

# **THE INFLUENCE OF MAXIM GORKY ON MALAYALAM NOVELS BETWEEN 1930 AND 1960**

**Thesis Submitted to the University of Kerala  
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
in Russian Literature**

By

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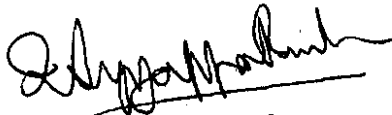
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This is to certify that the thesis entitled "The Influence of Maxim Gorky on Malayalam Novels between 1930 and 1960" is a record of studies and research carried out by Mr. K. Govindan Nair under our supervision and guidance and that no part of this thesis has been presented earlier for the award of any degree, diploma, title or recognition.



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## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is a bonafide record of research work done by me and that no part of the thesis has been presented earlier for any degree, diploma, or similar title of any other University.

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## PREFACE

Maxim Gorky (1868-1936) was undoubtedly the most popular of all the Russian writers of his time and remained a central figure throughout what is perhaps the most turbulent years in his country's history. About half a century has passed since Gorky died in 1936. We are separated from that date not only by the years but also by the changes that have taken place in the world. New generations have grown up, with a multitude of new social, philosophical, ethical and other questions to be answered. Our attitude to cultural and artistic values has also changed. However the hidden energy contained in the works of Gorky is capable of influencing many generations to come. His works continue to be brought out by various publishing houses in Russia and abroad. This shows that the interest in his works remains strong and lasting and he has won the devoted love of readers from all over the world. Gorky's works have influenced, and still continue to influence, the culture and social outlook of the Indian people also. Many Indian writers of the 1930s were attracted by Gorky's impassioned criticism of the evil in society.

This thesis is an attempt to describe the similarities between the works of Gorky and the Malayalam novels of these

writers and to assess the nature and size of Gorky's influence on them. The influence of Gorky is most clearly visible in Malayalam novels written after 1930. The novels of Kesava Dev (1905-1983), Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai (b. 1912), Cherukadu Govinda Pisharati (1915-1976), and Ponjikkara Raphy (b. 1924) are chosen to illustrate this fact.

This thesis consists of eight chapters. The first chapter attempts a historical survey and assessment of the contact between Russian and Malayalam literatures. The translations and critical works that appeared in either language are briefly analysed here. Chapter II discusses the reception of Gorky's works in India, with special reference to Kerala. Gorky's interest in India and the evaluation of Gorky's life and works by Indian scholars are described in the beginning of this chapter. The popularity of Gorky's works in Kerala and the critical studies of them by Malayalam scholars are discussed in the second part of this chapter.

The third chapter discusses the socio-political conditions in Russia and Kerala and the literary tradition of Gorky and the Malayalam novelists. The influence of contemporary socio-political events on the life and works of these writers is stressed here. The analysis of Gorky's development as a man and a writer is attempted in the fourth chapter. Gorky's life and the formation of his theory of art is analysed in this chapter. The theory of art is discussed in detail giving examples from his works.

Chapters V, VI and VII are designed to present the similarities and analogies between the works of Gorky and the Malayalam novels of Dev, Thakazhi, Cherukadu and Raphy and to assess the influence of Gorky's works on them. Selected Malayalam novels are analysed in these chapters in such a way as to reveal how the literary principles of the authors are reflected in them and how far they are influenced by those of Gorky.

My thanks are due to the University Grants Commission for assisting me with a fellowship to visit the Soviet Union for collection of materials relevant to this work. I am also indebted to Messrs M. S. Devadas, C. Unni Raja, C. Achutha Kurup, K. Surendran and P. T. Bhaskara Paniker for the valuable suggestions and discussions with them. I also wish to record my gratitude and obligation to Dr. Timur Futuridze, former Russian teacher in the House of Soviet Culture, Trivandrum and to Dr. A. A. Vitlipas, Visiting Lecturer, Department of Russian, University of Kerala for their valuable guidance and advice in the preparation of this thesis. The help, constant inspiration and creative guidance extended to me by my guide Dr. K. Ayyappa Paniker, Professor and Head of the Institute of English, and Dean, Faculty of Arts, University of Kerala are too great to be acknowledged adequately. Without his persistent encouragement and advice this work would not have been completed.

## CONTENTS

	PAGE
CHAPTER I Introduction	1
CHAPTER II Reception of Gorky's Works in India	14
CHAPTER III Socio-Political Conditions in Russia in the 1890s and Kerala in the 1930s	45
CHAPTER IV Gorky the Man and the Writer	88
CHAPTER V Maxim Gorky and Kesava Dev	121
CHAPTER VI Maxim Gorky and Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai	158
CHAPTER VII Maxim Gorky, Cherukadu and Ponjikkara Raphy	209
CHAPTER VIII Conclusion	239
Appendix	251
A Selected Bibliography	260