Summary of Work Done

**Minor Research Project**

**“ Creating Works are Quasi-Historical documents that reveal the social history of a region at a given point of time. A study of films/English novels set in the background of the Konkan-Coromandel coast of the 16th – 18th century”**

The Project is interdisciplinary in nature. It makes a connection between different disciplines: History, Literature, Film and Culture. The study is based on the premises that history can also be read in historical drama and fiction. The focus of the study is the Konkan and Coramandel coastal regions in the southern part of peninsula India. These regions had port cities which were trading centres from the early centuries. Arabs, traders from Central Asia, and Europe: Portuguese, English, France, Holland, Denmark. England came for trade in the port cities of India An analysis of four films based on the history of these regions, spanning a period of three hundred years, from the 15th to the 18th century has given illuminating insights regarding the history of the region as well as that of India. The films *Kerala Verma Pazhassi Raja, Urumi* and *The Sword of Tipu Sultan,* tell us that the colonization of India was gradual process. It was an outcome of a combination of many factors, the most detrimental being the disunity which prevailed among the various princely kingdoms. A lack of patriotism among the people of India, the avarice of the coloniser as well the as the colonial subjects, all of which reduced India to a fragmented country. The country and the nation was a collection of disunited kingdoms and subjects, each warring with each other for wealth and power. The Portuguese, English and French traders who entered the country through the port cities in Kolkata, Madras, Cochin, Calicut, Goa and Surat found the Indian rulers easy victims to bribe and treachery. These rulers lacked integrity, unity and courage to stand united against the foreign traders who soon turned invaders of the land. Pazhassi Raja and Chirrikkal Kelu were among the exceptional men who were brave warriors of that time. Both of them belonged to the northern Kerala Malabar region. They were both warriors with a passionate love for the land and a hatred towards the foreigners, who they felt had come for trade and should not be allowed to invade India. Raja and Kelu gathered an army from among the tribals and villagers and with their rhetoric of nationalism,trained them in the indigenous martial warfare of ‘**Kallaripayattu**’ . Both of them were able to raise huge armies to fight the foreigners. Chirrikkal Kelu Nayanar fought the Portuguese in the 16th century, while Pazhassi Raja resisted the English Company in the 18th century and Tipu Sultan formed alliance with the French to defeat the English in 1790s. However, each of them met with tragic ends because the foreigners were able to influence their close aides by promises of power and wealth to betray the leader. This happened in the case of Pazhassi Raja and Tipu Sultan. In this way, Konkan and Coramandel coasts became strongholds of the English factors and by the end of the 18th century India became a colony of the Imperial Empire. Years later, it took an educated leader like Dr Ambedkar and Gandhi to bring the people of India to a common concept of One India and One nation.

The novels, *The* *Holder* *of* *the* *Truth* , *White* *Mughals* , *The* *Last* *Mughal* , reveal the socio-cultural and socio-historical milieu of these 300 years. These novels have dealt with the times that saw the fall of the Mughal empire, the hostility between the locals and the foreigners as well as the Indianisation of some foreigners. *White* *Mughals* is a novel where the novelist William Dalrymple writes about many white officers of the Company, both English and French who were charmed by India to adopt Indian life, marry Indian women and even change their religion. Many of them raised families and lived in India till their end. Here we see a case of ‘ reverse colonialism’ which is vastly different from what has been contended by the postcolonial critic, Edward Said in *Cultural* *Imperialism*.

The project has been rewarding in re-reading the history of India of the Konkan and Coromandel Coast. It has been established beyond doubt that history lies not only in the written texts; it also gets represented in any creative writer who uses history as raw material and blends it with the visual images of his interpretation of the historical material. Collective memory as well as legends and folklores can be accessed by creative writers to re-create the past into a very enlivening experience.

Prepared by Principal Investigator and Researcher of the Project:

Dr. Ancy Eapen, Associate Prof.

Dept. of English, U.C.College, Aluva.