

The institution functions with focus to creating dynamic understandings of gender, and has instilled in its policies measures for gender sensitization. Gender sensitization is treated as a basic requirement and initiatives are made to go beyond normalized understandings of gender, rejecting traditional binaries, resulting in an inclusive campus. The policy of the institution regarding gender equity and its promotion is implemented through the conduction of various programmes in each academic year with focus on ensuring gender justice on campus, and creating support structures. As an institution that caters to the educational needs to a large number of women students, who are a majority on the campus, awareness programmes and classes are provided, and a women-friendly campus is ensured by way of practices that guarantee equal access to facilities, adopting proper measures for security at the same time. Significantly, the institution also focuses on acknowledging gender as a component, along with caste/class in academic and other discussions on social parameters, and highlights intersectionality.

The concepts of gender equity and justice require more than creating gender-just environment, and it is important to sensitise the students to the needs and issues of gender and sexual minorities. Our policy for gender inclusivity on campus offers scope for organising sensitization programmes that would convey the concept of inclusive structures to the student community. With this purpose, the institution has hosted events that articulate the rights of LGBTQI communities, thereby declaring our stand on gender equity.

1. Gender Sensitisation Programmes

1.1 Awareness Classes/Programmes

1.1.1 Curtain Raiser of Queer Pride Kerala 2016



The curtain raiser event of Queer Pride Kerala 2016 on 27th July, 2016 jointly organized by students union is a benchmark of the institution's inclusive policies. The seminar on Gender Politics and resistances was inaugurated by queer activist Chinju. Manisha, transgender activist and guest of the event spoke out her life and raised concerns about the victimization that gender and sexual minorities are forced to put up with. Dileep R, writer and assistant professor spoke on sexual politics and identities in the context of Kerala.

2. Session with Nalini Jameela and Beena



A conversation with Nalini Jameela, author and Sex workers' Forum of Kerala leader and Beena Anish, close associate of Sahayathrika, the platform for lesbians in Kerala was organized by Department of English as part of the Two-day National Conference on 'Negotiating Sexual Difference: Ethics of the Present'. The topic of discussion was "Whos Keralam?" moderated by Dileep R, Assistant Professor, Department. The discussion centered on how sexual difference and embodied experience construct socio-cultural identities.

3. "Pen Nadan"- Solo Drama demonstration by Santhosh Keezhattoor



The solo demonstration by theatre and film artist Santhosh Keezhattor is significant enough to be considered a landmark in the history of Malayalam theatre. The demonstration is based on the life and career of the theatre artist Ochira Velukkitti Aasan, who is one of the masters of Malayalam theatre. His contributions to theater are noteworthy, particularly while considering that he has played female roles. The demonstration by Keezhattor is a capturing narrative of the actor's career, which also casts a shadow on the history of theatre in Kerala, and the (absence of) space that women had in artistic spheres.

4. National Seminar on Women in Leadership organized by Women Cell on 20.02.2018.
5. Awareness class for Students on "Women Health and Hygiene" by Dr. Deepa, Gynaecologist organised by Women cell
Dr. Deepa delivered a talk on Women's health and hygiene as part of the activities of the women's cell during the year. Majority of the students being girls, an awareness class on hygiene and health becomes necessary in ensuring the well being of the students and creating opportunities for healthy development.
6. Awareness campaign on Menstrual Hygiene

1.2 Authors' Lectures/ Interactions

1. Talk on 'Femininity and Expressions' by KR Meera



Malayalam Author and winner of the Kerala Sahitya Academy award for her Novel *Aarachar*, K.R. Meera delivered a talk on 'Femininity and Expressions' as a part of the presentation of K.V. Sudhakaran Award for Short Stories to writer V. M. Devadas. Meera spoke on the contemporary need for sensitizing young boys to the issues that women face, and pointed out at the irony of raising a generation of boys who aren't emotionally empowered, and are indifferent to the struggles of women, even when we actualize women empowerment



2. "Victims or Survivors? When Women Speak about Sexual Violence" by Rekha Raj



A session on "Victims or Survivors? When Women Speak about Sexual Violence" by Rekha Raj was organized by Department of Philosophy as part of the seminar 'Understanding Subjectivities' on 13-09-2018. She opined that sexuality has nothing to do with sexual assaults. It is purely an attempt to establish power dominance. Its aim is to insult and put women in an inferior position.

3. Talk on "Excluded Gender in Caste and Class Analysis" by Dr. T. K. Anandi.
4. Talk on Understanding Caste in the GenderHistory of Kerala by Dr. K.M. Sheeba

1.3 Invited Lectures/ Talks

1. Lecture Series on " Athirthi Kadakkunna Vakkukal"



In connection with International Women's Day a lecture series was organized by the Women's Cell,

2. Talk on " Chinthavishtaya Seeta" by P. Pavithran organised by the department of malayalam in collaboration with their alumni organisation , an interpretation of the famous poem from womens' perspective


3. Invited Lecture on Feminist Theories of Film by Dr. A. Hariprasad, Associate Professor, Department of Film Studies, , as part of Decalogue, a platform for film discussions, lectures and screenings .

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
GOVT. BRENNEN COLLEGE PRESENTS

DECALOGUE
DIALOGUES ON CINEMA - III

04
FEB

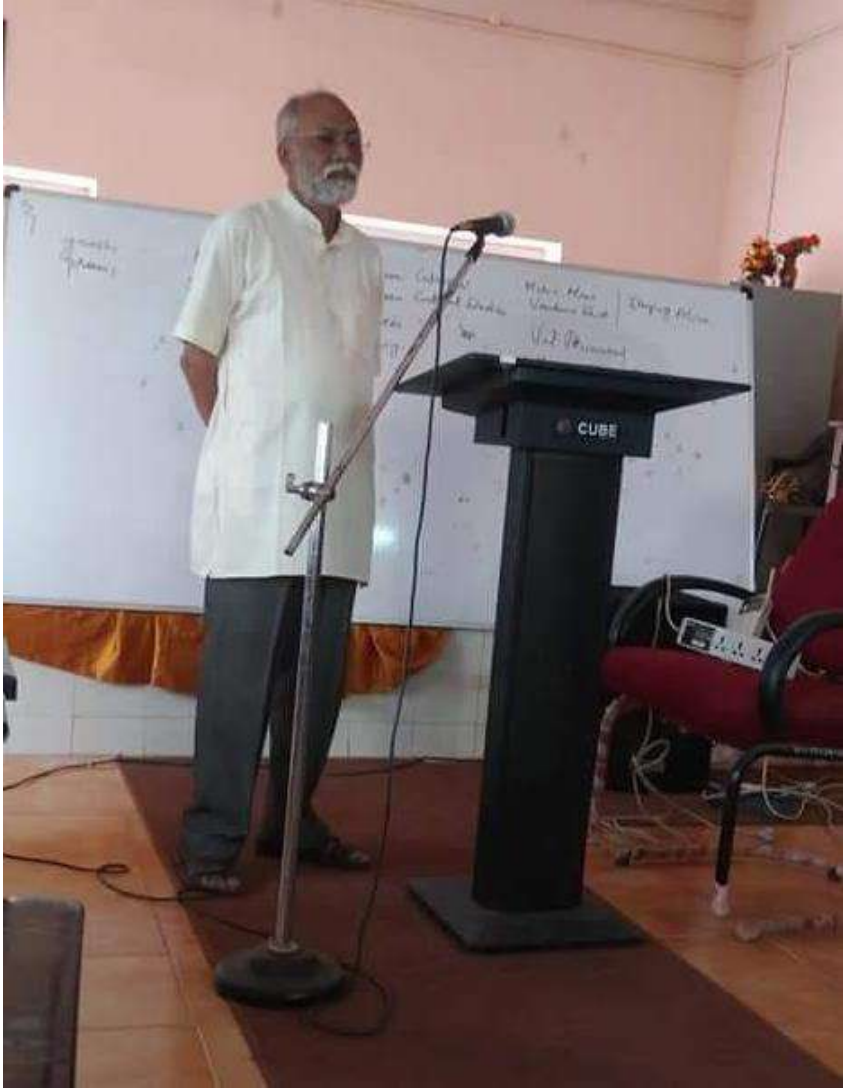
AN INVITED LECTURE
**FILM THEORY AND
SCREEN THEORY**
IDEOLOGY AND UNCONSCIOUS



DR. HARIPRASAD ATHANICKAL
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR
DEPARTMENT OF FILM STUDIES EFL UNIVERSITY HYDERABAD

Monday, 04/02/2019, 11am, Hindi Seminar Hall

4. Invited Lecture on Postmodern Feminism by Dr. Prasantha Kumar (Retd.) Director, Indira Gandhi Centre for Gender Studies, SSUS, Kalady, in the Three-day Lecture series as part of Centrum, a platform for invited lectures.




LECTURES:

06 FEB 2019
On Lacan (1:30pm to 3.30pm)

07 FEB 2019
Post Colonialism (Fanon, Said, Spivak, Bhabha) 10:00am to 12:00pm
Postmodern Feminism (1.30pm to 3.30pm)

08 FEB 2019
Ecocriticism (10am to 12pm)

**PG DEPT OF ENGLISH
GOVT BRENNEN COLLEGE
INVITES YOU**



ESSENTIAL THEORY

Prof. Prasantha Kumar
HOD Dept of English
Director, Indira Gandhi Centre for Gender Studies
SSUS, Kalady.

5. A session on 'Body and Moral agency' by Dr.LeninCC as part of the Lectures on Applied Ethics' organised by Department of Philosophy
6. Talk by Smitha Pannian, social activist and women writer of Kerala
7. Talk by Dr.Sindhu K V, social activist and Poet

1.4 Seminars/Workshops

1. Seminar on Negotiating Sexual Difference: Ethics of the Present

The two- day National Seminar on *Negotiating Sexual Difference: Ethics of the Present* was organized by the PG Department of English and Research Centre on **13 and 15 December, 2018**. is quite relevant in the contemporary context in which sexual difference is one of the determining factors in constructing discourses with reference to male subjectivity, and alienating non-male subjectivities from socio-cultural spaces. The sessions of the seminar addressed the theoretical and socio-cultural aspects of sexual difference in the light of global movements of resistance to various forms of exclusion.

The resource persons reflected on experience of exclusion, and raised discussions on how sexual difference is perceived and understood in various contexts.



Since the topic of the seminar is highly relevant to the current socio-cultural climate in Kerala, and India, the resource persons included academics and activists, who have been engaging themselves in the debates on sexual difference with reference to some of the recent issues that have led to social unrest in Kerala.

Dr. Deepa Sreenivas, Associate Professor, Centre for Women's Studies, University of Hyderabad, inaugurated the event and delivered the keynote



Dr. Arunlal Mokeri, Assistant Professor of English, Govt. College, Mokeri on **“Post-secular Kerala and the New Dialogues on Gender.”** The talk addressed the possibilities of a new dialogue on women in the light of certain post secularist conflicts in Kerala. The session titled **“Caste, Sexual Violence and ‘Progressive Spaces’: Theorising Speak-Out Movement”** by Praveena Thaali, Researcher, Centre for Human Rights, University of Hyderabad. was based on the recent revelations of sexual violence against women, discussed how even the seemingly progressive spaces exclude women. **Archana Padmini**, Curator and Performing Artist, Malayalam Film Industry, and WCC Member, delivered a talk on **“Reel and Real” The Space of Cinema and Normalised Misogyny.** Archana spoke on how Malayalam film industry is highly misogynistic, drawing on her experience as a female artist in the industry. Citing instances from popular films, she pointed out how the narratives normalize misogyny. The audience initiated discussions on the recent controversies in Malayalam industry, reflecting on how the space of cinema is constructed on sexual difference. **Leena Gita Reghunath**, Journalist and Former Editorial Manager at *The Caravan* addressed the audience on the topic **“Looking for Truth, Justice and Freedom: A Feminist Journey into Journalism.”** Leena shared her experience as a woman journalist with one of the leading magazines in the country, and reflected on how she has been able to transcend the boundaries of gender, in her journey that was quite rewarding. **Dr. Nisha P.R.**, SSRC Regional Research Fellow at the Centre for Indian Studies in Africa, University of the Witwatersrand, delivered the talk titled **“Writing Women into History: Episodes from Indian Circus.”** She based the talk on her research experience in the history of Indian circus, and spoke on how significant is the role that women artists perform in inscribing circus into history. **Dr. Anilkumar P. V**, Assistant Professor of English, Govt. Victoria College, Palakkad, delivered the valedictory address on the topic **“The Arcana of the Spiritual Body.”** Citing the recent verdict on women entry into the Sabarimala Temple, the speaker problematized the ways in which the female body is often conceived as sexual and the male body as spiritual.

2. Demonstrations/Performances

2.1 "Malala"- Solo Drama demonstration by Niharika Mohan in Brennen solo drama festival.

Narrating the life experiences and the globally identified resistance of Malala, the icon of women power and the urge for knowledge, the performance highlighted women's right to education and liberty.

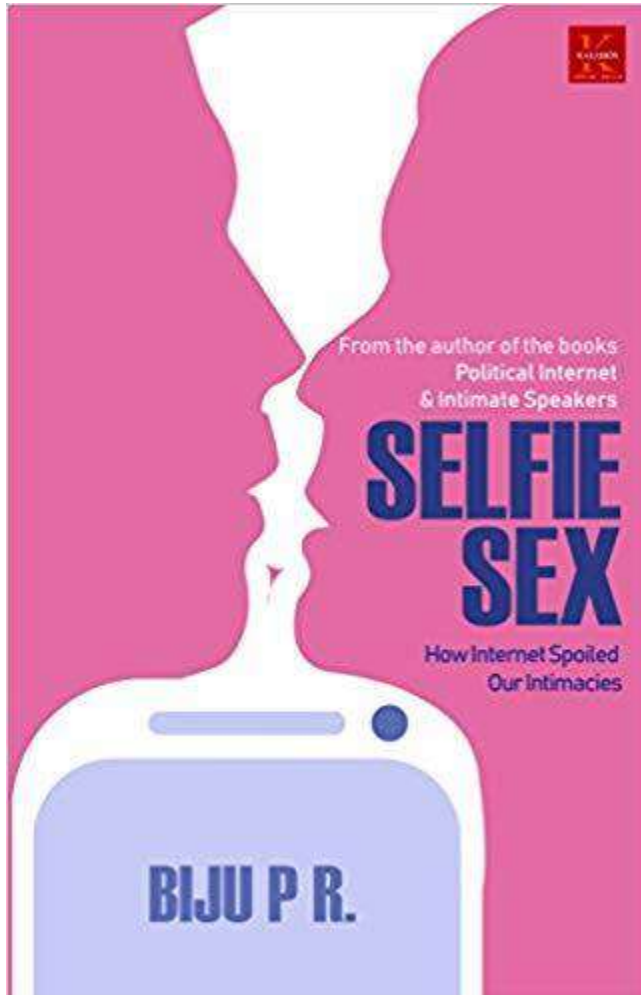
2.2 "The Presence of Women in Yakshagana and Folkarts"- A Demonstration

2.3 Dance Demonstration by Anita



Dissemination

As a reflection of the sensitivity shown by the whole institution towards gender , our teachers have written popular books and articles and taken initiatives to organize quality programmes outside the campus in this connection



The Ascetic & The Erotic

Despite his pathbreaking radicalism, Sree Narayana Guru considered women's bodies defiling, and sensuality a hurdle to truth-seekers

Deep Raj

In the 96th sloka of Shiva Satakam, Sree Narayana Guru asks Lord Shiva to keep him away from serious women who have set out to mesmerise him with their enchanting and voluptuous bodies. Commentators who trace the genealogy of Guru's ascetic practice to the Siddha tradition argue that this is a feature common to that tradition.



But these lines in Shiva Satakam certainly baffle us as these avatars are not expected from a radical sanyasi who in many ways broke traditional notions of renunciation. We need to explore what historical or textual limits prompts one to project the female body as an ominous presence that disrupts the focus of the male seeker.

This brings us squarely back to the question of the 'knowing subject'. Is it a disembodied abstract position? It is certain discursive practices which exclude certain bodies from occupying that subject position. Knowledge production is an embodied enterprise. Women are perceived as distracting the 'knowing subjects' (distant and distinct from corporeal body), in all institutions of knowledge production. Their mere bodily presence could distract tapas of a sanyasi!

Sanyasam is renunciation or non-attachment and mystics are dropouts who do not belong to the community in any definite sense. But this withdrawal, as it has been pointed out by some scholars, confers certain 'powers' on sanyasis which make their return to the mundane world more effective. Despite their intentions, this creates an aura around them that makes their social interventions smooth and effective.

Narayana Guru also returned to the world and institutionalized non-attachment by setting up ashrams. But in such a radical and progressive 'counter culture' that he created, women got excluded. I am calling it a counter culture because Guru, who is considered the founder of modern Kerala, lived a life outside the heteronormative spaces that defined it. He had friendships with every other male intellectual of his time.

Though renunciation involves renouncing something, it is not a process totally devoid of pleasure. The pleasure emerging out of Guru's friend circles is determined by the all-male nature of it. It is not an accidental occurrence. It structurally prevents the entry of certain other bodies into such subject positions.

Many recorded anecdotes describe the warmth of the relationship Guru had with Dr Palpu; both would sit and talk for hours on issues of common interest at the

Aluva ashram. Ashrams were spaces where men could leisurely sit and chat and spend quality time as friends. One of the preconditions of friendships is the existence of such alternate spaces.

Let us juxtapose this with the story of Sarawathy Amma, who was almost a contemporary of Guru. She too wanted to become a sanyasi at one point of time and had a strong craving for intellectual pursuits. But we can't find her trace anywhere in our intellectual history. An unmarried status is not perceived as hindrance to leading a quality life as a knowledge-seeker in Guru's case. But if a woman tries to stand alone and pursue an intellectual life, she is seen as 'lacking' something; quite often a male in her life. Knowledge could never be reason enough to committing one's life to reason and intellect in case of women!

The experience narrated by Sugatha Pramod, a disciple of Nitya Chaitanya Yati, in her book Gururudayam foregrounds this point in an intimate manner. She also, in her teens, had renounced everything to join Narayana Gurukula in Coyt. Though women from within and out of India stayed at Yati's Gurukula at different periods, Sugatha was the only female inhabitant in the ashram at that point of time.

One day she noticed that one of the residents was smoking beedi secretly in the kitchen.

He feared that she might inform the incident to Yati. "In a flash he approached me and kissed me on my cheek and reoriented, anyway you have decided to complain about me to Guru, now add this too to your list of complaints," writes Sugatha. Nitya Chaitanya Yati was deeply disturbed by it. At another place Sugatha writes: "I noticed that he was absorbed in thought. He spoke as if in a trance, in a tired voice, 'Nataraja Guru was right. Women need a separate ashram. They are to be protected'".

The girl who renounced ordinary life was eventually married off to an artist associated with the ashram. Even Yati, who was more radical than any male intellectual of that time, could not imagine Sugatha as his successor in Gurukula. Why couldn't he dream of a future Gurukula inhabited exclusively by women? So what option is left for a woman who leaves home and commits herself completely to a life devoted to knowledge-seeking? What is the quality of life that society allows to a woman who prefers to tread a lone path? Right from ashrams to universities, women seem to remain an unwelcome presence. These are invisible emotional webs that forces women to feel ashamed not for something they have done, but just for what they are.

Recent developments related to a nun, remind us how patriarchal spaces like convents are. Even the so-called alternate spaces including ashrams are not different, though the violence is not that conspicuous. Informal networks are no exception either. Consider the famed get-togethers around progressive and independent intellectuals like Kesari A. Balakrishna Pillai, M Govindan or John Abraham.

They were all-male friendship circles. No women could enter it unless as exceptions to the rule with 'guest passes'. Even the Naxalite movement could not have afforded to accommodate more than one Ajitha!

Certain recent developments are more alarming. The anarchist spaces which came into existence by problematising the male/sacrifice oriented thinking/acting traditions in Kerala and started celebrating pleasure (and not renounce it) through interventions like Kiss of Love too seem to perpetrate this power dynamics. We have witnessed at least two incidents in the recent past where two subaltern women who fought their way into places where they were denied entry earlier spoke about their bitter experiences. Pleasure is also turned into an excuse for making oppositional spaces uninhabitable for women. Man seems to be the standard, whether it is pleasure seeking or knowledge seeking. The 'other bodies' against which Guru sought help from Lord Shiva continues to haunt even the New Gen radicals.

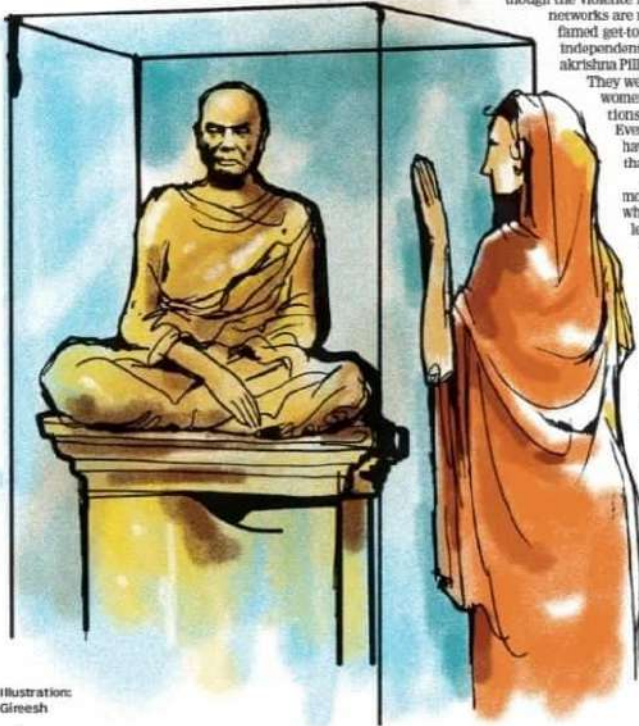


Illustration: Gireesh

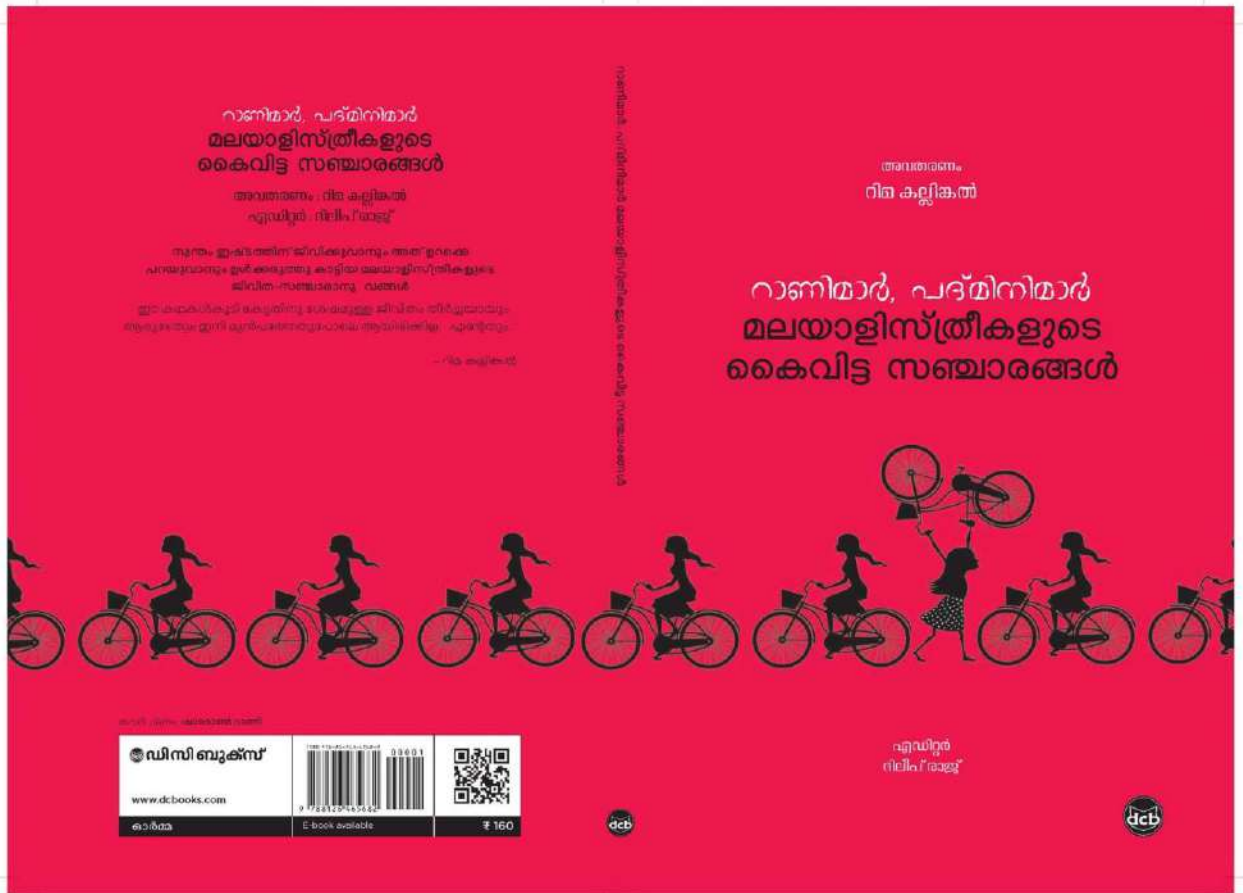
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ഡോ. ആർ. രാജശ്രീ

നായികാ നിർമ്മിതി

വഴിയും പൊരും



Students' Projects, Courses

As an extension and consolidation of the proactive stance taken by the college on gender equity, Malayalam and Philosophy departments have included core courses on gender for undergraduates and students in good numbers take up projects related to gender every year.

