



Tracing the Evolutionary Socio-Cultural Trajectory in Kerala: A Comparative Study of *The Legends of Khasak* and *Naalukettu: The House Around the Courtyard*

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Abstract: The paper "Tracing the Evolutionary Socio-Cultural Trajectory in Kerala: A Comparative Study of *The Legends of Khasak* and *Naalukettu: The House Around the Courtyard*" sheds light on the socio-cultural study of Kerala as it is portrayed in O. V. Vijayan's *The Legends of Khasak* and M. T. Vasudevan Nair's *Naalukettu: The House Around the Courtyard*. They are timeless pieces of Malayalam literature that examine Kerala's complex social and cultural landscape. The novels' plots, heavily influenced by the clash between tradition and modernity, show the conflict between personal desires and social expectations, the rigid gender roles that exist in society, and the idea of nostalgia and yearning for a more straightforward past. They also reveal the various power structures that exist in society and how they affect people's lives. Furthermore, these two classic books accurately portray Keralan culture and folklore and show how modernity and urbanisation are eroding traditional ways of life in a world that is undergoing rapid change. These fascinating pieces transport us back in time.

Index Terms - Culture, Kerala, Modernity, Society, Tradition.

I. INTRODUCTION

India is a multiethnic country with a rich history and culture. Even though the rest of the world may have overlooked many innovative gems in regional languages, the only way to increase the number of readers is through culture and tradition. By putting the cognitive processes of a population in the context of their socio-cultural origins, traditions help us understand that population's people.

Kerala, an Indian state in the country's southwest, is renowned for having a voluminous cultural legacy. Kerala's culture is studied from many angles, including its history, customs, literature, art, and festivals. The literature of Kerala's official language, Malayalam, has a significant impact on the state's cultural identity. The literature of Malayalam has greatly benefited from the works of well-known authors like *Vaikom Muhammad Basheer*, *Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai*, and *MT Vasudevan Nair*.

Kathakali is a traditional dance-drama that is renowned for its elaborate costumes, ornate makeup, and expressive gestures. It is one of Kerala's most well-known and vibrant performing arts. Kerala is home to a wide variety of musical and dance styles. There is a lot of classical music, with Carnatic music being one of the more popular genres. *Mappila Pattu* and *Onappattu*, two popular folk songs, are also widely used. Festive occasions feature performances of traditional dances like *Kaikottikali*, *Oppana*, and *Duffimuttu*.

Kerala celebrates numerous exciting festivals all year. One of the most important festivals is *Onam*, which is celebrated with lavish feasts, boat races, and ethnic dance performances. *Vishu*, *Thrissur Pooram*, and *Attukal Pongala* are a few additional noteworthy celebrations.

Kerala is well known for its age-old Ayurvedic practises with a rich cultural history. Natural cures, massage therapies, and herbal treatments are emphasised in the holistic medical and wellness system known as Ayurveda. The state draws a lot of tourists looking for wellness retreats and Ayurvedic therapies.

An important destination for tourists is Kerala's backwaters, a system of lagoons, lakes, and canals. Travellers can have a unique experience by taking a houseboat cruise, also referred to as a *kettuvallam*, which is popular locally for providing views of paddy fields, rural life, and lush green surroundings. The diverse cultural heritage of Kerala includes many more elements than these. The state is a fascinating place to explore and study cultural studies because of its distinctive fusion of culinary traditions, festivals, dance, music, and art that add to its vibrant cultural tapestry.

The study of culture's various facets, including its historical, economic, social, and political facets, is done through the interdisciplinary field of cultural studies. It first came into existence in the middle of the twentieth century as a reaction to the shortcomings of conventional disciplines in comprehending and analysing the complexity of culture. Cultural studies critically examine cultural practises, representations, and power dynamics by drawing on theories and methodologies from fields like literary theory, postcolonial studies, gender studies, media studies, anthropology, and sociology. It looks into how societal interactions, institutions, ideologies, and historical contexts shape and are shaped by culture.

Ideology, self, power, representation, resistance, and consumption are important terms in cultural studies. Numerous studies in this area focus on topics like cultural identity, popular culture, subcultures, media and communication, social movements, globalisation, and the production and consumption of cultural artefacts. The goal of cultural studies is to question prevailing cultural norms and reveal the underlying power structures that support social injustice. By emphasising the processes through which culture is created, transmitted, and assimilated by various social groups, it encourages a reflective and critical approach to understanding culture. Globally speaking, cultural studies offer a framework for examining the intricate interactions between culture, society, and personal experiences with the goal of promoting a more equitable and inclusive understanding of cultural phenomena.

Both *The Legends of Khasak* by O. V. Vijayan and *Naalukettu: The House Around the Courtyard* by M. T. Vasudevan Nair offer insights into various facets of Kerala's history and society. These books portray Kerala in its prehistoric era and contrast it with Kerala today.

The mid-twentieth-century setting of O. V. Vijayan's *The Legends of Khasak* is a fictitious village by the name of Khasak that is depicted as remote and uninhabited. It paints a picture of prehistoric Kerala, where villagers still live according to long-standing traditions, rituals, and beliefs. The book explores the intricate relationships between caste, religion, and social hierarchies that were prevalent in prehistoric Kerala. It examines the difficulties and conflicts that the main character, Ravi, encounters as he questions and challenges societal norms and tries to emancipate himself from the constraints of the past. The book depicts an agrarian society where farming and crop cultivation are the main sources of income for the villagers. It also depicts the tribulations, superstitions, and close bonds that existed between people and nature in prehistoric Kerala.

The Legends of Khasak is an amazing book that explores the essence of ancient Kerala by fusing myth and reality. The book provides a deep reflection on tradition, spirituality, and the complexities of human existence through Ravi's experiences and encounters. It continues to be one of the most renowned pieces of Indian literature and makes a significant contribution to our knowledge of Kerala's cultural history.

The mid-twentieth-century setting of *Naalukettu: The House Around the Courtyard* by M. T. Vasudevan Nair reflects a period when joint families were typical in Kerala. It illustrates the change from a feudal system to a modern one. The complex relationships within a joint family, with its patriarchal structure and strict traditions, are explored in *Naalukettu*. It emphasises the conflicts brought on by generational gaps and the struggle to uphold traditions while incorporating contemporary ideas. The novel depicts the societal changes that were happening in Kerala at the time, including the impact of Western education, urbanisation, and the rise of the Nair community as a powerful social class. It accurately portrays Kerala society's conflicts between tradition and modernity.

The natural splendour and landscape of Kerala are also beautifully portrayed in the book. Readers get a glimpse of the area's rich cultural and natural heritage thanks to M. T. Vasudevan Nair's descriptive writing, which brings to life the lush greenery, backwaters, and picturesque surroundings. This literary masterpiece explores the history of ancient Kerala in great detail. While illuminating the social, cultural, and historical foundation of Kerala society, it offers readers a captivating and immersive experience that transports them to a bygone era.

Both books offer a look into the past and emphasise Kerala's evolution over time. Since the times portrayed in these novels, Kerala has experienced significant changes in its sociocultural heritage, economy, and political landscape. Gender equality, education, healthcare, and infrastructure have all seen improvements in the state. With its high rates of literacy, social welfare initiatives, and focus on sustainable development, Kerala has also grown to be a well-liked tourist destination.

However, elements of the past that are depicted in the novels continue to have an impact on Kerala's contemporary society. The celebration and preservation of traditional rituals, artistic expressions, and cultural practices continue. Despite the evolution of societal structures, certain problems still exist to varying degrees, including caste-related problems and the battle to balance tradition and modernity. So, both the novels *The Legends of Khasak* and *Naalukettu: The House Around the Courtyard* throw light on Keralan society in the past and how it evolved into the modern era. While examining the changes and complexities of Kerala's history and society, these novels capture the spirit of a bygone era.

II. THE LEGENDS OF KHASAK

In his book, *The Legends of Khasak*, O. V. Vijayan chronicles the life of young teacher Ravi, who leaves his hometown to start over in the isolated village of Khasak. The narrative begins with Ravi's arrival in Khasak, where the locals greet him with open arms and are renowned for his vivid descriptions of the surroundings, the locals, and their customs. He quickly acclimates to his new life and develops a fascination for the locale and its inhabitants. Father Alphonso, a local priest, becomes friends with Ravi and serves as both his mentor and his compass.

After accepting a teaching position in Khasak, Ravi starts to get to know the locals. Madhavan Nair, the village landlord, and his wife, Maimuna, are among the people he interacts with.

As he becomes more familiar with the villagers' way of life and begins to uncover their secrets, Ravi gains more knowledge about their daily routines. In Khasak, he learns that there are many ingrained superstitions and historical notions and that the past and present coexist in peculiar ways. Additionally, he finds out that a long-ago curse still frightens the community.

Ravi begins to solve the mysteries surrounding Khasak and its inhabitants as the book goes on. He learns that the village has a sinister past and that its ancestors' ghosts still roam the streets. In addition to being extremely religious and superstitious, the villagers also hold the view that the spirits of the dead can cause harm to the living. Ravi also learns more about the caste system and how it influences villagers' day-to-day activities. To better understand the villagers' way of life, Ravi becomes fixated on solving the mysteries of Khasak. As a result, he spends his time ambling through the community and talking to the residents. He makes friends with some outcasts who reside outside the village.

Ravi's awareness of his surroundings decreases as he ponders Khasak's mysteries in greater detail. He starts having unsettling visions that seem strange. He starts to believe that he is the special one who will end the curse that has afflicted the village for ages. His obsession with overcoming the confines of his existence and achieving enlightenment causes him to lose all sense of reality. His obsession harms his mental health as he starts to see himself as a sort of messiah who can usher in a new era of Khasak's spiritual awakening.

The book concludes with Ravi becoming embroiled in the conflict between the local villagers and the bandits who have been terrorising the area. Ravi sees this as his chance to prove himself and end the Khasak curse for good. Although he leads the villagers into battle, the results are not what he had anticipated. Because they see him as a threat to their way of life, the village's more traditional forces are against him. Additionally, he battles inner demons like self-doubt and insecurities about his spiritual prowess.

Following the battle, Ravi comes to the realisation that he had been living in a world of his own making and that the legends of Khasak were mere that—legends. When he leaves the village, he is no longer the same person he was before. Ending on a bittersweet note, Ravi departs Khasak with a newfound appreciation for the complexity of human nature and the pursuit of meaning in life. He understands that one cannot escape the past and that decisions made in the present will ultimately determine one's fate.

The novel is a work of literary art thanks to its vivid descriptions of the setting and its inhabitants, and its message is just as relevant now as it was when it was first released.

III. NAALUKETTU: THE HOUSE AROUND THE COURTYARD

Published in 1958, M. T. Vasudevan Nair's Malayalam book *Naalukettu: The House Around the Courtyard* is a work of literature. Appunni, a young man who grows up in a traditional Nair family in Kerala, is the protagonist of the book, which follows his life. The traditional Nair Theravada (ancestral house) in which Appunni grows up, which is constructed around a central courtyard, or Naalukettu, serves as the inspiration for the book's title. In the early 20th century, social change was a topic of discussion in Kerala, which is explored in the book.

Appunni, a young boy, is the central character in the tale. The bright and inquisitive youngster, Appunni, is eager to discover more about the world outside of his village. The tales his grandmother tells him about his ancestors and their past accomplishments captivate him. But he also learns about the harsh realities of today, like the oppressive caste system and the poverty and hardships that the lower castes experience. Appunni's disenchantment with the customs and values of his community grows as he gets older. He starts to question the legitimacy of the Nairs, an upper-caste family that oppresses the lower castes.

Due to his rebellious nature, Appunni frequently has disagreements with his family's elders and other members of the community. He doesn't give up, though, and he ends up standing as a beacon of hope for those who are oppressed and marginalised. To pursue his dreams and start over, Appunni leaves his family, his neighbourhood, and his community behind in the novel's final chapter.

M.T. Vasudevan Nair illustrates the tension between tradition and modernity in Kerala society throughout the entire book. He illustrates the lower castes' fight for equality and dignity as well as the contribution that education and enlightenment make to social change. It is a profoundly insightful book that explores the social and cultural dynamics of Kerala society at the turn of the 20th century.

The difficulties encountered by those who attempt to rebel against conventional Keralan social and cultural norms are poignantly and sharply depicted in *Naalukettu*. The book also serves as a coming-of-age tale as Appunni struggles with the pressures of convention and expectations while learning to navigate the complexities of life and love. It is a classic piece of writing that has never lost its appeal.

IV. THE CONFLICT BETWEEN TRADITION AND MODERNITY

In the context of rural life in Kerala, India, O.V. Vijayan's *The Legends of Khasak* examines the tension between tradition and modernity. The novel examines the tension between the villagers' traditional way of life and modernity's advancements, as exemplified by technology, education, and the influence of outsiders. Ravi, one of the main characters, is a teacher who left his job and city life to teach in Khasak. He struggles between his yearning for the past and his desire to modernise Khasak's educational system. The conservative neighbourhood, which prioritises tradition over progress, opposes Ravi's attempts to instil modern concepts and educational techniques in the villagers.

Padma, a young widow who is shunned by the villagers because of her unconventional behaviour, exemplifies the tension between tradition and modernity in her character. Because she defies the traditional expectations of the community, she stands for the struggle between tradition and individuality. Since Padma disobeyed, the established order of the village was thought to be in jeopardy, and Padma was punished as a result.

The conflict between tradition and modernity is portrayed in the book as a struggle for dominance and control over the community. The village priest stands in for the community's traditional leaders, who are resistant to change and see modern concepts as a threat to their dominance. According to them, the village can only remain stable and in order by adhering to the traditional way of life. The conflict between tradition and modernity is portrayed in *The Legends of Khasak* as an effort to find one's identity and purpose in a world that is undergoing rapid change. The book demonstrates that while tradition can give people a sense of continuity and stability, it can also be oppressive and stifle personal freedom. On the other hand, modernity fosters innovation and advancement but also poses a threat to cultural identity and the continuity of long-standing traditions.

Similar to this, M.T. Vasudevan Nair's *Naalukettu: The House Around the Courtyard* illustrates the tension between tradition and modernity within the context of a Kerala Brahmin family. The conflict between the family's traditional values and practises and the contemporary lifestyle that the younger generation is embracing is explored in the book.

The main character, Appunni, is a representation of the younger generation, which is torn between tradition and modernity. While living in the city, he became acquainted with contemporary concepts and ideals, and he is eager to introduce them to his ancestral home. He encounters opposition from his relatives, who are firmly rooted in tradition and resistant to change. The physical layout of the *Naalukettu* itself reflects the tension between tradition and modernity. The home's courtyard, verandas, and numerous rooms serve as symbols of the family's traditional way of life. It is revealed, however, to be archaic and unsuitable for contemporary living. The question of whether to maintain the home's traditional architecture or modernise it to make it more livable is one that the family members must decide.

In the book, the struggle for dominance and control within the family is portrayed as a conflict between tradition and modernity. The older generation views tradition as a way to safeguard their cultural heritage and uphold their social standing, while the younger generation views modernity as a way to overcome the constraints imposed by tradition and pursue their own goals and aspirations. The novel explores the tension between tradition and modernity as a struggle for identity and autonomy within the context of a Kerala

Brahmin family. It shows that while tradition provides a sense of continuity and cultural heritage, it can also be restrictive and limit individual freedom. Modernity, on the other hand, brings progress and new ideas, but it can also disrupt established ways of life and threaten cultural identity.

V. THE HIERARCHICAL STRUCTURE OF SOCIETY IN KERALA

The hierarchical structure of Keralan society in the 1950s is depicted in O.V. Vijayan's *The Legends of Khasak*. In the novel, a caste- and class-based system of social stratification is depicted, with some groups of people enjoying privileges and power while others are marginalised and subjected to oppression. The upper-caste Brahmins, who hold positions of authority and sway in society, are at the top of the social food chain. They enjoy a great deal of respect and power because they are regarded as the most intellectually and culturally sophisticated group in society.

The other powerful castes below them, like the Nairs and Namboothiris, are also very powerful in society and the economy. In the past, members of these castes have held prominent positions in the military, land ownership, and government. The Dalits and other members of the lower castes, such as the Ezhavas, are subjected to a variety of forms of marginalisation and discrimination. In addition to being compelled to perform menial labour, they are denied access to political power, land ownership, and education.

The novel also depicts how religion contributes to maintaining these hierarchical structures. The exclusive control of religious rituals and practises belongs to the upper caste Brahmins, and these people's social standing and religious beliefs are intertwined. As a result, the notion that some racial and ethnic groups are inherently superior to others is strengthened. Consequently, *The Legends of Khasak* portrays a society that is sharply divided along caste and class lines, with a rigid hierarchy that is challenging to overturn. The novel demonstrates how this hierarchical structure can be oppressive, restrict personal expression and agency, and sustain social injustice and inequality.

Although set in a different era than *The Legends of Khasak*, M.T. Vasudevan Nair's book *Naalukettu: The House Around the Courtyard* also depicts Kerala's social hierarchies. The book is set in the early 20th century and describes a caste- and class-based society where some people enjoy privileges and power while others are marginalised and subjected to oppression. Therefore, *Naalukettu: The House Around the Courtyard* presents a society that is sharply segregated along caste, class, and gender lines, with a rigid hierarchy that is challenging to overturn. The novel illustrates how this hierarchical structure can be oppressive, restrict personal freedom and expression, and support social injustice and inequality.

VI. THE CLASH BETWEEN INDIVIDUAL DESIRE AND SOCIETAL EXPECTATIONS

In a traditional and conservative society, *The Legends of Khasak* by O.V. Vijayan depicts the conflict between personal desire and social expectations. The story's characters are compelled to weigh their desires against those of their family, friends, and culture, as depicted in the novel, and to come to an understanding. Young Ravi, the main character, recently relocated to Khasak, a remote village in Kerala. To leave his troubled past behind, he is looking for a fresh start. But he quickly discovers that the village is firmly rooted in customs and social expectations that limit his options and impose restrictions on his freedom.

The novel's central conflict is caused by Ravi's desire to experience sexual fulfilment and relationships with women. His community has strict moral laws governing sexual behaviour, which forbid extramarital sex and premarital sex. This keeps him constantly mindful of these laws. Tension permeates the book as a result of this conflict between his personal goals and accepted social norms.

Not only Ravi faces this conflict, but other characters do as well. Due to their disobedience to societal norms, other characters in the book also experience social rejection and ostracism. In addition, the novel emphasises how religion shapes societal norms and regulates personal behaviour. Even when they clash with people's personal preferences and freedoms, traditional values are upheld and the status quo is maintained by using a conservative, dogmatic interpretation of religion. So, *The Legends of Khasak* depicts the tension that can arise when personal desires clash with social norms in a traditional and conservative society and demonstrates how this conflict can result in social exclusion, alienation, and tension.

The conflict between personal desire and social expectations is a major theme in M.T. Vasudevan Nair's novel *Naalukettu: The House Around the Courtyard*. The story takes place in a conventional, patriarchal society where people are expected to uphold the traditions and values of their neighbourhood.

Appunni, the main character, is a young man who finds it difficult to balance his needs and wants with those of his family and society. He longs to live a life of his own but is constantly reminded of his obligation to take care of his family and uphold traditional values. Despite this, he still wants to pursue his dreams. Appunni's desire to escape the limitations of his caste and pursue a career in literature is one of the central conflicts in the book. But because the caste system is so ingrained in his family and society, they anticipate that he will choose a spouse and a profession that are appropriate for his caste.

In Appunni's mother's character, who is compelled to forgo her happiness to provide for her family, the conflict between personal desire and social expectations is also clearly visible. She is prohibited from pursuing her desires or aspirations in favour of continuing to be a devoted wife and mother. In addition, the novel explores how gender influences societal norms and limits personal agency. To uphold the honour and reputation of the family, women are frequently expected to put the needs and aspirations of the family before their own. Thus, *Naalukettu: The House Around the Courtyard* depicts the conflict between societal expectations and personal desires in a traditional, patriarchal society and demonstrates how this conflict can result in tension, frustration, and even tragedy for people who want to defy social and cultural norms.

VII. THE RESTRICTIVE GENDER ROLES

According to *The Legends of Khasak*, rigid gender roles were still upheld in rural Kerala, India, in the 1950s. The novel illustrates societal limitations on women's autonomy and freedom as well as societal expectations for them. The female characters in the book are primarily expected to carry out domestic duties and to prioritise their roles as wives and mothers over all other considerations. They are forbidden from participating in public life and pursuing their objectives and passions. The gender roles that give men more freedom and agency than women serve as an example of how the novel portrays the double standards that are present in modern society. For instance, Ravi, a male teacher who recently moved to the village, is free to roam around and interact with people from different backgrounds, whereas women are expected to remain inside the confines of their homes.

The novel also addresses the impact on women of how society limits and regulates female sexuality. This is a reflection of the patriarchal mentality that permeates society and that holds women accountable for maintaining the honour and reputation of their families through their sexual behaviour. The novel portrays the rigid gender roles that are prevalent in rural Keralan society in light of these limitations on women's autonomy and freedom. The novel exemplifies how restricting and oppressive these societal norms can be to people's freedom of expression.

Similar gender-based restrictions to those in Keralan society at the turn of the twentieth century are depicted in *Naalukettu: The House Around the Courtyard*. The novel serves as an example of how society limits women's autonomy and sets expectations for how they should behave. The female characters in the book are primarily expected to carry out domestic duties and to prioritise their roles as wives and mothers over all other considerations. They are not allowed to live publicly or pursue their objectives and interests. For example, the mother of the main character is expected to devote her entire life to the welfare of her family and is discouraged from following her interests or living a life apart from caring for them.

Men are given more freedom and agency than women in gender roles, which the novel uses to highlight the unfairness that exists in modern society. As an illustration, the father of the main character can commute to work from different places all over the country, whereas women are expected to stay in the safety of their homes. The novel also touches on women's sexuality and how society restricts and regulates it. The female characters are under pressure to uphold the reputation and honour of their families through their sexual behaviour, and any failure to do so is met with severe consequences. This is an example of the patriarchal mindset that dominates society and in which women are only seen in terms of their sexual behaviour, and their actions are closely monitored and controlled.

The novel illustrates the rigid gender roles that predominated in Keralan society at the start of the twentieth century in light of these limitations on women's autonomy and freedom. It illustrates how these social norms can be oppressive and stifle personal expression, as well as how women are frequently seen as unimportant patriarchal objects rather than as distinct individuals with their own identities and objectives.

VIII. THE CONCEPT OF NOSTALGIA

A major theme in the book *The Legends of Khasak* is nostalgia. The main character, Ravi, is shown to be nostalgic for his former life in the city and his lost love. He misses his hometown, which he left behind to accept his position in Khasak, and he also experiences homesickness. Khasak's inhabitants are portrayed as sentimental about their way of life, which they believe is in danger from modernization and the intrusion of outside forces. They face the conflict between trying to maintain their traditions and having to adapt to a world that is changing while still wanting to do so.

There is a persistent yearning for a more straightforward, innocent era throughout the entire book. This yearning is not just for the past but also for an idealised version of a bygone era. Nostalgia helps the characters in the book connect with their cultural heritage and sense of identity as they constantly seek a sense of belonging and purpose in their lives. Overall, the idea of nostalgia is used to highlight the conflict between tradition and modernity, as well as the search for meaning and identity in a world that is changing quickly, in *The Legends of Khasak*.

Similarly, the idea of nostalgia is crucial to *Naalukettu: The House Around the Courtyard*. According to the way he is portrayed, Appunni misses his youth and the carefree times he had in his ancestral home. As a result of moving to the city, he misses the traditional way of life that he left behind. His return to Naalukettu brings back old memories and reawakens his sense of kinship with his ancestors.

The conflict between tradition and modernity is explored in the book as Appunni tries to balance his nostalgia with the realities of the present. It is made clear that the traditional beliefs and practises of his community clash with the contemporary lifestyle he has embraced in the city. As he struggles to balance these competing demands, he realises that he is torn between his need to adapt to the changing world and his desire for the comfort and familiarity of his ancestral home.

The novel also examines the concepts of generational change and time passing from the perspective of Appunni's character. The Keralan architectural style known as "Naalukettu" is portrayed as a representation of the persistence of tradition and family. The gradual demise of this way of life and the loss of traditional values as younger generations grow more removed from their roots are depicted in the novel. The idea of nostalgia is used to highlight the conflict between tradition and modernity, the value of family and cultural heritage, and the complexity of identity and belonging in a world that is changing quickly in *Naalukettu: The House Around the Courtyard*.

IX. CONCLUSION

Novels like *The Legends of Khasak* and *Naalukettu: The House Around the Courtyard* serve as examples of literary works that highlight the sociocultural changes Kerala underwent. *The Legends of Khasak*, a book by O. V. Vijayan, explains how Kerala's social and cultural landscape changed as a result of British colonialism. The book *Naalukettu: The House Around the Courtyard* by M. T. Vasudevan Nair details the changes that took place in the years after independence.

Numerous topics, including modernization, gender inequality, and social and cultural identity, are covered in both books. Understanding these works helps one understand how Kerala's sociocultural landscape has changed over time and how it has evolved. The distinct social and cultural identity of Kerala has been shaped by a number of historical occurrences and factors, such as colonialism, modernization, and globalisation. The study places a strong emphasis on how literature shapes public opinion and promotes cultural change. Over the years, both books—which are now recognised as classic works of Malayalam literature—have had a huge impact on readers and writers alike.

The Legends of Khasak and *Naalukettu: The House Around the Courtyard* have been compared in order to better understand Kerala's sociocultural trajectory and the challenges it has faced over time.

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