



Nehal Ahmed

Title: The Gulf dream: A study of Representation of Arab and Indian Family in Malayalam Cinema

Abstract:

The extensive migration of labour from India to the Gulf states has brought about notable shifts in Indian society, encompassing social, political, economic, and cultural dimensions. Malayalis from the state of Kerala, a predominant group in the Gulf also constitute the largest Indian ethnic group in Qatar, accounting for over 50% of the total Indian labour force. However, the issue of cultural identity, emotional relations, and its representation in films is an understudied subject. The study examines the cultural connection between Kerala and the Gulf, with a specific emphasis on familial aspects. Employing the approach of Emotional History, the study explores the shifting terrain of the "Gulf Dream" and the dynamics of labour and family issues in Malayalam-language cinema. It will enquire about the ideas and values of the family depicted in cinema, additionally challenging the portrayal. The study delves into the impact of emotions on the evolution of social and cultural norms and identities over time, along with the ways they have been felt, conveyed, and controlled. Two Malayalam films *Ayisha* (2023) and *Meow* (2021) explore the interaction between non-resident Arab and Arab residents, highlighting the emotional tensions between culture and goodwill. The study will use the theory of Orientalism to analyse the portrayal of Arabs in Western and Malayalam cinema. The findings underscore the importance of comprehending the emotional history of cultural and political elements in shaping the relationship between Indians and Arabs in the Gulf region.

Bio:

Nehal Ahmed is a doctoral student at the Academy of International Studies, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi. His research interests consist of Indian cinema, World Cinema, and Migration studies. He has been writing on cinema and human stories for leading national and international dailies such as The Hindu, Aljazeera, The Telegraph, Outlook and Newsclick. He also contributed for the journal called The Book Review Journal, Oxford Review of Books. "Nothing Will be Forgotten: From Jamia to Shaheenbagh" is his first book. He received the Muzaffar Ahmad Memorial award for the same book. His book has been nominated for India's prestigious award Sahitya academy Yuva Puraskar 2023. He is currently working on his second book called "Gulf in My Family" based on Gulf Migration.
