

Contemporary relevance of *Comala* a short story by Santhosh

Echikkanam

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In

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by

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Declaration

I, Akhlnath K.M, hereby declare that this project entitled **Contemporary relevance of *Comala* a short story by Santhosh Echikkanam** submitted to the University of Calicut in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Bachelor of Arts in English and History, is a research work done by me under the supervision and guidance of **Ms. Lis Merin Peter** Assistant Professor, Department of English & History, Christ College (Autonomous), Irinjalakuda.

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Certificate

This is to certify that this project entitled **Contemporary relevance of *Comala* a short story by Santhosh Echikkanam** is a record of research work carried out by **Mr. Akhlnath K.M** under my supervision and guidance in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Bachelor of Arts in English and History submitted to the University of Calicut.

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Introduction

Literature is a term used to describe written and sometimes spoken material. Derived from the Latin word *litteratura* meaning "writing formed with letters," literature most commonly refers to works of the creative imagination, including poetry, drama, fiction, nonfiction, and in some instances, journalism, and song. Literature broadly is any collection of written work, but it is also used more narrowly for writings specifically considered to be an art form, especially prose fiction, drama, and poetry. In recent centuries, the definition has expanded to include oral literature, much of which has been transcribed. Literature is a method of recording, preserving, and transmitting knowledge and entertainment. Literature, as an art form, can also include works in various non-fiction genres, such as autobiography, diaries, memoir, letters, and the essay. Within its broad definition, literature includes non-fictional books, articles or other printed information on a particular subject.

Malayalam literature, body of writing in the Malayalam language of South India. The earliest extant literary work is Ramacharitam (late 12th or early 13th century). In the subsequent period, besides a popular pattu (song) literature, there flourished a literature of mainly erotic poetry composed in the Manipravalam style, an admixture of Malayalam and Sanskrit. The earliest examples of Malayalam literature are ballads and folk songs, which are entirely indigenous. Two outside sources, however, contributed much to the development of the later literature: Sanskrit, which was the language of scholarship, and Tamil, which was the language of administration over a long period. Ramacharitam, a poem based on the Yuddhakanda of the Ramayana, is the most important of the works influenced by Tamil. Both in its grammar and its vocabulary it appears to be a mixture of Tamil and Malayalam. Less markedly dependent on Tamil are the works of a family

of poets from Niranam in central Travancore who flourished in the late 14th and 15th centuries. Their works include translations of the Ramayana, by Rama Panikkar, and of the Bhagavadgita, by Madhava Panikkar.

Translation Studies is a field of study that deals with the theory, description, and application of translation. Because it examines translation both as an interlingual transfer, and as an intercultural communication, Translation Studies can also be described as an inter-discipline which touches on other diverse fields of knowledge, including comparative literature, cultural studies, gender studies, computer science, history, linguistics, philosophy, rhetoric, and semiotics. The skills of translation are becoming ever more important and desirable. Today's multicultural and multilingual society demands effective, efficient, and empathetic communication between languages and cultures. That's important for various reasons, which we'll now explore.

Contemporary Malayalam poetry deals with social, political, and economic life context. Under a spoken blessing of a resourceful array of poets and authors, the modern Malayalam literature is fast ahead in its class, style and quality. Development of short story as a popular literary form was began in the 19th century. The spread of general education and the birth of newspapers and magazine helped the spread of novels and other genres of writing and literature.

JivatsahityaPrasthanam (1937), a movement which was transformed into the *PurogamanaSahityam* (Progressive Literature). They stood for reform and the creation of a socialistic society and used the subject matter of literature as a tool for it. ThakazhiSivasankara Pillai, Kesava Dev, PonkunnamVarkey, KaroorNeelakanta Pillai, Vaikom Muhammad Basheer, LalithambikaAntherjanam, S.K Pottekkat, K. Saraswathiyamma and P.C. Kuttikrishan played an important role in popularizing the

genre. Ponjikkara Rafi, P.A. Muhammed Koya, Vettoor Raman Nair and T.K.C Vaduthala's, N. P. Muhammad etc. mainly depicts the story of their own community. Other short story writers depicted the experience of Soldiers. Some of the writers are Kovilan's *Boardout (1953)*, *OrikkalMausyanayirunnu (Once He Was a Man, 1953)* and *Marupati (The Reply)*, *Nandanar's*) and *OruKochanujaneKurichu (About a Younger Brother, 1957)* *Bhayam (Fear, 1959)*, *Pirannal (Birthday, 1968)* etc. The writers challenged the established and the widely accepted principles of literary composition and approved values. Eg:-M. Mukundan's *PrabhatamMutalPrabhatamVare (From Morning to Morning)*, O.V.Vijayan's *Parakal (Rocks, 1970)* etc. The modern short story writers like *Murukan Enna Pampatti (Murukan the SnakeCahrmer)* by M.P. Narayana Pillai, *PrapanchattinteAvasistangal (The Remnants of the Universe)* and *Mazha(the Rain)* by Zakariah, *VarantayilNinnullaKazhcha (Sight from the Varanda)* of PattathuvilaKarunakaran, *MuppathuVayassulla Oral (A Thirty-Year Old Man)* by M. Sukumaran, *AarumPokathaVazhi* by PunathilKunjabdulla, *UtpattiVicharam (Thoughts on the Origin)* by T. Ramachandran focused their writings for social causes. Other authors of contemporary short stories are N.S. Madhavan, Gracy, T.V. Kochubava, K.B. Sreedevi, Valsala etc.

Santhosh Echikkanam is a South Indian popular contemporary short story writer from Kerala. He is one of the new comers in Malayalam literature. He was born in kanhangad, Kasargod district in Kerala. Santhosh was engaged with politics during his college days. He never came first in the college story writing competitions, but he persisted with his literary pursuits and later achieved success, mostly for his short stories. His stories are down to earth and speak about the common people. He writes novels, poems and short stories and many of his works have been adapted to Malayalam silver screen. His short story '*Comala*' earned him the Kerala Sahitya Academy Award in 2008

in the short story section. He became popular through his short stories which tell tales of common people. Echikkanam's journey as a writer begins from Bedaduka. Born in a rural village, he had to struggle to create an identity of his own. After writing the socio-political satire "*Comala*", he established himself as a leading short story writer. He has also co-scripted a few Malayalam films and scripted several superhit Malayalam mega serials.

The prosperity and progress of any society depend on how strong the bonds of love and the feeling of oneness are among its people. If the people are strongly connected with one another through the bonds of brotherhood and oneness, the society remains firm and united during the days of adversity and crisis. On the contrary, a society where the forces of individualism and isolation loom large, is a deeply broken and weak one. History tells us that societies fall when there is the dominance of selfishness, when people live for themselves and attach no importance to the wellbeing of their countrymen.

The theme of the story "*Comala*" revolves around this concept, where media seeks only the public attention and not the public wellbeing; and the ignorance of the people about the sufferings of the other. The author compares this society to the town presented in the famous novel, *Pedro Paramo* by "Juan Rulfo". This town is known as "Comala"- the town of the dead. There are people who are kind enough to help and care others, but majority of people are busy with their own lives. And media can be considered as one of the best examples. It only aims at seeking public attention, no matter what cruel methods it includes, and only act like they are genuinely interested in the problems of others. This situation is portrayed in this story, where the protagonist 'Viswan' is the victim of the selfish society and media. The story also includes the themes of betrayal in friendship, poverty and the feeling of isolation in the society. The title is

quite perfect because the people, who are behaving like they have no feelings and emotions can be considered only as ghosts and not human beings.

The project includes three chapters; in the first chapter it is about the Self-centered man and media. The second chapter is the about the problems faced by a person because of the influence of media in the short story “Comala”. The third chapter includes the characterization and hypocrisy of the characters that appear in the short story “Comala”.

Chapter I

Self-Centered Man and Media

It's no wonder why self-centeredness is typically viewed as the most unappealing personality trait in a potential friend or partner. Most of us struggle to maintain a sense of compassion and understanding toward others. Self-centered people, on the other hand, don't bother to take the time to understand another person's point-of-view or feelings. In today's society, people are becoming more and more self-centered. They appear to strive for their own benefits. They will help the other only if they are benefited from that. Leaders, politicians and everyone else should rise above their own personal interests and try to give a message that we care for our country, our traditions and our collective wellbeing. The media can play a vital role in this regard. It needs no explanation that in the present day, the world media is a powerful tool to change the minds of the people. It should be used to disseminate healthy principles rather than just the disturbing news of blood, anarchy, dirty politics and love for material things that ultimately trigger the forces of polarization in society.

Influence of Social media has made us more self-centered. Often times though, a person's social media becomes a way to promote themselves. Pictures that are posted completely misrepresent that person's life, adding only cute pictures or selfies, and essentially making that person's life look perfect. It is still imported to realize that no one's life is as perfect as they may make it appear on social media. It is understandable that people want to showcase accomplishment and special events in their lives with pictures and posts. Keep in mind that these pictures often take at least 20 times (or more) to be post-worthy, and they only reflect how a person wants to be seen, not how they actually are. Social media is not the most reliable source for learning about a person;

instead, tangible interactions provide a better idea. Social media, while it connects us to others, may actually lead to greater self-centeredness as people strive to make their “presence” known. Media and society are closely related to each other. The extensive impact of media on society can easily be seen these days. Media reflects our society, how it works and what it constitutes. With the advancement in technological area, our society has also observed the expansion in the thoughts and ideas of people. Every single invention starting from the printing press to the latest smartphones our society has accepted it. Earlier people used to communicate things with the help of sketch and print forms but as time passes the medium became more advanced and useful.

Now people are just a click away from any and every information that is available on the internet. There are different forms of media that help to inform, educate and entertain our society more effectively. Media can be in print form that is through newspapers, books, magazines etc. Media includes an electronic form for spreading information which is one of the most used media of mass communication. With the help of radio and TV, listeners and viewers not only get updated but it also creates an understanding of current happenings. Radio being an audio medium helps in disseminating information to every nook and corner of our country. Radio has also played an important role in creating a platform for imagination. The reach of this audio medium is not only limited to urban areas but it has covered a wide range even to the remote areas of our country.

The people living in rural parts of the country are getting more benefits of the audio medium of mass communication. The programs on radio cater the interest of rural section which constitutes small-scale industries, farming, forestry, fisheries etc. which has also helped the rural people in their day-to-day life matters. On the other hand, TV is the second most used medium in terms of reach. Visuals and audio when combined

together help in better understanding and provides up-to date information. News from all parts of the country is investigated and presented through this medium of mass communication, Initially, Television in our country was introduced for education purpose. But later as time passes the objective of educating people turned into imparting information and entertaining masses. Now Television has become an important part of our daily life. It covers a vast section of programs like daily soaps, news, movies, reality shows, sports, weather forecast, religious programs, music etc.

Social media is becoming one of the most popular and best accessed media of communication these days. Social media has brought different people from the different geographical area on one platform on which they can share their feeling, ideas, emotions, information and much more. The manifold social networking sites like Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, Google +, others open the door to share ideas, views, and thoughts on the same platform. By the advancement of science and technology, the world has come close to each other. Today people don't have to wait for the dissemination process but the condition is such that every social media user has become a source of information on their own. The daily news and views to which the social media user comes across cover a wide range of topics.

These topics or subjects are related to the happenings of our surrounding. People can like, show emotions through the list of emoticons or even comment accordingly. The social media act as an umbrella that constitutes a variety of interesting features that have our life very easier. Features of tagging friends, location sharing, photo and video uploads, message chatting, video calling, searching friends etc. have made our life more engaging.

The Mass Media is a unique feature of modern society; its development has accompanied an increase in the magnitude and complexity of societal actions and

engagements, rapid social change, technological innovation, rising personal income and standard of life and the decline of some traditional forms of control and authority.

The media influences so many people's attitude nowadays. Information can be spread after a few clicks of a button, whether it is true, false, supposition or gossip. This can affect relationships in various ways, be it between celebrities and ordinary people or between celebrities themselves and their loved ones. The media can manipulate, influence, persuade and pressurize society, along with even controlling the world at times in both positive and negative ways; mentally, physically and emotionally. Controversial stories are reported and printed with no reliance of it being fact or not. The public is meant to believe everything they're told and not question it. With it being so easy to say assert an opinion so easily after a few taps, it can lead to investigations and front-page headlines. Additionally, as newspapers and magazines have websites, articles can be posted and received quicker than printed articles, and are updated more regularly. Links to these articles can be posted to social media platforms – like Facebook and Twitter – as well as being emailed and messaged directly between friends and family. Today, the media is everywhere, and can easily get to places if needs be in breaking news scenarios. Media can influence the way people are viewed, which means people's careers can change within a flash.

Social media offers accomplished by collaboration space for social interaction between seemingly infinite numbers of people. Several benefits have been identified in relation to the routine use of social media platforms. The six keys be central or dominant of benefits were identified as increased interactions with others, more available, shared, and tailored information, increased accessibility and widening access to health information, peer, social, emotional support, public health surveillance, and potential to influence health policy. Although there are several benefits associated with

the use of social media, specifically image based social media, some uses of these platforms may lead to potentially unwanted effects. The primary image based social media platforms this review examines are Pinterest, Instagram and Facebook.

Media is the contemplation of our society and it depicts what and how society works. Media, either it is printed, electronic or the web is the only medium, which helps in making people informed. It also helps in entertaining the public, educate and make people aware of the current happenings. Media has today become the voice of our society. There is a variety of media platform that has stimulated the thoughts of the young generation and other sections of our society, more eloquently.

Media has become an indispensable part of our daily life. It has influenced the public such that people need newspaper with their morning tea. Media, either it is print, electronic or social media has emerged as the main source of information and technology.

Chapter 2

Analysis of Comala

In media studies, mass communication, media, psychology, communication theory, and sociology, media influence and media effects are topics relating to mass media and media culture's effects on individual or an audience's thoughts, attitude and behavior. Whether it is written, televised, or spoken, mass media reaches a large audience. Mass media's roles and effects in shaping modern culture are central issues for study of culture.

The influence of mass media has an effect on many aspects of human life, which can include voting a certain way, individual views and beliefs, or skewing a person's knowledge of a specific topic due to being provided false information. The overall influence of mass media has increased drastically over the years, and will continue to do so as the media itself improves.

Today we live in a world where the truth, if there is one, is constructed by the media. In the post truth era, politics is no longer the art of the possible, but of the fictive. Literature is also undergoing a change of meaning, where narratives are constructed for selfish motives like companies using storytelling to motivate employees. In news channels, day in and day out, there are media monsters conducting discussions about the suicide of the farmers, for example, and commodifying the same to great effect. After a unspecified period of time, people are thrown into fictions which they are forced to believe to be true. In *Comala*, Santhosh Eachikkanam foregrounds the interface between the commodification of media and the uncelebrated lives of the commoners completely ignored in the process. This story was written in the context of the rise of suicidal

tendency among the people in the post-globalized world. The title, which is the name of the town of the dead in Juan Rulfo's *Pedro Paramo*, presents images of an unsympathetic mob at the suffering of a commoner. In Rulfo's novel, the narrator Juan Preciado comes to Comala, following the words of his dead mother, on the quest for his father, Pedro Paramo. The novel metamorphoses into an extraordinarily evocative and haunting journey through hell, where everyone seems to be spectral presences to the narrator. Rooted strongly in Kerala culture, the author draws a picture of Kerala where people have become cynical, pessimistic and self-centred like the dead dwellers of the town of Comala. But it also can be viewed as a picturisation of society not only in Kerala but in the world itself, where the importance of understanding each other and the elements of goodness is vanishing.

The whole story revolves around the incapacitated situation of Viswan, the protagonist of the story. It starts with a channel discussion in which Viswan and his family's suicide was the topic.

In a literal sense, the channel and the personalities who were present in the discussion saw it as a mere topic for discussion. None of them used their knowledge or power to save Viswan and his family, but to show off themselves before the people. The discussion starts with a question; will Viswan and family die or not? rather than, what can we do in order to save Viswan? This itself gives an indication towards the 'glamorizing even the death' attitude of the media.

Viswan, a person who holds no title was without any other option but to suicide. The only way before him was to announce his decision to the public, hoping it would help him in any way. But it was useless and gained him nothing but more despair. His belief in his teacher's words, that, "helping others is an act of holiness", shows that he

was a man of principles. His friend who deceived him, also used these words to convince Viswan. He asked him to sign as the first surety for his bank loan. It is a sad fact that people use good things and good values to do something bad. People know someone's weakness and use it as a weapon against them. It is to be noted that the personalities in the discussion were the bank secretary, psychologist, advocate, and official from National Crime Records Research Bureau. These people, who hold high positions in the society is capable of doing something for Viswan. Even if they do not have time to argue for him, they could economically help him to repay the loan. It will do no harm to their lives, but they are not ready for it. This proves that uneducated and poor people have more willingness to help others than the educated ones. The bank secretary escapes from the situation by stating that he can act only according to the rules of the bank. But all these rules and regulations were created by humans itself; and sometimes humanity should prevail over those rules. The psychologist, who should be the foremost one to understand Viswan, blamed him through his theories. And the newsreader's words "let us continue the discussion. but before that today's headlines" tells that for the media, headlines are more important than a person's life. The advocate was eager to punish Viswan if he fails in the attempt to suicide. She states that Viswan is killing his wife and children. But she does not understand that he decided to die along with his family because if he dies alone, his family will be left in the street and no one will be there to look after them. After hearing everybody's opinions, the newsreader asks what Viswan has to say. He asks him to be brief because they are running out of time. In short, all the persons who were present there increased Viswan's sorrow instead of consoling him.

The channel conducts a polling through SMS to say people's opinion Viswan's suicide. But the next day Viswan was surprised to see that no one asked him about the television discussion and there was no response through polling. This part in the story is

the most striking example of the society's selfishness. People are not even caused to show discomposure about other people's lives. Viswan asks the librarian for the book *Pedro Paramo*, and he gives it to him with a smile and says; "this is the book of the dead". Death and smile are contrasted and yet here the person smiles when the other person is going to die. Even the death of one became joke for the others in today's society. After Viswan had finished reading the book, its unrelenting form and content threw Viswan into a mist. He realized that his life is dried-up and incapable of being put up with like Comala. By the time he woke up in the morning, he had been lost somewhere between life and death. One week before his death, he left home for a journey to find his friend. The following lines from the story; that "he asked many people about his friend. All of them were awaiting those others who had cheated them.", says enough about the condition of people in the contemporary society.

Happening at a time subsequent to a reference time, what Viswan received was utter disappointment. On the fifth night of his journey, he stood on the National Highway trying to wave down some trucks. But the trucks went fast without paying any attention to him. There was a wayside restaurant, and the author describes the people standing there as "more silent than the dead", which explains the gravity of the situation where people are living like the dead. Viswan bought a coffee and before he started drinking it, he heard the sounds of brakes crashing down headlong on the ground. Here, the mindset of Viswan was very much different than before. He was changed due to his situations and sufferings and he did not feel much shock. In his earlier days, he would have set aside the coffee and hurried to the rescue of the automobile driver. Yet he had a hope that someone would go pick up the wounded and try to wave down some passing vehicle. But from those who stood there, not even a look of support for the misfortune of the accident

victim arose. Instead, they dedicated themselves to eating like the dead. This made Viswan feel that he was in Comala.

When the young man's blood hit on Viswan's feet, its warmth awakened the human in him and he rushed to the man and tried to save him. He waved to many vehicles for help but nobody was willing. Then the man who ran the roadside restaurant told him that it was a usual sight there. It is strange that something like dying of a human being became a usual thing. The restaurant owner arranged a jeep for him. But the driver of the jeep refused to touch the young man's body. This made Viswan to believe even more that this place is Comala. Suddenly a middle-aged man hurried into the jeep and sat down without bothering to wait for Viswan's permission. All along the way the man talked a lot and asked Viswan about the news time discussion. He felt hopeful that at least one person helped him. But after sometime, to his surprise, the man asked the driver to stop the jeep. He accompanied Viswan only to reach his home at the late night. Here the author succeeded in presenting a true concept as said by Viswan. That is, "The mind is an innocent mason. With how much the social forces that binds you to the course of action demanded by that force does it builds up a fancy with brick of virtue but even before you could relish its beauty, it will break into pieces like an absolute weak stone-heap". It is true that our calculations can go wrong quickly. Our thoughts and feelings for someone could be changed anytime.

After some time, the young man was dead. Before his death, Viswan asked the driver to stop and went to fetch some water for the man. He reached by a stream and thought that, "he too, like him, travelled to who knows which places, talked to several people. Lost and wept and won and rejoiced. Loved and hated and fell and got to his feet. He cooked his own body in the oil of desires and washed it clean of excrement. How many people discussed him, conducted opinion polls? All that time, what he was in

search of, unawares, were just two drops of water from the little stream where he has plunged his toes". These lines; though it appeals to the person in the story, also speaks about each and every person in the world. Everybody, whether men or women, rich or poor, white or black, wishes for just two drops of water at the end. No matter how we live, we all will encounter the same situation; that is, death. What matters is whether we lived our life like a human or like the dead. Everybody has problems, and everyone will become receivers of those last two drops of water from someone. In a way, every human being is a debtor. Viswan's debt, which was those drops of water for the young man, was cleared by him and that incident made him feel that the threat of suicide displayed in front of his house was a huge absurdity. This is not only the story of Viswan, but the story of every common man in the society and also the situation of a man who believes in the good side of people.

This world belongs to those have the ability to stay strong in every situation and those people who are attractive especially by means of smallness or prettiness or quaintness. The good people, who believe in other people easily; are cheated and remain disappointed every time. Therefore, treat people good, but do not believe everyone easily because most of the times, betrayal comes from the people from whom we least expect it.

The influence of mass media has an effect on many aspects of human life, which can include voting a certain way, individual views and beliefs, or skewing a person's knowledge of a specific topic due to being provided false information. Media is an ever-changing field and is being critiqued now more than ever by the general public. The overall influence of mass media has increased drastically over the years, and will continue to do so as the media itself improves. Media influence is the actual force exerted by a media message, resulting in either a change or reinforcement in audience or

individual beliefs. Media effects are measurable effects that result from media influence or a media message. Whether a media message has an effect on any of its audience members is contingent on many factors, including audience demographics and psychological characteristics. These effects can be positive or negative, abrupt or gradual, short-term or long-lasting. Not all effects result in change; some media messages reinforce an existing belief. Researchers examine an audience after media exposure for changes in the psychological result of perception and learning and reasoning, belief systems, and attitudes, as well as emotional, physiological and behavioural effects.

Chapter 3

The Benumbed Beholders

Comala, the short story by Santhosh Eachikkanam evokes the state of being degenerate in mental or moral qualities of the modern world order that has gone to a level where loss of human life seldom evokes emotions in anyone. He tried to explain the common incidents happening around us through these stories in a down to earth fashion. The narration is so lucid that, happening with common man. It was a rare and peculiar way of creativity. *Comala* portrays the insensitiveness which is prevalent in the society and the individuals. This can be seen from the casual manner in which death is spoken about in newspapers, media and general discussions.

The chief character in the novel *Comala* is Kundoor Viswan. He is a forty-five-year-old man. He had suffered a lot in the last forty-five years or so. He is not a well-educated person. He is the man who were cheated by his friend Sudhakaran. And now Viswan and his family had decided to commit suicide because of the dept. Now he and his family are walking on a thread between death and seizure by the government. He is a man who is leading a peaceful life and they lived with what they have at the end of the day. The family is run by the amount that he got and also by her wife's salary. And he had two daughters also. And he had to put them together in his seven and half cent plot. And they were at the condition of suffering from lack of food. They were hardly trying to live under the concrete roofing and they started to live there at last Thulam. And he says that if the bank were taking their house, they will commit suicide.

Viswan shifted to Kundoor before two years. And he had a friend who is Sudhakaran and they were classmates. And Viswan had helped him when he was facing problems in

his life. And which lead him to this condition. And he believed that “helping others is an act of holiness, and sin is hurting others”. He came to know about this debt after three years. And because of this debt he faces a lot of problems in society. And he realised that he can’t pay this back, so he decided to commit suicide with his family.

In our society there are so many people who are facing different kinds of problems in their life due to this debt and this was only one of the problems which is faced by poor people, who don’t have any voice to react against these kinds of problems. Through Viswan Santhosh Eachikkanam portrays the issues faced by poor ones. They were not aware of how to face these problems alone. So they could not find any solution for this situation, so they decided to commit suicide. And government or any other authorities were not taking any initiative measures to understand and solve their problems.

At the point of time, he had to say someone who else stands surety before, that they will be cheated tomorrow. He says that whatever it is, in the world each one of us is alone. There is a proverb meaning even if you throw away something into the river you have to measure it before throwing it away. So, when money is involved it will be good if you keep an account, even if it’s with your own mother. Not to take it out on her. But when tomorrow someone else makes us to do so, we need some kind of evidence.

Viswan is expecting that he will get justice and is waiting for the news. But the response that he received from the viewers makes him disappointed. He never expects such responses from people. They will understand these situations only when they face the same. And he read the novel *Pedro Paramo* by Juan Rulfo. About a man named Juan Preciado who travels to his recently deceased mother's hometown, Comala, to find his father. A major theme in the book is people's hopes and dreams as sources of the motivation they need to succeed.

Hope is each character's central motive for action. Viswan is comparing his wife to a character Dorotea in the novel *Pedro Paramo*. And by reading these works, he feels a positivity in his mind and remove the board in front of his house. And decided to search Sudhakaran. He had searched him in so many places. But there is no result. Through his way, he had experienced a lot. He realizes the real meaning of humanity. And he finds a lot of people who were selfish in their own way not thinking of others. He saw a man who met with an accident. And at that time there were so many people around that place. But anyone of them were not ready to help that person. Even when Viswan was also not ready and he also thinks that any other will help him. But he realized that any of others will help him. So, he takes him to hospital. In that way also, he felt humiliated by the behaviour of others. At the end, the man asked a drop of water, Viswan travelled long time to find water, and he find a river and bring water to that person and gave him. And at last, he realises that his debt was these two drops of water. And he has repaid it. Then it occurred to him that the threat of suicide displayed in front of his house was a huge absurdity. That should be taken off. And he was now happy to get a realization.

Juan is one of the two narrators in the work. He comes to Comala in order to find his father, his mother's last wish. He finds the town forsaken by owner or inhabitants and dies of fright from the ghosts. He is then buried in the same grave as Dorotea, whom he talks with. It is apparent that he dies without the proper sacraments and is now stuck in purgatory.

Dorotea is town's beggar. She tells the story of Comala before Pedro died after she is buried in the grave with Juan. She was known for being homeless and living on the charity of the people in the town. She had always tried to have children but had “the heart of a mother but a womb of a whore”. She was known for her eccentric behaviour by thinking that she had a baby.

And the other character is Radha, who is the wife of Viswan. And she is a tailor and she tries to help her husband even when she was not physically well. She was a wife who is always ready to help her husband in any difficult situation. For repaying this loan, she had worked a lot, and at last her knees swollen by continuously working and she had to take medicine from the Pollakadavaidar for a week.

Sudhakaran, is a man who cheats his genuine friend Viswan by taking money from him and he didn't repay the money to the bank and he is the one who is the reason behind the debt trap and also the problems that Viswan and family now facing. He was the classmate of Viswan. They studied together, sitting at the same bench in the Government High School Velloor. He had emotionally attacked Viswan by uttering the sentence "helping others is an act of holiness" which was said by their teacher Poduvaal sir. And Viswan believed his words and those trust was taking advantage by him. After knowing about this issue Viswan met him and informed about the letter that he was received from the bank. But he was not ready to do anything for him. And he is a man who takes advantage of him and when he gets what he needed from him, he just changed and put his friend in the way to suicide. Through Sudhakaran, the writer gives the message that don't trust anyone blindly and never do too much help to others. Or otherwise, we have to face these types of problems in our life.

Madhavan Nair, is the Secretary of Velloor Service Co-operative Bank. Without considering humanity, he just considers on his own duties through which he shows his responsibilities that he wants to show to their bank. But as a human being he can do anything for Viswan by hearing what really happened in his life. When the news reporter asked about these Madhavan says that "we can act only under the Co-operative Bank Act. It was Sudhakaran who obtained the loan. If he fails to repay the loan, it is imperative that the first surety repay the capital and the interest amounting to Rupees Ninety

thousand three hundred and forty-five. Or else the Bank can do nothing expect confiscate Viswan's house and the surrounding plot.

And he says that they had given enough time to repay the loan to the bank. They had sent the registered notice several times. And they tried their best to defer the confiscation. And also, they said that if they begin to write off the debt based on their tears. They have to close down the banks and stay at home. And also, they informed that the job of the Bank is financial transaction. And these were one of the problems faced by the people and if they take loan from the bank and can't repay it may be it is because of the high interest that they ask. They all are looking for their financial growth and never considering the hopeless or meaningless life of others due to this kind of situation.

Dr. C. Nandakumar, well-known psychologist, writer and social activist. As a psychologist, he is well known to read the mind of a person in any situations. And he says that he can't do it. And he leaves to assume that a planned move relating to suicide has already started forming in his mind. But he points that life has a tendency to seduce and pull back someone who is contemplating death. And it will make him all the more scared. He wanted to get suicide but a fear that is greater than death is growling inside him. It may be because that he is coming from poor background. And there is nothing to lose from their side.

And the next character who takes a role in this novel is Advocate Fathima, she had connected with telephone line and she wants to talk about the legal aspects of suicide. She is a well-known advocate who can give detailed information about this. She informed that according to Section 309 of IPC makes the attempt to commit suicide is an offence. The Court has the power to award a punishment of up to ten years imprisonment and fine. Not just the attempt to commit suicide, inclining one to commit suicide is also an

offence. If he fails in this suicide attempt, there is no doubt that he will be charged on both these counts? In a sense, he is killing his wife and children.

And then the other personality who joined in this news line was Shri Alex Punnoose, a senior official at the National Crime Records Research Bureau (NCRRB). And he is going to speak about the increase in the rate of suicide in Kerala over the last few years. And he very well knows about the suicide rate and also the reason behind it. Kerala has the highest rate of suicide in the country. And looking towards the national average, Kerala is heading toward an extremely dangerous situation. As looking towards the crimes and consumption of alcohol, the rate is increasing day by day. and he informs that as per the statistics for 2004, 11300 persons committed suicide in Kerala. And every year the rate of suicide is increasing. *Comala* depicts the pathetic situation prevalent in not only Kerala but in the nation as well.

Conclusion

In the modern competitive world, the life of human is degraded in to almost a robot-like existence. Capitalisation, globalization and other facets of the contemporary world order have also fuelled this phenomenon. Many factors have contributed the survival of human beings a difficult one. The competence of human beings wanting to survive in the modern world has become much more formidable than ever before. However, this has led people to take extreme steps like exploitation of fellow human beings. Sudhakaran from *Comala* is an example for this kind of exploitation. Human beings have become just another commodity to trade for things required for their survival. It's no wonder why self-centeredness is typically viewed as the most unappealing personality trait in a potential friend or partner. Most of us struggle to maintain a sense of compassion and understanding towards others. Self-centered people, on the other hand, don't bother to take the time to understand another person's point-of-view or feelings.

Lack of concern for others feelings is unrestrained and violent in the world around. Unfortunately, insensitivity is seen and heard all around especially in the media. The society has become so immune to the class that makes up society. The need of the hour is not a technologically advanced world and society but a society with empathetic individuals. Along with the individuals the media has also become insensitive towards the people and society. Information that is spread over social media has a tendency to be unchecked and often possesses facts that are exaggerated or even fabricated which may affect the society or an individual like Viswan from *Comala*. The influence of mass media has an effect on many aspects of human life, which can include voting a certain

way, individual views and beliefs, or skewing a person's knowledge of a specific topic due to being provided false information.

A contemporary writer like Santosh Echikkanam's *Comala* is a replica of the modern society and the hypocrisy of media that delineates cold-blooded unpitying attitudes of individuals.

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