcend the mundane and attain a higher plane of consciousness. The novel portrays each character going on the journey of desire, a longing for a desire to break free from the material world and attaining a higher level of spirituality.

Vijayan's portrayal of bliss is deeply rooted in the Indian philosophical tradition, drawing upon concepts such as *moksha* (liberation) and *nirvana* (enlightenment). Through philosophical dialogues and introspective musings, the novel confronts with existential questions surrounding the nature of reality, the self, and the pursuit of happiness. In doing so, Vijayan challenges the readers to think beyond the physical and/or emotional pleasures, where he encourages the readers to consider the philosophical aspects of true happiness and liberation by reminding them of the impermanent and, therefore, illusory nature of the worldly reality and desires. The work of the exemplary text titled “The Infinity of Grace” brings forth a philosophical idea of bliss that intertwines a variety of spiritual, philosophical and psychological thoughts. The novel offers an insight into a process of self-realization and rejuvenation, thus offering an experience that makes readers question their own realities and state of happiness. Ultimately, Vijayan's masterpiece serves as a timeless meditation on the quest for meaning and the eternal search for bliss amidst the vicissitudes of life.

Bliss, in the context of “Generations” is depicted as an elusive and often ephemeral state of being, intricately tied to the characters quest for meaning and fulfillment amidst the complexities of life. Vijayan's narrative delves deep into the psyche of his characters, revealing their innermost desires and struggles in their pursuit of happiness. Whether it is the protagonist grappling with the burdens of familial expectations or secondary characters navigating the

tumultuous waters of societal norms, each individual's journey is marked by moments of joy and sorrow, triumph and despair. Moreover, Vijayan juxtaposes the traditional values and customs of Kerala society with the forces of modernization and globalization, offering a nuanced commentary on the changing dynamics of happiness and fulfillment. As characters navigate through shifting landscapes of culture and identity, they confront the dichotomy between tradition and progress, often finding themselves torn between the familiar comforts of the past and the allure of an uncertain future. In this clash of ideals, the notion of bliss emerges as a precarious balancing act, requiring individuals to reconcile their personal aspirations with the demands of society.

“A glimpse into the idea of pollution entertained by the different castes in Malabar shows how harsh and inhuman the caste system has grown on this coast. An orthodox Hindu considered himself to be polluted by the touch of a person belonging to an inferior caste at a certain distance, even touch was not necessary to convey pollution. A Nayadi community member within 300 feet of a high caste person was imagined to convey atmospheric pollution”.⁴

“Generations” transcends the confines of a conventional narrative, inviting readers to ponder the nature of happiness and the complexities of human existence. Through his richly textured prose and vivid characterizations. The novelist paints a vivid portrait of a society in flux, where the search for bliss becomes a poignant reflection of the universal quest for meaning and purpose. In doing so, he offers a profound meditation on the human condition, reminding us that true happiness lies not in the destination, but in the journey itself.

Vijayan, all the aspects of feast, fast, festivals and the phenomenon of aim and purpose of life that define the human quest in these novels presented a colourful canvas of human existence. Thus, engaging readers into a specific reality where the attempt to find as much individual pleasure as possible rises alongside the general well-being of mankind, Vijayan makes his readers make some philosophical reflections concerning the nature of life and their own Searched for meaning. Feast and fast can be regarded as important and semantically charged elements in Vijayan’s address that reflect the contradictions of the human existence. feast and the fast serve as symbolic representations of the larger experience of life that is a cycle of pleasure and deprivation that is rich and lean. With remarkable skill, Vijayan sets up the themes of indulgence and restraint and forces the reader to think about the cost of their vices/ virtues not in terms of a heaven or an afterlife but as the price of their individual desires and the society they live in. In this consideration, it is important to state that festivals represent occasions that

fulfill rites or ceremonies, which, in turn, put emphasis on certain values and traditions that people acknowledge. Festivals, with their rituals and traditions, offer moments of collective celebration and reflection, serving as reminders of shared values and heritage. However, beneath the surface of revelry often lie deeper tensions and contradictions, as Vijayan exposes the hypocrisy and inequality that can accompany religious and social observances. Through his incisive critique, Vijayan compels readers to confront the complexities of identity and belonging in a rapidly changing world.

Vijayan's novels lie a profound concern for the welfare of mankind and a relentless pursuit of justice and equity. His characters navigate the moral complexities of their society, grappling with questions of power, privilege, and responsibility. These issues and conflicts teach readers about their contribution to the society and the social justice they want to pursue as well as the suffering of vulnerable citizens as illustrated by Vijayan. Consequently, he lays emphasis on the close association of personal happiness and social justice when calling readers to contribute to a better world. In his novels, happiness is portrayed as a kind of pleasure, which touches spiritual and even social qualities in man and society. His novels offer a compelling vision of bliss that transcends mere pleasure and encompasses a deeper sense of spiritual fulfillment and social harmony. As depicted through the many vivid stories and deep contemplated topics that Vijayan demonstrates, there is always a need to understand the value of compassion, fairness and equality, as well as the need to strive for the general wellbeing of all people when navigating through the halls of life.

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CHAPTER – 6

CONCLUSION

6.1 An Overview of Previous Chapters

6.2 Major Findings and its Contemporary Relevance

6.3 Future Scope for the Research

CHAPTER-6

CONCLUSION

6.1. An Overview of Previous Chapters

This Research Study comprises Six Chapters. The First Chapter is introductory in nature. It describes concepts and definitions of 'Background' and 'Beliefs'. The interpretation of the term "Background" depends on the specific context in which it is used, and it can refer to the surroundings, context, history, or supporting elements relevant to that context. Background information is a crucial element of an essay, research paper, or presentation because it captures the readers' attention and encourages them to continue reading. It provides support or evidence related to the topic. Typically, background information outlines the history of the subject or the root causes of an issue, offering the reader a general understanding. A 'Belief' is an internal conviction that something is true, even if that belief lacks proof or seems irrational. Generally, beliefs can be categorized into two types: core beliefs and dispositional beliefs. Core beliefs pertain to thoughts individuals actively consider, while dispositional beliefs emerge when a person is not directly engaged in the action being contemplated.

This Chapter further discusses about brief survey of Indian English Novels, and has a brief introduction about the term 'novel' as it is defined as a piece of prose fiction. The novel has its reasonable length, the novel may be defined as a long narrative. It combines narration, history, philosophy, poetry, fantasy, and social criticism, and a particular view of life. The novels have various elements such as plot. It deals with the event and situations that are presented in the plot. And second is the characters of men-women that appear in the novels, the third element is a dialogue that means interaction among characters. The fourth element is the scene and time of action. The fifth element is the style in which narration is done, the sixth is the view presented by the novelists. A novelist has a creative view of human life.

The Indian English novels flourish in both quality and quantity. Since independence, it has been considered as a medium to connect the readers and become an appealing part of our literature. Indian English novels have their journey from the time of Rig-Veda or Upanishad. The Indian English novels are divided into four stages. The first stage includes the writers such as Bankimchandra Chatterjee, Toru Dutt, and Ramesh Chandra Dutt. Bankimchandra Chatterjee's first novel "*Raj Mohan's Wife*" [1864], considered as arrival of English fiction.

It is translated from Bengali to English. Shaikh Dean Mohammad, an Indian writer authors the first book in English entitled "*The Travels of Dean Mohammad*" [1973].

The further discussion highlights the second phase of Indian English novels writers like as A.S.P. Ayer, K.S. Venkataramani, and the great trio of novelists like as Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan, and Raja Rao. The foremost novelists of this era are Manohar Malgonkar, Bhabani Bhattacharya, and Khushwant Singh. After that some prominent writers came into light and contributed to Indian English fiction. The nineteenth-century novelists came into existence like as Ram Krishna Punt "The Bay of Bengal" [1866], Trailokya Das, 'Hirimba's Wedding' [1884], and Michael Madhusudan Dutt's 'Bjoy Chand: 'An Indian Tale' [1888], and Yogendra Nath Chattopadhyaya's, 'The Girl and Her Tutor' [1891]. The novelists appeared like as Romesh Chunder Dutt, who translated his novels into English language 'A Lake of Palms' about Indian lifestyle in 1902. Rabindranath Tagore contributes to the novels. His novels are "The Wreck" [1910], and "Gora" [1910].

The twentieth century becomes an inspiration for writers during this the novels are based on social and political conditions. They write about freedom struggle and that time literature is known as Gandhian literature. The novelists of Gandhian movements are R.S Ventatramm, Mulk Raj Anand, R.K Narayan, and Raja Rao. They started writing around mid-1930. Their works are the real beginning of Indian English novels.

Raja Rao novels deal with the theme of Indian Independence. The first novel 'Kanthapura' [1938], is about Gandhian outlook and teachings. R.K Narayan, considered as the foremost novelist. Gandhian influence is seen in his novels as 'Waiting for the Mahatma' [1955], 'The Bachelor of Arts' [1937], and 'The Dark Room' [1938]. These three novelists mark their presence in the history of Indian English literature.

Bhabani Bhattacharya became famous after publication of his first novel 'So many Hungers' [1947]. Manohar Malgonkar another prominent novelist, and also known as partition writer. Khushwant Singh is a well-known writer in English. Chaman Nahal was a great novelist of his era. His famous novels were 'My True faces' [1937], 'Azadi' [1978], 'The English Queen' [1979], 'The Crown and the Loincloth' [1981]. Salman Rushdie, Vikram Seth, Shashi Tharoor, Anita Desai, Arundhati Roy, Shashi Deshpande, Bharti Mukherjee, Amitav Ghosh, and Geetha Hariharan, are the modern novelists of Indian English Writing. These writers gave a new shape to Indian writing novels. Salman Rushdie began his journey as a novelist from 'Grimus' [1978]. His novels 'The Midnight's Children' received Booker Prize in 1981.

Amitav Ghosh's novels are '*The Circle of Reason*' [1986], '*The Calcutta Chromosome*' [1996], '*The Wasp Palace*' [2000], '*The Hunger Tide*' [2005], '*Sea of Poppies*' [2008], and '*River of Smoke*' [2011]. Arun Joshi's novels include his experiences. His novels include '*The Foreigner*' [1968], and '*The strange case of Billy Biswas*' [1971]. His novel *Labyrinth* won 'Sahitya Akademi Award' in 1982. Followed by Vikram Seth is considered popular Indian novelist. His first novel is '*The Golden Gate*' [1986], '*The Suitable boy*' and his third novel '*An Equal Music*' [1999]. Amitav Ghosh along with Salman Rushdie made Indian Writing English a memorable one and give a new direction to Indian writing fiction.

Women novelists made a significant contribution to Indian Writing in English. The novelists portray a real picture of Indian society and culture and they had a reputed position in literature, among women novelists are Cornelia Sorabjee, Kamala Markandaya, Ruth Praver Jhabvala, Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande, Jhumpa Lahiri, Kamala Das, and Arundhati Roy.

Modern Malayalam Literature also began by modelling itself on western patterns but soon began to focus on questions of politics and ethics and the ways to explore the possibilities of language. To begin with, the French and Russian revolution influenced Malayalam literature in the early 1940's and 50's. The trinity of Ullur, Vallathol and Changampuzha had reigned Malayalam literature for a long time, until Kumaran Asan along with Ayyappa Panicker and Kakkad laid the foundations of Western modernism in Malayalam literature. However, Malayalam literature was marked by the need to protest and the need for introspection. Modernity in Malayalam literature seen in nineteenth century. Modernity is also seen in Balachandra Nemade's '*Kosla's*' [1963] Ananthamurthy's '*Samskara*' [1969] and '*The Legends of Khasak*' by O.V Vijayan.

Malayalam novels began around the beginning of the Twentieth century and was influenced by western literary forms. Novels written in the first decade following India's independence lacked the radical spirit of earlier works. They reflected the authors' feelings of despondency and introspection. Sadness emerged as a recurring theme, with writers adopting a fresh perspective on their surroundings. The effects of this tumultuous and sensitive period also led to the creation of politically and culturally important texts in regional languages, particularly in Malayalam and Bengali.

First Chapter further discusses about "The Life and Works of O.V. Vijayan". O.V. Vijayan's full name was Ottupulakkal Velukkuty Vijayan. He was born in 1930 in Palghat Kerala. He has also published in Malayalam six novels, three novellas, eight collections of stories and

several volumes of political essays. His third novel *Gurusagaram* (translated as *The Infinity of Grace*) won the National Sahitya Akademi Award (1990). The novel also won the Kerala State Akademi Award (1990) and the prestigious Vayalar Award (1991). He depicts an alienated world. He speaks about cultures, languages, social evils, and beliefs. Like any other novelist, he has some visionary ideas about the reality inherent in the physical world. For this purpose, he makes use of an absurd language. He authored several volumes of short stories that vary from comic to the philosophical, and translated most of his own works from Malayalam to English. His first novel 'The Legend of Khasak', and other novels 'The Saga of Dharmapuri', 'Madhuram Gayathi', 'The Path of the Prophet', 'The Infinity of Grace', and 'Generations'.

As a short story writer, O.V. Vijayan created his impact in the literary history of India. His short-stories discussed the degradation of moral values, and various other issues of modern Indian Society. 'In Remembrance of a Long Night' in [1979], 'Peacelessness' in [1985], 'In the Sea-Shore' 'The Story Told by the Wind' etc., were his famous short stories. The concept of "Magical Realism" despite its allure, has faced criticism since its inception, often regarded as vague and lacking in critical rigor. Critics point to its absence of a clear definition and its tendency to be categorized as a postcolonial discourse. Vijayan has undeniably crafted a magical realm that allows readers to explore consciousness and the complexities of human existence, along with the enigmatic forces that sustain life in the universe. Like any novelist, he seeks to uncover truths grounded in the physical world, recognizing that certain aspects of life can appear absurd in their nature and significance. These absurd realities remain central to our understanding of existence.

This chapter discusses O.V. Vijayan's debut novel, "The Legends of Khasak" (1969), which is significant for introducing a new aesthetic in Malayalam literature. It is also notable for its reinterpretation of the Gandhian vision of village community. The novel was first serialized in the Malayalam weekly newspaper *Mathrubhoomi* in 1968 and was published in book form the following year. Following its success, Vijayan translated the work into English in 1994. Set in the fictional village of Khasak, the story follows Ravi, an outsider tasked with establishing a single-teacher school to provide basic education for local children. However, he ultimately misuses this social role to indulge his own desires.

O.V. Vijayan translated majority of his works into English. Quite often substantial differences were noted between the original and their translation. O.V. Vijayan in his work "The Legends of Khasak", provides a 'magical journey' for his readers indeed. Magic realism in the novel

which unconsciously operate the Postcolonial ideology within its framework. The village Khasak represents age old myths, legends, and the traditional practices. His approach is unique as it focuses on representing the relics of myth and legends with vivid detail as a strategy building a literary resistance against the shadow colonization of villages.

“The Saga of Dharmapuri” published in 1985 is a political satire dealing with Delhi’s politics of 70s, especially just before the declaration of emergency. The novel reveals various theme such as theme of Fantasy, theme of social and economic condition, theme of identity of Self, theme of exploitation, and the theme of spirituality. This novel implicitly follows a rigid patriarchal structure that imposes silence on the gendered subject. The women characters in the novels, respond to define patriarchal ideologies such as domestic, familial space from within their marginalized positions. The Saga is the saga of a third world country by the name of Dharmapuri, it is a country which has lost its traditional and values. Life in Dharmapuri is symbolically and representatively reflected in the life of its capital. Shantigrama, and resonates in perfect sympathy to the rhythm to its Prajapathi’s carnal desires and hours of defecation. Nevertheless, the novel shows how Siddhartha is overwhelmed by the extent of the deep-rooted corruption. The introduction of Siddhartha, the king of Kapilavastu who left his kingdom to atone for the guilt of kings and wars, gives a new turn to the novel. “The Saga of Dharmapuri” offers no solutions. It poses questions and several possibilities. It offers nothing but a deeper understanding of the plight of the common man.

“The Infinity of Grace”, published in 1987, explores the complexities of the human psyche. Vijayan drew significant inspiration from the teachings of Karunakara Guru of Sree Santhigiri Ashram, near Thiruvananthapuram. His own spiritual transformation after meeting the Guru is mirrored in the character of Kunjunni, a journalist from Kerala who embarks on a long, winding journey—both physical and spiritual—to discover the infinite grace of life. This novel distinguishes itself from Vijayan's earlier works through its unique use of language, vision, and characterization, and it received several prestigious awards, including the Vayalar Award and the Central Sahitya Akademi Award.

“The Infinity of Grace” features a complex, multi-layered narrative woven from various individual plots and narratives, with Kunjunni’s experiences serving as the central thread. Each narrative possesses its own atmosphere and contributes to the overall meaning of Kunjunni's journey. The novel is recognized for its intricate structure, integrating historical, philosophical, and mythological elements, culminating in a thrilling conclusion.

In contrast, Vijayan's later work, "Generations" (Thalamurakal), is both autobiographical and historical, reflecting the collective experiences of a family seeking self-awareness and connection to their heritage. This journey is especially poignant given the bitter experiences of their subculture and the strong sense of clan identity. The story follows four generations of the Ponmudi family in Palakkad, Kerala. In "Generations," Vijayan returns to his roots in Malabar, fictionalizing aspects of his own Ezhava community. Despite being a flawed masterpiece—marked by loose ends and a hurried conclusion—the novel stands out for its immense scope and merit in regional literature. Vijayan himself translated it into English.

The Second Chapter illustrates the "Unravelling Existential Pursuits, Self-Realization and Freedom for Self". Existential pursuit can be defined as the quest in a person's life as an individual or in a group where one or more persons are seeking meaning, purpose and knowledge in their existence especially under the tenets of existentialism—an important philosophical movement which began in the 19th and well into the 20th century. It focuses on individual decisions, liberty, and existence of the world and human being which is filled with essences of sheer meaninglessness. In the realm of existential pursuit, individuals grapple with fundamental questions about their existence. Existential thinkers like Jean-Paul Sartre, Albert Camus, and Søren Kierkegaard have explored these themes extensively in their works, contributing to a deeper understanding of the human experience and the quest for meaning in an inherently uncertain world. The term "Existentialism" (French: Lexistentialism) was introduced by French Catholic philosopher Gabriel Marcel in the mid-1940s. Existentialism, along with existentialist literature, is fundamentally a Western concept. It originated in Germany following the outbreak of World War I and subsequently spread to other European countries like France and Italy, eventually reaching the rest of the world. After World War II, this philosophy became pervasive, even finding a home in the coffeehouses of Europe where writers and intellectuals congregated.

It also portrays the "Existential Pursuit" in the novels of O.V. Vijayan. In "The Legends of Khasak" Vijayan delves into the existential struggles of Ravi, the protagonist, as he moves to the remote village of Khasak in Kerala, India. Ravi confronts with questions of identity, purpose, and the meaning of life as he becomes entangled in the lives of the villagers. The novel is replete with existential elements as Ravi confronts the isolation of Khasak, the mysteries of existence, and his own internal conflicts. "The Saga of Dharmapuri" continues to explore existential themes as it follows the life of Govindan Nair a man who rises from a

humble background to become a successful politician. The novel delves into the complexities of power, ambition, and identity.

“The Infinity of Grace” this novel is less well-known compared to the others it also touches on existential themes. The story revolves around the character of Govindkutty a sensitive and introspective individual. “Generations” This novel explores the lives of multiple generations of a family, tracing their experiences through the socio-political changes in Kerala. In all these novels, O.V. Vijayan's writing delves into the human condition and the philosophical questions that arise from it. His characters often find themselves in existential crisis, trying to make sense of their lives in a world that can appear chaotic and absurd.

This Chapter further discusses about “Quest for Self-Realization.” It is a deeply personal and introspective journey aimed at gaining a profound understanding of oneself, one's purpose in life, and one's true potential. It often involves a search for inner peace, happiness, and fulfillment. O.V. Vijayan, in his works in Malayalam literature, had a profound and multifaceted vision regarding the quest for self-realisation. His writings often explored themes of identity, self-discovery, and the human condition. This exploration of spiritual and philosophical dimensions is evident in his novels and short stories.

“The Legends of Khasak” explores various themes, including the quest for self-realisation. The story is set in the fictional village of Khasak follows the life of its protagonist, Ravi. Ravi is a complex character who is searching for meaning and self-realization in his life. The theme of self-realisation is another related concept that demonstrates how this individual's journey towards discovering himself is interweaved with the tales and fates of the characters he meets in Khasak.

“The Saga of Dharmapuri” is known for its rich symbolism and allegorical elements. Many characters and events in the novel can be interpreted as representing different aspects of the human psyche and the journey towards self-realisation. These symbolic elements add depth to the exploration of the theme.

“The Infinity of Grace” explores the quest for self-realisation in the context of Indian spirituality and the human condition. The novel delves into the complexities of human existence and the eternal search for meaning and transcendence. Vijayan uses symbolism and allegory to convey deeper philosophical and spiritual ideas. The novel is replete with rich imagery and metaphors that invite readers to contemplate the nature of reality, the self, and the

divine. Through the protagonist's quest for self-realisation, the novel invites readers to ponder the timeless questions of existence, identity, and the ultimate purpose of life.

Vijayan's novel "Generations" is a complex and multi-layered work that delves into various themes, including the quest for self-realisation. The novel is set in the backdrop of Kerala and follows the lives of several generations of a family. Vijayan explores the characters' search for self-identity, meaning in life, and their place in a changing society. One of the central themes in the novel is the generational divide and the tension between traditional values and modernity.

This Chapter unfolds "Identity Crisis" Identity clashes, also known as crisis, refer to situations in which an individual experiences inner turmoil or confusion about their sense of self, values, beliefs, and identity. Identity clashes are a central theme in "The Legends of Khasak" represents a different cultural and linguistic background compared to the people of Khasak.

"The Saga of Dharmapuri" deals with various themes, including identity crisis, in the context of a changing society and political landscape. While the novel is known for its complex narrative and multifaceted characters. One of the central identity crisis in the novel revolves around the cultural and regional identities of the characters.

"The Infinity of Grace" delves into the clash between traditional and modern values in Kerala society. Religion plays a significant role in the lives of the characters, and the novel explores how religious beliefs and practices impact their identities.

"Generations" is set against the backdrop of significant political upheaval in India. It delves into the clashes between different political ideologies, such as communism and nationalism. The novel also explores cultural identity clashes, especially in the context of India's diverse cultural landscape.

This chapter further unfolds the theme of "Search for Freedom." Vijayan. can be understood through his exploration of the individual's search for liberation from various forms of oppression, both external and internal. Vijayan's works often delve into the complexities of human existence and the struggles individuals face in achieving personal and societal freedom. The search for freedom is a central theme in "The Legends of Khasak". The novel explores the complex and multifaceted nature of freedom, both on a personal and societal level. The villagers of Khasak have their own unique customs, beliefs, and traditions. They live in relative isolation from the outside world, and this isolation allows them to maintain a certain degree of cultural and social freedom.

“The Saga of Dharmapuri” explores various themes, including the Search for Freedom. Set against the backdrop of the socio-political landscape of Kerala, India, during the mid-20th century, the novel delves into the struggles and aspirations of its characters, reflecting the broader struggle for freedom and justice.

“The Infinity of Grace” is considered one of his most significant works and is known for its complex narrative and deep philosophical themes. One of the central themes of the novel is quest for individual freedom, and journey to discover identity and freedom.

“Generations” explores various themes, including the search for freedom, which is a central motif in the story. The search for political freedom is a prominent theme in “Generations.” It highlights the struggles of marginalized communities and individuals to break free from the constraints imposed by society. The novel also explores spiritual and philosophical dimensions of freedom. O.V. Vijayan's novels are a captivating exploration of existential pursuits, self-realizations, and the quest for freedom of self. Through intricate storytelling and deeply introspective characters, Vijayan delves into the fundamental questions of human existence. His narratives often depict individuals confront with the complexities of life, seeking meaning and purpose amidst societal pressures and personal struggles.

The Third Chapter delineates “Impact of Socio-Cultural Norms”. Society and culture are interrelated and complex concepts that encompass the ways in which individuals interact, organize, and express themselves within a particular group or community. Society refers to a group of individuals who share a geographic location, a set of cultural norms, values, beliefs, and often a political or social structure. His writings often reflected his concerns about the misuse of power, lack of accountability, and the erosion of democratic values.

“The Legends of Khasak” portrays the rigidity of the caste system and its impact on the lives of the characters. The discrimination, prejudices, and injustices faced by lower-caste individuals are vividly depicted, shedding light on social inequalities. “The Saga of Dharmapuri” reflects on the deep-rooted caste system and social hierarchies that have historically been prevalent in Kerala. It examines the implications of caste-based discrimination, oppression, and the struggle for social justice. “The Infinity of Grace” delves into various themes, including politics, spirituality, and the human condition. Society and culture play a significant role in shaping the narrative and the characters in the novel.

“Generations” exploring the complexities and nuances of the human experience in a changing world. Each character represents a unique viewpoint, contributing to the richness and depth of the novel's exploration of society and culture.

This Chapter further discusses about the theme of “Urban V/s Rural Sensibilities”. Urban sensibilities refer to the perspectives, attitudes, values, and ways of life prevalent in urban or city settings. The interplay between urban and rural sensibilities is a central theme in “The Legends of Khasak” delves into the clash of cultures, the impact of modernity on traditional communities, and the struggle of individuals like Ravi and Appu to navigate the complexities of transitioning between these contrasting worlds.

In “The Saga of Dharmapuri” urban sensibilities are depicted as modern, fast-paced, and influenced by industrialization and technological advancements. The urban characters prioritize materialism, ambition, and individualism. Rural sensibilities in the novel are typically portrayed as rooted in traditional values, community-centric living, and a deep connection to nature and agriculture. “The Infinity of Grace” is set in the context of rural and urban sensibilities, exploring the complexities of human life and society. Vijayan often portrays urban life as fast-paced, competitive, and often detached from nature and traditional values.

In “Generations” has a mix of both rural and urban sensibilities, especially it includes characters transitioning from a rural to an urban setting or dealing with the clash of these different lifestyles and values.

This Chapter also explored the theme of “Traditional V/s Modernity”. “Traditional versus Modernity” refers to a comparison and contrast between traditional ways of life, values, practices, and beliefs with contemporary or modern approaches and perspectives. It encompasses various aspects of society, culture, technology, economy, and lifestyle. Vijayan, with his profound narrative prowess, crafts stories that serve as a canvas reflecting the tumultuous and often contentious transition from deeply entrenched traditions to the rapidly encroaching forces of modernity. “The Legends of Khasak” is a complex and multilayered work that delves into various themes, including the clash between traditional and modern ways of life. The tension between holding on to traditional values and adapting to modern influences creates a sense of ambiguity and complexity in the narrative.

“The Saga of Dharmapuri” explores various themes, including the clash between traditional values and modernity. The novel depicts the traditional way of life in Dharmapuri, a fictional village, which embodies age-old customs, beliefs, and societal norms. “The Infinity of Grace”

depicts the struggle and conflict between traditional beliefs, customs, and values on one hand, and the emerging modern perspectives on the other.

In “Generations,” the tension between tradition and modernity is evident through the portrayal of characters and their experiences in a changing socio-political landscape. The novel explores the complex interplay between tradition and modernity, using characters and their experiences to shed light on the tensions, conflicts, and adaptations that arise in a rapidly evolving society.

“Social Consciousness” refers to an individual's awareness and understanding of the societal issues, challenges, and dynamics that impact various groups and communities within a society. “The Legends of Khasak” explores various themes, including social consciousness. The novel delves into the caste system and social hierarchies prevalent in the region. It portrays the discriminatory practices and prejudices that exist in the society, shaping the lives of the characters in Khasak.

“Saga of Dharmapuri” is a significant work of literature that delves into various socio-political and cultural aspects of the society it portrays. It portrays the lives of marginalized communities and highlights the inherent unfairness and prejudice they face. The social consciousness highlights the impact of political decisions on the lives of ordinary people and the ways in which power can be abused. “The Infinity of Grace” portrays a vast canvas of human existence and society, intertwined with myth, history, and contemporary politics. It incorporates elements of magic realism, making it a unique and captivating work.

“Generations” delves into various complex themes, including social consciousness, politics, history, and the human condition. Social consciousness is a central theme in the novel, highlighting the evolution of society, politics, and human behavior over generations. Vijayan skillfully merges traditional and modern elements, presenting a vivid portrayal of a society entangled between its historical roots and contemporary challenges.

The Fourth Chapter “Significance of Social Beliefs” discusses social beliefs as a set of commonly held ideas, attitudes, values, or convictions within a particular society or social group regarding various aspects of life, including but not limited to culture, politics, religion, ethics, and social norms. These beliefs shape how individuals perceive the world around them, interact with one another, and make decisions. Social beliefs may include notions about gender roles, the importance of family, the right to free speech, the value of democracy, attitudes towards diversity and inclusion, or opinions on various social issues like healthcare, education, poverty, or environmental sustainability.

Social beliefs play a significant role in shaping the lives and experiences of the people in Khasak in the novel. The village of Khasak is deeply entrenched in religious beliefs and practices, primarily Hinduism and Islamic Sufism. The villagers of Khasak hold various superstitions and beliefs in supernatural entities.

“The Saga of Dharmapuri” delves into the social beliefs and practices prevalent in the region during different historical periods. The novel likely delves into the caste system, a social hierarchy that has been deeply entrenched in Indian society for centuries. “The Infinity of Grace” delves into the complexities of the human condition, exploring the struggles, existential crisis, and moral dilemmas faced by individuals within society. “Generations” discusses the remnants of the colonial past and how it influences the socio-economic and cultural aspects of society in Kerala.

This Chapter further explores theme of “Psychological Impact” It discloses how psychological factors, such as emotions, cognition, personality, and social interactions, impact mental health and well-being. This understanding is crucial for developing interventions and therapies to promote mental health. Psychological significance includes evaluating the importance of research findings and theories for advancing the field of psychology. Vijayan writings often delve into the human psyche, exploring various psychological and existential dimensions. He often critiques societal norms and the impact they have on the mental and emotional well-being of individuals, highlighting the psychological consequences of societal structures.

“The Legends of Khasak” is rich in psychological depth, exploring the intricate workings of the human mind, its struggles, and the complex interplay of emotions, societal expectations, and personal identity. The novel delves into the psychological healing process, showing how individuals cope with trauma, attempt to overcome it, and find solace and redemption through their experiences in Khasak. “The Saga of Dharmapuri” portrays a range of characters with diverse psychological makeups. The novel reflects the psychological impact of the socio-political context in which it is set. The narrative showcases the effects of political oppression, social inequalities, and power dynamics on the psyche of both individuals and communities. It delves into the trauma and psychological scars inflicted by a repressive society.

“The Infinity of Grace” delineates the development of the protagonist Kunjunni and his psychosomatic evolution into a mature self. Kunjunni, a journalist from Delhi, goes to Calcutta as a war correspondent during the Bangladesh war. He also endeavors to reconnect with his daughter and estranged wife on a concurrent level. Unfortunate circumstances enhance the

depth of his personal trauma, but he emerges out of that by overcoming it through a transcendental awareness. The psychological significance in “Generations” lies in the way that characters confronted with their personal struggles, aspirations, and the collective trauma of their society. It provides a window into the psyche of characters deeply affected by the political and social climate of their time. “Generations” is a complex work that offers a deep exploration of the human psyche and its interaction with the socio-political environment.

This Chapter further discusses “Influence of Social Taboos” are unwritten, informal rules or customs within a society that dictate certain behaviors, actions, or topics that are considered unacceptable, offensive, or forbidden. Vijayan often highlighted the deep-rooted social hierarchies and discrimination prevalent in Indian society. He explored the caste system, class divides, and the marginalization of certain groups. “The Legends of Khasak” portrayed as a place with its own set of social and cultural taboos, which play a significant role in shaping the lives and interactions of the characters. Caste plays a crucial role in Indian society, and this is reflected in the novel as well.

“The Saga of Dharmapuri” addresses the deeply entrenched caste system in Indian society. It critiques the rigid social hierarchies and the discrimination faced by lower castes. The story may highlight tensions between different religious communities and the misuse of religious sentiments for vested interests. Like many works of literature, “The Saga of Dharmapuri” addresses gender inequalities and the patriarchal structure of society. It may question the oppression and marginalization faced by women and how traditional gender roles perpetuate discrimination and violence against them.

“The Infinity of Grace” critiques religious dogma, hypocrisy, and the misuse of religion for personal and political gains. It challenges traditional beliefs and practices that perpetuate social inequalities and injustice. The novel touches upon sexual taboos and societal expectations regarding relationships, desire, and morality. It explores the conflicts and restrictions imposed on individuals due to conservative societal norms. Vijayan employs a multifaceted narrative to confront and critique these social taboos and issues prevalent in society. “Generations” portrays a traditional Ezhava landlord family and its experience of coping with the caste identity in the upper-caste dominated society of Malabar. Through vibrant characters and vivid settings, he exposes the oppressive structures that uphold inequality.

This Chapter also reveals the theme of “Emergence of New Generation” emergence refers to the advent or arrival of a succeeding cohort or group of individuals who are distinct from the

previous generation in various ways. This emergence can encompass a range of aspects, including cultural, technological, social, economic, and ideological shifts that characterize the behaviour, beliefs, and norms of this new group. Vijayan, known for his profound literary works that often delve into complex themes, including the emergence of a new generation. “The Legends of Khasak” explores themes of isolation, desire, spirituality, and the cyclical nature of life and death. In the context of the emergence of a new generation in the novel, Khasak undergoes social, cultural, and demographic changes. The emergence of a new generation symbolizes change, adaptation, and the struggle to find one's place in a complex world.

O.V. Vijayan, a prominent Indian writer and cartoonist, often delved into social and political themes in his works. The new generation in Dharmapuri experiences and responds to the societal, political, and economic changes that occur over time. This includes their adaptation to modern technologies, shifts in cultural norms, and evolving attitudes towards tradition and progress. The novel explores how the new generation grapples with questions of identity and cultural heritage. It delves into their attempts to redefine or reinterpret their cultural roots while navigating a rapidly changing world.

“The Infinity of Grace” highlights the clash of ideologies between the older generation, often entrenched in conservative beliefs and structures, and the new generation, which seeks change and is more open to different worldviews. The novel portrays the emergence of young individuals actively engaging in social and political issues. “Generations” has complex web of societal structures, historical transformations, and individual experiences that shape the lives of people over generations. Vijayan's narrative style in “Generations” is known for its complexity and rich symbolism. The novel is highly regarded for its intricate portrayal of characters and their evolving relationships with each other and with the changing society around them. Vijayan portrays the emergence of new generations as agents of societal change, presenting youthful protagonists who defy societal conventions and question the established order.

The Fifth Chapter is on “Exploring Festivals, Bliss and Human Welfare”. It discloses that feasts, fasts, and festivals are integral aspects of human culture, reflecting a myriad of traditions, beliefs, and practices that have evolved over centuries. Each of these concepts carries its own significance and serves various purposes within different societies and religions. Feasts are occasions marked by abundance, celebration, and communal gatherings. Vijayan,

intricately incorporates the themes of fasting, feasting, and festivals into his selected novels, infusing them with profound cultural and societal significance. This chapter further discusses “Goal of Life” in the select novels of O.V. Vijayan. In “The Legends of Khasak” the annual Onam celebration becomes a backdrop for communal unity and cultural nostalgia, highlighting the cyclical nature of life and the importance of heritage. “The Saga of Dharmapuri” festivals like Ambedkar Jayanti and Dalit Mahasabha gatherings become symbols of resistance and solidarity, showcasing the power of collective action and cultural expression in the face of oppression. Vijayan continues his exploration of life's meaning through the story of Muttulingam, a marginalized Dalit protagonist.

“The Infinity of Grace” revolves around the concept of grace – a transcendent force that defies rational explanation yet holds the promise of salvation. Festivals thus become arenas where characters negotiate their cultural heritage and aspirations for the future. Overall, festivals and celebrations symbolize the characters' ongoing quest for identity, purpose, and fulfillment amidst life's complexities.

This Chapter further discusses “Welfare of Mankind” in the select novels of O.V. Vijayan. Vijayan constructs intricate narratives that not only entertain but also provoke thought and reflection on the human condition as well. “The Legends of Khasak” explores the plight of marginalized communities and individuals grappling with existential questions in the backdrop of a remote village in Kerala. Vijayan explores the interconnectedness of the human spirit with the divine and the natural world.

“The Saga of Dharmapuri” offers a profound exploration of the welfare of mankind through its incisive critique of social injustices, celebration of human solidarity, and advocacy for a more humane and equitable society. Through its richly drawn characters and thought-provoking narrative, the novel resonates with timeless themes that continue to be relevant in contemporary discussions about social justice, human rights, and the pursuit of a more just and compassionate world. Vijayan encourages readers to engage critically with issues of social justice and human dignity. “The Infinity of Grace” examines the welfare of humanity within the context of colonial India. Through its portrayal of diverse characters and their experiences, the novel sheds light on issues like oppression, social injustice, and the quest for freedom.

“Generations” examines the complexities of human relationships, societal structures, and the impact of historical events. Set against the backdrop of post-independence India, the novel delves into themes of power, politics, and the intergenerational transmission of trauma and

struggle. Vijayan offers a critical perspective on the challenges faced by the country in the aftermath of colonization, including issues of poverty, corruption, and social inequality. Through the experiences of various characters, he highlights the struggles of ordinary people and the need for systemic change to improve their welfare.

O. V. Vijayan's select novels offer profound insights into the welfare of mankind by addressing a wide range of social, political, and existential concerns. Through richly layered narratives, complex characters, and a unique narrative style, Vijayan challenges readers to confront the injustices and inequalities that afflict society while advocating for compassion, empathy, and social change. His literary legacy continues to inspire readers to reflect on the human condition and strive for a more just and equitable world.

Bliss epitomizes a state of existence surpassing mere happiness, embodying profound contentment, fulfillment, and harmony with oneself and the surrounding world. It represents the apex of emotional experience, where every aspect of one's being resonates with joy and tranquility. Vijayan explores the paradoxical relationship between bliss and suffering, suggesting that true enlightenment often arises from the crucible of pain and adversity.

“The Legends of Khasak” the concept of bliss is intricately woven into the lives of its characters amidst the backdrop of the remote village of Khasak. Vijayan's characters confront with their desires, aspirations, and the search for meaning in their lives, often finding moments of fleeting bliss amidst the trials and tribulations of existence. Ravi, seeks solace and redemption in the simplicity of Khasak after a troubled past, hoping to find belonging and inner peace amidst the rural surroundings. In “The Saga of Dharmapuri” the concept of “bliss” assumes a multifaceted significance among the characters, transcending mere happiness to embody a profound state of contentment, fulfillment, and spiritual enlightenment. Set against the backdrop of a tumultuous socio-political landscape, the characters in Dharmapuri grapple with the elusive pursuit of bliss amidst the chaos and uncertainty of their lives.

In “The Infinity of Grace,” the concept of bliss is intricately interwoven with the fabric of the narrative, presenting a rich tapestry of spiritual exploration and existential contemplation. Set against the backdrop of a fictional spiritual commune called Gurusagaram, the novel delves deep into the lives of its diverse inhabitants, each grappling with their own interpretations and pursuits of bliss. It offers a profound and thought-provoking exploration of the concept of bliss, weaving together elements of spirituality, philosophy, and human psychology. Through its vivid characters and evocative prose, the novel invites readers on a transformative journey of

self-discovery and enlightenment, challenging them to reevaluate their own perceptions of happiness and fulfillment. Ultimately, Vijayan's masterpiece serves as a timeless meditation on the quest for meaning and the eternal search for bliss amidst the vicissitudes of life.

Bliss, in the context of “Generations” is depicted as an elusive and often ephemeral state of being, intricately tied to the characters quest for meaning and fulfillment amidst the complexities of life. Vijayan juxtaposes the traditional values and customs of Kerala society with the forces of modernization and globalization, offering a nuanced commentary on the changing dynamics of happiness and fulfillment. As characters navigate through shifting landscapes of culture and identity, they confront the dichotomy between tradition and progress, often finding themselves torn between the familiar comforts of the past and the allure of an uncertain future. In this clash of ideals, the notion of bliss emerges as a precarious balancing act, requiring individuals to reconcile their personal aspirations with the demands of society.

O.V. Vijayan, the themes of feast, fast, festivals, and the overarching goal of life converge to create a rich shade of human experience and existential inquiry. Feast and fast serve as potent symbols in Vijayan's narratives, representing the dualities inherent in human life. Festivals, with their rituals and traditions, offer moments of collective celebration and reflection, serving as reminders of shared values and heritage. However, beneath the surface of revelry often lie deeper tensions and contradictions, as Vijayan exposes the hypocrisy and inequality that can accompany religious and social observances.

His novels offer a compelling vision of bliss that transcends mere pleasure and encompasses a deeper sense of spiritual fulfillment and social harmony. True bliss, he suggests, is found not in the pursuit of selfish desires but in the cultivation of empathy, compassion, and solidarity with others. Through his poignant narratives and thought-provoking themes, Vijayan reminds us of the enduring importance of empathy, justice, and the pursuit of collective welfare in our shared journey through life.

The novels of O.V. Vijayan, including “The Legends of Khasak,” “The Saga of Dharmapuri,” “The Infinity of Grace,” and “Generations,” collectively form a rich narrative deeply entrenched in the socio-cultural milieu of Kerala. Central to the thematic exploration within these works is the profound significance of background and beliefs in shaping individual destinies and societal dynamics.

One of the most striking aspects of Vijayan's exploration of background and beliefs is his nuanced portrayal of the interconnectedness between personal histories and communal ethos. In “The Legends of Khasak,” for instance, the protagonist Ravi's journey is intricately intertwined with the mystical landscape of Khasak and the cultural legacy of its inhabitants. Vijayan deftly examines the role of religious and ideological convictions in shaping human behavior and societal structures. In “The Saga of Dharmapuri,” the collision of opposing ideologies be it the fervent nationalism of Comrade Govindan Nair or the religious fundamentalism of his adversaries—serves as a crucible for exploring the complexities of belief systems and their impact on human actions.

Furthermore, Vijayan's exploration of background and beliefs extends beyond the realm of individual psychology to encompass broader themes of power, oppression, and resistance. In “Generations,” for instance, the legacy of colonialism looms large over successive generations of a family, shaping their aspirations, prejudices, and struggles for liberation. Through intergenerational narratives and historical context, Vijayan underscores how deeply entrenched power structures perpetuate cycles of exploitation and marginalization, even as individuals strive to carve out their own paths against formidable odds. His novels often intertwine personal and societal turmoil, reflecting the changing socio-political landscape of Kerala and India.

Vijayan's narratives are distinguished by their deep philosophical underpinnings and the exploration of existential themes. His upbringing in Kerala, a state with rich cultural and political history, deeply influenced his writings. His novels, including “The Legends of Khasak,” are celebrated for their lyrical quality and profound storytelling. Vijayan's characters are often complex confronting with internal and external conflicts shaped by their backgrounds and beliefs. He employs magical realism to depict the surreal aspects of life and human consciousness. Vijayan was a visionary, using his narratives to critique and contemplate the future of society and humanity. His works explore themes of alienation, exile, and the search for meaning in a chaotic world. The backdrop of his stories rural and urban landscapes serves not just as setting but as a character influencing the narrative. Traditional beliefs and modern skepticism coexist in his novels, presenting a rich tapestry of thought. The significant use of symbolism and allegory in Vijayan's novels invites deeper analysis and interpretation. His humor, often dark and satirical, critiqued societal norms and political systems.

Vijayan was not just a novelist but also a cartoonist and journalist, which influenced his storytelling approach. His philosophical insights are considered to contribute significantly to

Indian and world literature. The themes of corruption, power, and moral decay recur in his works, reflective of his disillusionment with political ideologies. Vijayan's legacy is that of a thinker who used the novel as a medium to explore and critique human existence. His works have inspired countless readers and writers to explore the depths of human psyche and society. O.V. Vijayan remains a critical figure in literature for his unique blend of narrative artistry, philosophical depth, and socio-political commentary.

In conclusion, the novels of O.V. Vijayan stand as towering achievements in Indian literature, offering profound insights into the significance of background and beliefs in shaping human experiences and societal realities. Through richly textured narratives and incisive social commentary, Vijayan invites readers to confront with the complexities of identity, ideology, and collective memory, reminding us of the enduring power of storytelling to illuminate the depths of the human condition. As we navigate our own journeys through life, Vijayan's works serve as poignant reminders of the profound ways in which our backgrounds and beliefs shape not only who we are, but also the world we inhabit.

6.2. Major Findings and its Contemporary Relevance

Vijayan's novels are a blend of realism and fantasy, portraying the complexity of human life. His works are deeply influenced by his background in Kerala, incorporating its landscapes, languages, and cultural practices. The belief systems of his characters often reflect a blend of traditional Indian thought and contemporary existential questions. Vijayan used his narratives to critique societal and political issues, making his literature relevant beyond its immediate cultural context. His exploration of human consciousness and existential angst has contributed to his novels' enduring appeal. The setting in Vijayan's novels is not merely geographical but symbolic, highlighting the characters' inner landscapes. The use of magical realism serves to question the nature of reality and the limitations of human perception. Vijayan's characters are often in search of identity, navigating between traditional roles and modern challenges. The influence of Western literary traditions and philosophical thought is evident in Vijayan's approach to storytelling. The dialogues within his novels often serve as a platform for exploring complex philosophical ideas. His depiction of rural Kerala provides insight into the social and cultural dynamics of the region.

Vijayan's critique of political systems and ideologies reflects his disillusionment with post-independence Indian society. His novels suggest a deep engagement with questions of morality, ethics, and the nature of evil. Vijayan's use of language is innovative, blending dialects and

linguistic styles to enhance his narrative's authenticity. The novels often feature anti-heroes and flawed characters, highlighting human vulnerability and the capacity for redemption. His works explore the impact of historical events on individual lives and community destinies. Vijayan's narratives emphasize the significance of personal beliefs in shaping one's worldview and actions. The interplay between fate and free will is a recurring theme in his novels. His storytelling technique combines traditional narrative forms with experimental structures. Vijayan's literary legacy lies in his ability to universalize the particular, making his stories resonate with readers worldwide.

- Vijayan's novels often explore the cultural background of Kerala, showcasing its traditions, customs, and societal norms reflect historical events and their impact on the characters' lives, such as the partition of India, socio-political changes, and cultural shifts.
- Vijayan intricately weaves religious beliefs into his narratives, portraying the influence of religion and spirituality on the characters' perspectives and actions. His novels often draw upon Hindu mythological tales and symbolism to convey deeper meanings and insights into the human condition.
- His some of works also reflect environmental degradation and the exploitation of natural resources, reflecting a concern for the ecological balance and sustainable living.
- Vijayan explores the caste system and its repercussions on individuals and communities, shedding light on the injustices and discrimination prevalent in society.
- The background of political movements, ideologies, and power struggles forms a significant backdrop in his novels, reflecting the socio-political milieu of Kerala.
- Vijayan's works examine the enduring legacy of colonialism and its impact on the psyche of the characters and the collective consciousness of society and he also delves into the effects of globalization on traditional beliefs and cultural practices, highlighting the clash between modernity and tradition.
- Background and beliefs play a crucial role in shaping the personal identity of the characters, as they Confronted with questions of self-discovery and cultural belonging.
- Vijayan often explores the conflicts arising from divergent backgrounds and beliefs, leading to moments of introspection, reconciliation, or confrontation. Characters in his novels embark on a quest for meaning and spiritual fulfillment, seeking solace and guidance in their cultural heritage and philosophical traditions.

- Through satire and irony, Vijayan critiques societal norms, religious practices, and political ideologies, challenging readers to question established beliefs and values.
- His novels explore the interplay between faith and reason, portraying characters who are interwoven with existential dilemmas and moral quandaries.
- Background and beliefs serve as psychological anchors, shaping the characters' motivations, fears, and aspirations, adding layers of complexity to their portrayal.
- Generational differences in beliefs and values often lead to conflicts within families and communities, reflecting broader societal changes and tensions.
- In the face of globalization and cultural homogenization, Vijayan's novels sometimes advocate for a revival of indigenous beliefs and cultural practices.
- He gives voice to marginalized communities and individuals, shedding light on their struggles for recognition, dignity, and social justice. Characters are confronted with ethical dilemmas rooted in their background and beliefs, forcing them to confront their own prejudices, biases, and moral convictions.
- Through innovative narrative techniques, such as magical realism and nonlinear storytelling, Vijayan creates a rich background of cultural motifs and symbolic imagery, enriching the reading experience.

Its Contemporary Relevance

- The study explores how O.V. Vijayan's characters reflect the cultural and social background of postcolonial India, providing insight into the nation's evolving identity.
- By focusing on the significance of background and beliefs, the research reveals how historical and societal contexts shape individual and collective experiences in Vijayan's novels.
- This research highlights the intersection between personal beliefs and societal changes, offering contemporary relevance in understanding India's diverse ideological landscape.
- The study underscores the impact of regional and religious influences on identity, relevant to discussions on multiculturalism and secularism in modern India.
- O.V. Vijayan's exploration of existential dilemmas and spiritual quests resonates with contemporary societal debates about purpose, faith, and disillusionment.

- The research study is socially relevant as it examines how deeply held beliefs inform individuals' responses to socio-political shifts, a theme still relevant in India's dynamic political climate.
- Vijayan's depiction of rural and urban life contrasts in his novels, mirroring current societal tensions between tradition and modernity in India.
- The study draws attention to the alienation experienced by characters due to conflicting values, which echoes modern concerns about identity crisis in an increasingly globalized world.
- By analyzing the background of Vijayan's characters, the research provides a lens through which to examine class, caste, and economic disparities, still pertinent in contemporary Indian society.
- The study emphasizes the role of belief systems in navigating moral and ethical dilemmas, which is applicable to today's discussions on ethics in governance and business.
- Investigating the role of mythology and folklore in Vijayan's works offers a deeper understanding of how ancient traditions continue to influence modern Indian thought and literature.
- The research is timely as it engages with environmental and ecological concerns in Vijayan's novels, reflecting growing awareness of environmental issues in current discourse.
- The focus on existentialism in Vijayan's work ties into present-day philosophical debates on the meaning of life amidst technological advancement and urban alienation.
- The study sheds light on the psychological effects of political upheaval in Vijayan's novels, resonating with contemporary discussions about mental health and societal pressures.
- By exploring the portrayal of marginalized groups in Vijayan's novels, the research has social relevance in addressing ongoing issues of social justice, equality, and representation in India.

6.3. Future Scope for the Research

The Future Studies Could Involve Deeper Analysis of O.V. Vijayan's novels through Inter-Disciplinary subjects like as Psychology, Sociology and Cultural Studies. It could include examination and analysis how Societal changes and advancements influence characters background and beliefs. Future Research studies further could explore comparative studies between Vijayan's works and those of regional authors. This could provide Broder narratives into the insight. Future studies could also be done to investigate Vijayan's works within Broder Post-Colonial context and to examine how colonial legacies. Cultural hybridity and Power Dynamics, shape this portrayal of background and beliefs. Research could also be done to explore Gender Dynamics and representations in Vijayan's novels. In educational setting future studies could also be done to consider how Background and Beliefs things can be affectively integrated into curriculum designs and classroom discussions.

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A CRITICAL STUDY OF LITERATURE REVIEW IN THE SELECT NOVELS OF O.V. VIJAYAN

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Abstract

Initially dominated by poetry, Malayalam literature diversified with forms like the Atta Katha, blending dance, drama, music, and poetry. However, the novels emerged as a significant form, paralleling its rise in other Indian regions. This emergence was not solely due to British influence via English education but also stemmed from India's socio-political context. O. V. Vijayan, a prominent figure, stands out for his novels' incisive commentary on politics and society. His works skillfully employ elements of the backdrop—political climate, economic disparities, and social injustices—to critique prevailing societal issues. The canvas of his narratives serves as a platform for dissecting the world around him. There are a Few Works of O.V Vijayan Which has been Translated in English the Present Study Covers Select Novels of Ov Vijayan Viz. "The Legends of Khasak", "The Saga of Dharmapuri", "The Infinity of Grace", and "The Generations". The Present Paper Analyses Previous Research Studies Attempted on these Selected Novels of O.V. Vijayan.

Key-words: villages, society, myths, independence, ethics.

A CRITICAL STUDY OF LITERATURE REVIEW IN THE SELECT NOVELS OF O.V. VIJAYAN

- Simran Yadav

- Dr. Naveen Kumar Mehta

Ottupulakkal Velukkuty Vijayan, born in 1930 in Palghat, Kerala, was an esteemed Indian writer known for his deep and multifaceted novels that address complex themes and societal concerns. In 2003, he was awarded the prestigious Padma Bhushan. Vijayan's narratives are particularly noted for their incorporation of myth and magical realism, blending the mundane with the fantastical to enrich the storytelling and deepen the meanings in his books. These elements also reflect and possibly influence the psychological evolution of his characters, highlighting their inner conflicts and dreams. Vijayan authored six novels, three novellas, eight short story collections, and multiple volumes of political essays in Malayalam.

His third novel, "Gurusagaram" (translated as "The Infinity of Grace"), received the National Sahitya Akademi Award, the Kerala State Akademi Award, and the Vayalar Award, marking it as a significant contribution to Indian literature. His works often portray an estranged society and tackle issues related to culture, language, social injustices, and belief systems. Vijayan's storytelling is marked by its originality and ingenuity in narrative style, using a language that resonates with the common speech yet often challenges the readers from various regions of Kerala to delve deeper into his texts. He frequently critiqued authoritarian regimes and the misuse of power by political figures, using myths and folklore to discuss current events and timeless existential questions. His innovative narrative techniques and creative use of language set his work apart, making him a unique figure in Indian literature.

"The Saga of Dharmapuri" originally penned in Malayalam during India's Emergency period and published after it ended, is a pointed critique of the political landscape of that time. This novel uses the decay of public manners and traditional values as a backdrop for its postmodern commentary, suggesting that even societal taboos have become fodder for highbrow discussions. Set in the fictional Dharmapuri, the narrative presents its inhabitants—ranging from corrupt officials and degenerate ministers to sycophants and various types of moral degenerates—as symbols of the depravity within the political system." (Ravindra, 2015: 130-136).

"O.V. Vijayan's The Legends of Khasak explores multiple themes that resonate universally. The novel lacks a conventional storyline and instead delves into the spiritual and philosophical experiences of the village of Khasak. Through the narrative, Vijayan weaves together a tapestry of local myths, stories, and superstitions, setting them against the encroaching forces of scientific rationality represented by Ravi's new school. This clash between traditional and modern perspectives forms a core irony in

the novel. Additionally, by recounting historical encounters as remembered by the villagers, Vijayan offers a unique perspective on cultural interactions over different eras and locations.” **(Selvalakshmi& Jayan, 2016: 86-88).**

“In outlining the setting of Dharmapuri, we can now focus on Vijayan's intricate use of bodily imagery. The author focuses on three fundamental human impulses: eating, defecating, and fornicating. Throughout the novel, these elements are intentionally employed to evoke a sense of revulsion among readers. The character Siddhartha, embodying both leadership and compassion, acts as the moral guide within the story.” **(Maria, 2017:29:41).**

“The Legends of Khasak” O.V. Vijayan skillfully intertwines Persian, biblical, and Hindu myths to create a rich narrative tapestry. Vijayan's utilization of myth and mythical elements is intricate, making it difficult to discern where myth ends and the broader narrative begins. This analysis attempts to identify recurring patterns and prefigurative motifs in Vijayan's works, solidifying his reputation as a mythographer. These include themes such as the origin of things, journeys, paradises, falls from grace, and the quest for spiritual guidance. Additionally, the study delves into the examination of recurring images like winged serpents, dragonflies, and the deity Krishna.” **(Saran&Vasuhi, 2018:224-249).**

“The Saga of Dharmapuri” depicted in the novel symbolizes depths of darkness. The story revolves around the President who manipulates nationalistic sentiments to maintain power and accumulate wealth, including through morally reprehensible acts like exporting cadavers. The narrative is filled with disturbing scenes, including rapes committed by government officials under the pretense of patriotism, child molestation, necrophilia, revolting scatological content, crude eroticism, and gruesome cannibalism. Against this backdrop, the character Siddhartha, a nomadic ascetic, enters the scene promoting messages of non-violence, love, and peace.” **(Saraswathy, 2019: 492-498).**

“The central theme of The Legends of Khasak revolves around the concept of a journey, particularly the psychological journey undertaken by the protagonist, Ravi. Ravi grapples with intense guilt stemming from an incestuous relationship with his stepmother, seeking to escape this burden. His official trip to Khasak, while ostensibly for work purposes, serves as a means of distancing himself from his troubled reality. However, even in Khasak, he finds no respite from his inner turmoil. The village's belief in karma provides Ravi with a sense of resolution in confronting mortality. As the novel approaches its climax, Ravi, standing at the bus-stop preparing to depart Khasak, deliberately allows himself to be bitten by a snake, viewing death as a means of atonement for his sins and a pathway to redemption through rebirth.” **(Ashwathy, 2020: 198-202).**

“In The Legends of Khasak, the landscape plays a pivotal role, almost like a character in itself. Throughout the story, the environment exerts a powerful influence on the lives of the characters. It's as if entering the territory of 'khasak' determines one's destiny. O.V. Vijayan skillfully utilizes the setting—a rural village in the mid-twentieth century—to underscore this theme. This village, largely untouched by

modernity, serves as the backdrop for the protagonist, a science student. Through this portrayal, Vijayan suggests that humanity is inherently intertwined with nature and cannot escape its pull.” **(Sruthi, 2021: 58-61)**

“O.V. Vijayan's monumental work, "The Legends of Khasak," represents a significant shift in his literary career, moving away from mere protest to a more nuanced analysis of societal issues. It delves into the marginalization experienced by certain communities within the framework of a nation-state, suggesting that these issues can be addressed through constitutional means. Vijayan's remarkable creativity is evident in his ability to traverse different tones and themes. His debut novel, "Khasakkinte Ithihasam" (The Legends of Khasak), published in 1969, signaled this transformation. While his earlier work had a sense of existential futility, "The Legends of Khasak" stands out as a pioneering piece of fiction that reshaped Malayalam literature, drawing a clear line in its history.” **(Jagdish, 2022: 646-649).** “

O.V. Vijayan's *The Legends of Khasak*, there's a deconstructive analysis that examines the protagonist Ravi's complex attitude toward Western education. Previous studies have focused on exploring Ravi's sexuality in relation to morality. However, a deeper understanding emerges when we consider the connection between Ravi's discriminatory behavior towards women and his stance on Western education, using Derrida's deconstructive approach influenced by Jan Patočka's philosophical essays on history. Ravi abandons his studies in astrophysics to embark on an internal journey, as Vijayan suggests in the Afterword, or perhaps as a form of atonement for his sins, as hinted at throughout the novel.” **(Vadacke, 2023:2-11).**

“Legends of Khasak, the clever manipulation of a myth by an individual named Nizam Ali. He seizes upon the instability inherent in a myth to elevate himself to the position of 'Khazi' in the novel. Nizam Ali, initially an ordinary man, suddenly gains power and dominance by appropriating the myth of Khasak. His motive is to escape imprisonment and attain authority. By modifying and adding a 'Second-Order Signification' to the myth passed down by Allah-Pitcha Mollakka regarding the descendants of Khasak, Nizam Ali transforms into the sorcerer of 'Saved Miyan Sheikh.' As 'Khazi,' he becomes an influential figure who exploits the people of Khasak. This instance illustrates how mythmaking and the adaptation of existing myths are continual processes across cultures. Through skillful manipulation, dominant discourses of a period can be transformed into the ideology of an entire society, utilizing myths as effective tools.” **(Dalvin, 2023: 333-335).**

Concluding Remarks

O.V. Vijayan, one of India's most celebrated writers, intricately weaves themes of magical realism and postcolonialism throughout his novels, particularly evident in his seminal work, "The Legends of Khasak." Through a comparative study of Vijayan's novels, a deep exploration into the intersection of magical realism and postcolonialism emerges, shedding light on the complexities of identity, power dynamics, and cultural clashes in the context of postcolonial India.

"The Legends of Khasak" stands as a prime example of Vijayan's adeptness in blending the mystical with the mundane. Set in the fictional village of Khasak, the novel transports readers into a world where folklore and reality intertwine seamlessly. Through the protagonist Ravi's journey, Vijayan explores the impact of colonialism on indigenous communities, as well as the struggle to reconcile tradition with modernity. By employing magical realism, Vijayan invites readers to ponder the deeper layers of reality and the myriad ways in which history shapes individual and collective consciousness. Vijayan's portrayal of Ravi's odyssey as a self-made victim caught in the crosshairs of East-West confrontation is both compelling and thought-provoking. Ravi's quest for identity and belonging mirrors the broader existential dilemmas faced by postcolonial societies grappling with the legacies of colonialism and globalization. Through Ravi's experiences, Vijayan delves into the complexities of cultural assimilation, alienation, and resistance, offering a nuanced critique of power imbalances and cultural hegemony.

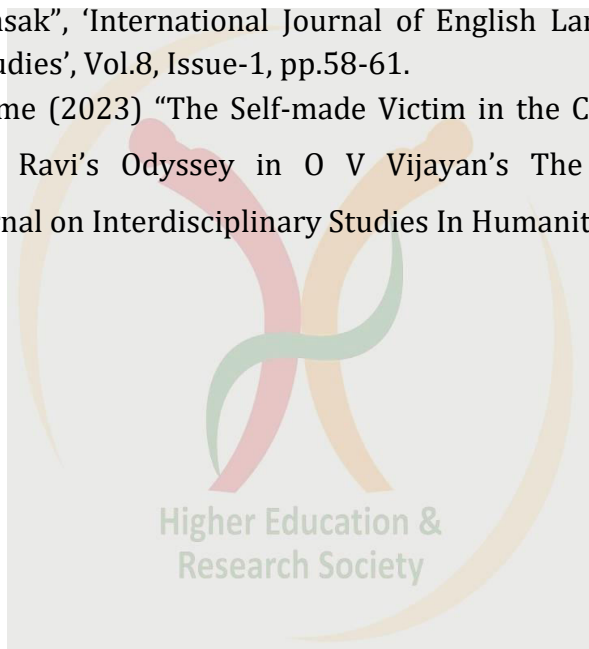
"The Saga of Dharmapuri" further underscores Vijayan's exploration of the infinite grace and resilience of the human spirit. Through the trials and tribulations of the characters in his novels, Vijayan celebrates the enduring power of human connection, spirituality, and cultural heritage in the face of adversity. By centering themes of grace and generation, Vijayan highlights the cyclical nature of life and the eternal quest for meaning and transcendence.

In conclusion, O.V. Vijayan's novels offer a profound meditation on the intersection of magical realism and postcolonialism, weaving together themes of identity, power, and resistance with remarkable depth and complexity. Through his evocative storytelling and vivid imagery, Vijayan invites readers to embark on a journey of self-discovery and collective introspection, challenging conventional notions of reality and inviting us to reimagine the world through a more inclusive and empathetic lens.

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Concept of “Go Green” in O.V. Vijayan’s the *Legends of Khasak*: Growing Consciousness towards Mother Nature

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Abstract:

In recent years, the global “Go Green” movement has garnered significant attention, serving as a universal call to embrace sustainable living and prioritize environmental conservation. Drawing inspiration from Vijayan's literary masterpiece, this study explores the parallels between the ecological challenges faced by the fictional world of *Khasak* and the urgent issues confronting our planet today. *The Legends of Khasak* intricately examines the intricate relationship between its characters and nature, offering a lens through which we can understand the intricate interplay between human actions and the environment. This paper posits that the “Go Green” movement, with its focus on sustainable practices, conservation, and the safeguarding of Mother Nature, resonates deeply with the themes presented in Vijayan's work. The Present Paper aims to explore the Concept of Go Green in O.V. Vijayan’s *The Legends of Khasak* in the backdrop of growing consciousness towards Mother Nature.

Keywords: humanity, crises, suffering, nature, environment, pollution

Introduction

O.V. Vijayan, born Ottupulackal Velukkuty Vijayan on July 2, 1930, in Palakkad, Kerala, was a prominent figure in Indian literature, known for his contributions as a novelist, short story writer, and cartoonist. “O.V. Vijayan’s novels portray a deliberate submission to the forces of nature” (Lalitha, 2017: 122-132). His impact on Malayalam literature extended beyond crafting compelling narratives; he also emerged as a social commentator and political activist. One of his notable works is the acclaimed novel *Khasakkinte Ithihasam* (*The Legends of Khasak*), a masterpiece exploring spirituality, social dynamics, and existentialism through the character of Ravi, a young

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teacher in the fictional village of Khasak. “O.V. Vijayan in ‘The Legends of Khasak’, conventional practices, local stories, myths, and religious ceremonies play a central role in guiding the community” (Akhil & Geetha, 2019: 375-377). Vijayan’s influence firmly places him among the celebrated novelists in the Malayalam language. “The philosophy of literature is considered in its third sense, where a writer may create books with the intention of substantiating a particular argument. However, when skillfully executed by an accomplished writer, philosophical themes can have a remarkably enduring impact on readers” (Rajendran, 2018: 89-95).

The term “Environment” encompasses the surroundings in which living organisms exist, including physical elements such as air, water, and land, along with social and cultural factors. A positive environment significantly impacts well-being, promoting physical health through clean air and water, proper waste disposal, and minimal pollutants. The quality of our surroundings also affects mental health, with natural spaces correlating to reduced stress and improved mood, while adverse conditions like pollution contribute to mental health issues. Additionally, a conducive environment is linked to economic prosperity, as healthy ecosystems support industries and agriculture, contributing to sustainable economic practices.

The environment’s role in regulating Earth’s climate is crucial, with human activities like deforestation and fossil fuel use contributing to climate change, impacting ecosystems and societies. Maintaining a balanced and sustainable environment is essential for the well-being of individuals and communities, considering physical, mental, social, and economic factors.

Eco-criticism, a literary and cultural theory, explores the relationship between literature and the natural environment. Emerging in response to growing environmental concerns in the late 20th century, it examines how literature represents and influences our understanding of nature, ecology, and environmental issues. Joseph Meeker is often considered the pioneer, exploring ecological aspects of literature in *The Comedy of Survival*. The field gained prominence in the 1990s with contributions from scholars like Lawrence Buell, Cheryll Glotfelty, and Jonathan Bate. Eco-criticism’s importance lies in promoting environmental awareness, advocating for sustainability, and contributing to the ecological dialogue. “Ecocriticism seeks to explore the ways in which people in society engage with and react to the natural world and ecological factors. Instead of adopting a utilitarian perspective on nature, the present emphasis is on reevaluating the relationship between human beings and their surroundings” (Nimisha, 2016: 375-377).

By analyzing how literature reflects and shapes perceptions of the natural world, eco-criticism fosters environmental consciousness.

Incorporating insights from various disciplines, it encourages a holistic understanding of the relationship between literature and the environment, inspiring social and environmental activism. Eco-criticism plays a vital role in cultivating a deeper understanding of the intricate link between literature and the environment, contributing to a more ecologically informed and responsible society.

Research Methodology

This research paper relies on a combination of primary and secondary data sources for its foundation. The original works by the select author is used as primary sources. The selected novel for carrying forward the research work is critically evaluated and analysed. The secondary sources will include the use of Library, Research journals, Magazines, Internet. These sources provide help and guidance for examining the works in depth and for further multiple interpretations.

Revisioning *The Legends of Khasak*: Environmental Perspectives

The re-visioning seeks to delve into *The Legends of Khasak* from an environmental standpoint, highlighting the ecological aspects interwoven into the story. Through an analysis of the complex connections among characters, landscapes, and the natural world, the research aims to uncover the environmental themes of the novel and examine how it addresses, critiques, or anticipates ecological issues. “*The Legends of Khasak*, the narrative revolves around the rural terrain of Khasak, where Vijayan adeptly presents a varied cast of characters and intricately weaves the folkloric spirit of the locale into their lives through his creative storytelling” (Ashwathy, 2020: 198-202).

The fictional village of Khasak, where the novel takes place, acts as a backdrop for exploring the interaction between human activities and the environment. By closely examining the described landscapes, the paper investigates how they actively contribute to the narrative. From the lively meadows to the sacred groves, each component plays a role in the ecological tapestry, providing insights into the delicate balance between nature and human existence. The study specifically identifies instances where natural elements symbolize broader environmental concerns, such as the recurring theme of water bodies, the symbolism of plant and animal life, and the portrayal of weather patterns. The objective is to decode how these elements enhance the novel’s underlying environmental narrative.

Through an examination of these relationships, the research delves into themes of dependence, exploitation, and mutualism. This exploration aims to reveal how these relationships mirror real-world

dynamics, offering readers a nuanced understanding of the intricate connections between humans and the environment.

The Legends of Khasak gains significance in the current environmental discourse by bringing attention to its ecological layers. By unraveling these layers within the narrative, the study seeks to foster a deeper comprehension of the complex relationships among literature, culture, and the environment.

Awareness towards Mother Nature in *The Legends of Khasak*: Issues and Challenges

Examining the environmental undertones in *The Legends of Khasak*, the study unveils the intricacies and hurdles embedded in the narrative, presenting a comprehensive insight into the awareness, or lack thereof, regarding Mother Nature. Although the novel doesn't overtly center on environmental issues, it can be interpreted as an exploration of the broader theme of human connectivity with nature and the trials faced by communities in maintaining a harmonious bond with the environment. The novel reflects the deep cultural and spiritual connection traditional societies often have with the natural world.

The ecological challenges confronted by the characters and the community in Khasak encompass issues like deforestation, water scarcity, and various environmental problems. Nature assumes a symbolic role in the novel, a common literary device where it serves as a metaphor for different aspects of human life. The narrative subtly urges environmental awareness and, in some instances, explicitly encourages readers to ponder their relationship with nature and take steps towards environmental conservation.

The enchanting beauty of Khasak significantly contributes to the memorability of the text through vibrant descriptions and its association with the local inhabitants. The legends surrounding Khasak, particularly those linked to the mosque, set the scope of the novel. Vijayan adeptly combines the rustic allure of Khasak with gothic elements to establish the novel's mood, portrayed through the deteriorated Mosque of the King, the captivating waterfall, the eerie gallop of horses during solitary nights, and the depiction of enigmatic creatures concealed within the lush greenery. "Vijayan, renowned for his exceptional creative versatility as a writer, initially composed his iconic masterpiece, *The Legends of Khasak*, with apparent ease in a sphere seemingly separate from the wider historical currents of the era" (Jagdish, 2022: 646-649).

O.V. Vijayan captures the essence of Khasak by emphasizing its distinctive features, such as houses with thatched roofs and the quintessential village teashop, reminiscent of typical scenes in Kerala villages. The novel showcases a deliberate surrender to the forces of nature, emphasizing a harmonious coexistence with the natural

surroundings. “Vijayan employs a range of images in his writing, with a notable recurring theme being dragonflies, frequently associated with Appukili and their significance in preserving memories from the past. Another poignant image involves Ravi’s mother seated on the veranda, indicating the stars in the sky as a symbolic representation of her profound maternal affection for her child” (Sruthi, 2021:58-61).

The Legends of Khasak narrates the journey of two spores, with the elder one pausing upon encountering a lush green valley, while the younger one, driven by a desire for discovery, continues the expedition. The novel underscores the omnipotence of nature over humanity, displaying its strength through natural calamities like famine, drought, flood, and earthquakes. The interdependence of human life and nature is highlighted, underscoring the impossibility of separating oneself from the profound influence of the natural world. The challenges faced by the characters in *Khasak* mirror broader global environmental concerns, providing a contemporary context for discussions on environmental awareness. The characters’ personal journeys in the novel are intricately intertwined with their surrounding

Concluding Remarks

Vedic philosophy often views nature with reverence, deeming various elements as divine. In *The Legends of Khasak*, the village is portrayed as a mystical and spiritual place, emphasizing the interconnectedness of the natural and spiritual realms. The sacred grove symbolizes this unity. The cyclical nature of life, a key Vedic concept, is mirrored in the novel’s narrative, highlighting the interdependence of life and nature. This cyclic perspective serves as a subtle reminder to respect environmental cycles. Characters in the story grapple with moral dilemmas, their actions intricately linked to the natural world. The Vedic principle of Dharma, emphasizing righteous living and responsibilities, can be applied to environmental conservation, urging the protection of nature.

Examining the protection of Mother Nature from a Vedic standpoint, it’s crucial to consider Vedic literature, which underscores the interconnectedness of all beings and the environment. In Vedic philosophy, Earth is seen as a living entity deserving respect. Vedic concepts, such as the sacredness of nature, non-violence, and the interconnectedness of living beings, deeply influence Indian culture and philosophy. Author Vijayan likely drew on these ideas, subtly incorporating them into his work. The novel delves into the environmental impact of human actions and the repercussions of disrupting the natural order, conveying a sense of the importance of harmonious coexistence with nature.

Vijayan's awareness of nature and his perspective on Earth as an ideal habitat are evident in the narrative, where the village of Khasak is intimately connected to its natural surroundings. The characters' relationships with the land, river, and ecosystem may signify a broader understanding of Earth as a source of sustenance, emphasizing humans' coexistence with nature. Although Vijayan doesn't explicitly articulate environmental or Vedic themes like a modern environmentalist, the novel reflects broader cultural and spiritual values recognizing Earth as a precious and interconnected entity.

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We appreciate your efforts and dedication and wish you the best in your future endeavours.

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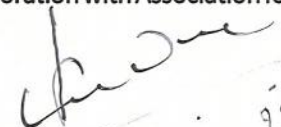
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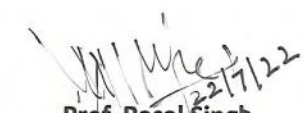
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