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Philanthropy and Justified Sinners: Power and Socio-Political Resistance in Indian and English Outlaw Kayamkulam Kochunni and Pyle's Robin Hood

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Abstract:

This proposed study, a symptomatic approach, attempts to make an inclusive and comparative analysis of two distinguished outlaws hailing from distinct regions, videlicet Kayamkulam Kochunni from the context of Kerala and Robin Hood from English folklore. The study extends its purview by making an in-depth exploration of the multifaceted layers of socio-cultural apparatus, distinctive traits and behavioural commonalities that bind the outlaws together in the same spectrum. The undercurrent behind the acts of banditry and robbery are examined in order to throw light on the driving forces behind their actions. The pivotal focus of the paper is to de-knot the threads that interweave the characters, which is analysed through the aspect of Philanthropy, which is seen as an evident and shared trait between these two enigmatic outlaws. The paper further aims to dissect the driving impulse, motivation, cultural manifestations and societal consequences of Philanthropy within the narrative discourses of Kayamkulam Kochunni and Robin Hood, providing deeper insights into the variegated cultural, social and historical commentary of the respective epochs that moulded the legendary figures. Through a nuanced exploration of their altruistic endeavours, transcending geographical and regional markers, this study aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the parallel themes that conjoin these seemingly heterogenous figures from India and the UK.

Keywords: Philanthropy, Legends, Discourse and Comparative Analysis.

Introduction

The inquest looks into two important legends that lived during a particular phase in Indian and British history—specifically of Kerala and Yorkshire. These two men were outlawed by the concerned governments, yet are whom history describes as men with a certain serendipity to their character. They are Kayamkulam Kochunni from the context of Kerala and Robin Hood from British history. There are a few aspects and traits that these two characters share and the commonness in their personality traits are intriguing too. The foremost being their outlawed status. The reasons for their excommunication are their banditry and felony. Nevertheless, another striking aspect is that they both were ‘committed robbers’ who dedicated a large amount of their loot to the poor which stands as a justification to the crimes they did.

The interesting point is that the acts of robbery were not done for the well-being of any individual. They were a vent to their frustrations of a poverty-stricken life. Alternatively, they served as an act of retort against the callousness of the governments, an expression against the obnoxiousness of class inequalities and an act of Philanthropy, innate to the experience of hunger and deprivation which the two outlaws in concern had been through. It would not be erroneous to claim that their felony helped them survive, as well as, a share of their delinquency served as a relief to the people experiencing poverty.

While Philanthropy is projected as their predominant character trait, fortunately or unfortunately they were outlawed by the authorities then, in both contexts. For, the texts written about them render them as philanthropists- each specific to his context, who would spread some selfless, devout concern to the economically deprived class. Yet both their outlawed status and their ambiguous philanthropic attitude call for a reconsideration of what urged them to be persistently selfless about their generosity (despite the fact that they were men who were outlawed). This makes it essential to understand ‘Philanthropy’ itself in at least its few well-known variant senses. For, Philanthropy cannot be taken at its mere denotative meaning, it needs to be analysed in terms of its connotative meaning, especially in the contexts of such outlawed men like Kayamkulam Kochunni and Robin Hood who, as remarked above were quite ambiguously philanthropic.

“So what does Philanthropy stand for? There seems to be a difference between the idea of Philanthropy in the past which simply meant being altruistic by nature and Philanthropy in the present, which the following quote reinstates:

In the past it was all about charity in favor of the disadvantaged and the poor. [. . .] Philanthropy also means power. “The goal of Philanthropy is to advance society by providing necessary social, cultural and educational services which are not provided by the state or market for political or economic reasons or which are provided by the state but not in a way that satisfies philanthropists” “The donor provides money, time and ideas for a project, which he or she alone, in connection with other donors, attempts to control. [. . .] Philanthropy always has something to do with power and the shaping of the future of society” (Qtd. in Schyut et al 3)

The above statement clearly sketches the appropriation of charity by a philanthropist whose motive though is socially beneficial, does not escape a certain strain of ‘power’ or control over others. In other words, it does at least bear multiple features that draw itself from particular social necessities and demands that quite often are practised by the very same people who experience and realise what such crises mean. The very idea of charity, service and power, in the case of the two outlaws, are manifestations of resistance in order to defy and subvert some flawed governance or the other. Or a strategy where, when there is a failure on the part of the ruling power (the government, for instance), a fresh power implants itself to abate the social agony.

At the outset, we need to look at the idea of ‘Philanthropy’ from its philosophic, psychological and social connotations. Wilson observes, according to Auguste Comte, a French philosopher and the founding father of sociology, who coined the word altruism, derived from the Latin for others and defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as, “. . .intentional action, ultimately for the welfare of others that entails at least the possibility of either no benefit or a loss to the actor” (4) which the two men are. At the same time, Christopher Olivia describes Philanthropy as, “function of martyrdom” (5). Accordingly, the dimensions of the word ‘Philanthropy’ are in a state of flux which allows one to perceive it from psychological, economic, sociological and anthropological perspectives (Schyut, et al. 121).

To narrow down the sense of the term, Philanthropy simply implies ‘charity’ that takes one into the two prime dimensions mentioned above, psychological and sociological causes, considering the two outlawed figures chosen for study. There are three sides to the way in which it functions in individuals, such as social, Integrational and Ecological functions. According to Schyut, the Integrational function is observed as a kind of

Philanthropy [that] concerns the sense of responsibility felt by people and the drive to act. More specifically, Philanthropy expresses this sense of responsibility for the well-being of the unknown others, larger groups, or the community in general. Philanthropists show personal initiative, triggered by strong commitments to the goals they want to support. They are not obliged to give; instead, they are willing to give. (128)

It is this state of mind that Kochunni's (and Robin Hood) express and acquire a sense of power through his philanthropic deeds as remarked in the above quote. The social function holds greater relevance to the two characters which alone shall be chosen for discussion, as it deals with "education, human services, public benefit and international aid" (Schuyt, et al. 128). In the context of the select novels, the philanthropic inclination is more in terms of human services and also, as an added form of resistance against the prevalent inequality in the society that undoubtedly justifies them as sinners who sin for the welfare of the deprived multitudes.

Therefore, looking at the contextual history of both outlaws becomes essential. The story of Kayamkulam Kochunni figures in Kottarathil Sankunni's *Aithihya Mala Part 2*, a collection of stories about the kings and heroes of Kerala that best translates to 'Garland of Legends'. As per Facebook reports, "Kayamkulam gets its name from a portmanteau of two Malayalam words – Kayam (sap of a spice tree) and Kulam (pond) while a more reliable version is that Kayamkulam got its name from "Kayal" (lake) and "Kulam" (pond), since the Kayamkulam lake (Kayamkulam Kayal) is as shallow as a pond (a bit exaggerated). However, the village gains a lot more significance through the name of the Outlaw Kochunni and his legendary existence there as a native hero.

Kayamkulam Kochunni: Context, Culture and History

Born in the year 1818, in Kayamkulam, a village in Karthikapally, Alapuzha District and having lived during the early 19th century until his death. In 1859, Kochunni was a friendly brigand of Kerala who was fondly described as the 'Robin Hood of Kerala'. It is said that he was born in the Malayalam year 993 in the Malayalam Calendar month of Karkidakom into a poor Muslim family. His father himself was a thief, which seemed to have brought Kochunni a sense of shame. Edged by severe poverty, at the tender age of 10, Kochunni left his home to fend for himself and reached Evoor. He worked in the shop of a Brahmin (Namboothiri) and supported his mother with the meagre earnings he received. He mastered the native martial arts

form of 'Kalari' by learning this skill by hiding himself atop trees and impressing Gurukkal Ithingal Thangal, who ran a training place there.

Guru Ithingal Thangal, having learnt of his deep interest and commitment to learning the art form, accommodated him into his Kalari school. Kochunni, through situational persuasion soon became a famous thief, who was held in high esteem and adulation by the Keralite poor, for, much of the loot he managed to procure was shared with them. While with the added credit of being a shrewd and brilliant martial artist he became a menace to the rich. Most of these men became rich by unfair capitalistic practices and avarice. His theft tactics were impeccable and were diligently executed. Neither the police nor the law could clamp him down until he was betrayed by the Judas-like-betrayal of one of his own associates - Arattupuzha Velayudha Panicker, after which he was remanded to Poojapura Prison in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, where he breathed his last. Since then, Kayamkulam Kochunni tales spread across Kerala making him the central figure to many Keralite Grandmas' bedtime narrations to their loved grandchildren. And the legendary figure was culturally rooted and held an appeal to all Keralites even today, irrespective of the glaring religious discord that is prevalent. The character of Kayamkulam Kochunni was highly individualistic with all his austerity, assertiveness, outspokenness and shrewdness. Oral narrations of the theft-manoeuvres of the legendary figure are much more overwhelming and interesting than the written versions of Kottarathil Sankunni, Hussein Karady as well as the recently released *Children's Fiction* by Nila Rajeev in translation are worth mentioning.

Between the 1640's and the 1660's, Kayamkulam was the hub of conflict of trade and power, between the Zamorins, (Nair monarch of Kozhikode) the Dutch and the Portuguese. The Dutch seem to have made in specific a few "significant contributions to the economy of Kerala. They created conditions favourable for the revival of Kerala trade. New products and scientific techniques of cultivation were introduced with a view to improving the agricultural economy." (Menon 215) Besides the power of the Dutch and the Portuguese, down the centuries, Kerala was also ruled by many Kings until its unification under Marthanda Varma as 'Travancore', in which Kayamkulam was a key annexure. Kayamkulam deserves a special mention here for its prosperity, as under the auspices of the Raja of Kayamkulam, the land did flourish and Menon observes in his *Survey of Kerala History* the interesting fact that highlights instances that lead to the economic inequality among the subjects. One such instance that strikes for instance is how,

Travancore army under Ramayyan Dalawa, [Dewan of Travancore state], now

marched against Kayamkulam. The Kayamkulam Raja failed to get the expected help from his allies. In his despair he sent his family in disguise to Trichur and threw all the valuables in his palace into the Kayamkulam lake. The Raja [of Kayamkulam] thereafter fled from his kingdom. The Travancore army captured the Kayamkulam fort and palace. In the course of the search of the palace, it was found that some of the arms and military stores bore the name of "Devanarayana". This was clear proof of the complicity of the Raja of Chempakasseri (Purakkad or Ambalapuzha) in the wars fought by Kayamkulam against Travancore. (230)

However, what is noticeably acute here is the prosperity that the mixed governance of foreign rule and native royal lineage brought to Kerala that probably left behind large economic exorbitance on the one hand and extreme impoverishment on the other. For, the very act of the Raja of Kayamkulam throwing the palace valuables into a lake proves the existence of inequality and wealth-amassing tendencies, naturally pervasive among the royals that in turn get reflected in the society too. Instances such as these stir us to adjudge the attitude of a brigand like Kayamkulam Kochunni who lived at a time when economic variations had evoked glaring class categories that urged people to resort to thieving. Though the claim may sound too generalized, this period was one when the attitude of the Kings and their interests should have been more upon the welfare of the subjects of a kingdom than on battles, and it was undoubtedly not so. Kochunni and Robinhood are characters that originated as outcasts who despite their famished condition were philanthropic and generous; generous with a defiance that evoked them to rob the rich and feed the poor.

Robin Hood: Context, Culture and History

While there are so many Western parallels to Kayamkulam Kochunni, the much interesting case is that of his Western twin Robin Hood, the Brigand of Sherwood forest, who figures in the novel of Howard Pyle who is almost close to Kochunni in his philanthropic self-appeasement and social welfare. He first figured in Langland's *Piers the Plowman* that appeared in the 1470's And, of course, there are other such characters that throng the Western corridors, such as Robin Hood of El Dorado and Rob Roy of Irish background and Jesse Woodson James and Alexander Franklin James from the USA. Their lives as outlaws are interesting tales that mirror the socio-economic conditions in general, socio-economic mediocrity in war torn zones, its related impacts and the general inequalities of the times that drive them to indulge in felony, which in turn urges the judicial system of each nation outlaw them.

In spite of the multiple versions of Robin Hood, the primary question is whether he existed at all, though summarizing a possibility of his existence would be to best describe him as a peasant “. . . a yeoman hero for a yeoman audience. . .”, an ill-defined section of the society” (Almond and Pollard 52) and the real Robin Hood lived during King Richard I (Richard the Lionheart) in 1189-1199 and at times of being part of the landowning nobility, at times of the Disinherited- the term given to Montfortian rebels in England in the latter reign of Henry III (1216-1272). (Pilling) and was

. . . England's most popular literary heroes is a man whose most endearing activities to his public were the robbery and killing of landowners, in particular church landowners, and the maintenance of guerilla warfare against established authority represented by the sheriff. (Hilton 30)

A number of conjectures prevailed about the actual existence of Robin Hood of Sherwood, who was to a large extent seen as “. . . as a free peasant representing peasant ideology for a peasant audience” (Qtd in Almond and Pollard 54). It is also observed that Robinhood was “not only a military and social leader in a courtly sense” but also issues liveries and pays them fees. He also welcomes his (paying) ‘guests ’to the greenwood, as if it is his castle, by sending his steward/herald/servant Little John to greet them in his name.” (Knight 49) In short, his existence in the modern metaphor, to use Hobsbawm’s words “is that the social bandit is a reality that motivates certain forms of political resistance to oppressive regimes within peasant societies.” (Seal 67) And he further adds that the economic and social conditions swerve in such a way that they tend to produce outlaw figures.

Ritson in his *Collection of All the Ancient Poems, Songs and Ballads* claims that his actual name was Robert Fitzooth, the vulgar pronunciation of which gravitated to Robin Hood. He adds that he was born in 11000 AD, at Locksley, during King Henry II ‘s reign. He also credits him with the title of Earl of Huntingdon whose wayward squandering of wealth made him a pauper, the very same reason for which he was outlawed. (Qtd in Rahman 2). It has also been proven that, whether he was real or not, there did exist several men, who inspired the ‘Robin Hood Spirit ’of Philanthropy, of the same Robin Hood who frequented Inglewood and Barnsdale or in short “. . .a yeoman of the forest”(Almond and Pollard 56).

There were three other outlaws such as Little John, William Scadlock and George A. Green who joined Robin Hood along with a female called Marian, to whom Robin Hood was attracted to, as suspected by Ritson in the preface to his text. (Rahman 2). Over the years, researchers have tried to provide a whole list of various possibilities of many men who were apparently identified as Robin Hood, that makes the identity of this mysterious legend more

intriguing. However, the very same uncovering of his identity leads us to consider the surmise that British historians failed to embed this character into British history or literature because he was Scottish and that too much before the Scottish Independence. Most of the outlaws were manifestations of anti-British ideals who indulged in willful felony much against the British unfairness and discriminatory rules and laws as well as imperialism who thus stood as a “. . . a signifier of the Other, of antagonism, of dissent and of opposition to unjust authority.” (Rahman 7). This again, justifies their deliberate resort to felony, which served to counter the antagonistic othering by British imperialists and thereby the labelling of them as ‘justified sinners’, outlawed powers who serve the society much more than the clandestinely corrupt kings, nobles and the aristocratic elites.

This is proved in a statement that Robin Hood himself makes where he says, “Methinks I would rather roam this forest in this gentle springtime than be King of all merry England. [. . .] Better a crust with content than honey with a sour heart.” (Pyle 245) However, his acts of felony were considered unjust and as in the case of Kochunni, the Sheriff of Nottingham swore that he would bring Robin Hood to justice for the two hundred pounds that was announced as a reward for his capture and besides, the Sheriff wanted him more for the murder of the Sheriff's kin. Pyle observes that he stayed in the Sherwood forest in hiding for nearly a year though the greenwood had become his home since long. Quite a few men had chosen the Sherwood forest as their hideout like Robin Hood to escape oppression and wrongs against them. Some hunted deer as they had no other means for food, others, because they had to surrender their land to the King's existing wealth, and some others who were robbed by some rich Baron or some powerful esquire. These instances expose the miserable economic conditions of the times and the impoverished social inequalities. (pp. 9-10) Such acts of felony, specifically in the case of Kayamkulam Kochunni and Robin Hood are a manifestation of their revolution against the unfair system of the times. According to Monforte and Maestri, a political issue becomes a social responsibility when there is an error in the system and so the individual takes up charity into his own hands in order to reduce the “systemic injustice”. This is referred to as “privatization of political responsibility” (Williams et al., 2016: 2293). As a result, such charities are guided by “an ideology of individualism, self-reliance, and minimal government” (122-123). This justification by Monforte and Maestri provides ample scope to understand the psyche of the two outlaws in their abstruse philanthropic mechanism.

Comparative Analysis

The outlaws in question thereby become an epitome of ‘power’ though through felony, yet it is for the benefit of the poor; or it would not be erroneous to say that the term power becomes synonymous with Philanthropy each in his specific context, as they acquire their status as forest brigands, whom the poor hold in high esteem and adulation. This favour that they mete out to the deprived earns them their power status, though transgressive to the authorities (who commit the same iniquity exploiting their political status). But in the case of the outlaws or the justified sinners it could be rightfully proclaimed that such men need not be an elected or a renowned social being. This role could be assumed by anyone who has an inclination to be philanthropic and that very tendency diffuses and sooner becomes an internalised behaviour. It puts the actual power- such as, that of a king or a ruler into shade for he is the one who has failed his subjects. In lieu, the new philanthropist has in fact substituted the deeds a king on the failure of what the latter should have righteously implemented. While this impact is at the social level, at the psychological level, this could be perceived, as an escapist tendency that psychologically flushes the person of the trauma, caused under stressful conditions as poverty and economic deficit. The condition could be one of poverty or that which allows the philanthropist to make amends in his own small way, to set right a flawed society; or it could be one that revamps history to the benefit of a whole society, creating a momentum for the philanthropist to conduct himself or his Philanthropy, positively forward. Or it could also be seen as an emotional strategy that attempts to erase what snatched away the delight of a victim of poverty in the prime time of his youth hood.

Yet all of these are efforts that emanate from the individual philanthropist whose ultimate experience is a sense of satisfaction that he begets of it. This bestows upon him, a sort of self-esteem and self-glorification that come of such an act of Philanthropy. This in turn exalts the generous philanthropist to the pedestal of (a sensation of) power. This indeed is an indulgence that increases the sanguinity in both the giver and the receiver.

To prefix the two men in question with the history of the times, one can only blame the unfair times which probably was the cause for such random occupations that these men resorted to. The existence of Ithikkara Pakki from near Kollam, in Kerala and yet another petty thief who lived near the present day Kaduvapalli in Trivandrum district have found a specific mention in the responses to the blogpost of Maddy’s ramblings. However, the most oft narrated and more read story is that of Kochunni in Kerala.

In the case of the two select figures in concern, the social distinctions and the class issues in the Indian and the English contexts are indeed obvious. “Robinhood and the Monk”,

“Robinhood and the Guy of Gisborne”, and “Robinhood and the Potter”, “A Geste of Robyn Hode”, the contextual history of Robin Hood reveals, that the legend lived at a time when there was glaring social inequality. One of the major issues, was the flourishing of the feudal society that conflicted with the lower class. While the other was how the compassionate yeoman-outlaw himself existed because of the class differences by his presence of mind to flex his outlawed status to philanthropic prowess. For what perpetuates Robin Hood in history is his felony which is intricately related to the then social conditions. For instance, the shifts from rural to the urban locales, the Plague, the Peasant's Revolt- seen as a by-product of the agrarian social revolution to become artificers, who inevitably turned out to be suppressed groups, ‘an outlaw band of yeoman’ otherwise known as “ ‘journeyman fraternity as it is a criminal band. (Tardif 135) [add more about Agrarian Rev]. Both the outlaws are ruthless in attempting justice of some sort, therefore they tend to become domineering forces throughout, attempting to take reigns into their hands of what was deliberately over-sighted by the authorities thus playing a vital role in making a huge change to the economy and culture of a country In such a context, even a humanist attitude as Philanthropy is revolutionised when it's done with the intention of ‘charity’ being done not from one's own wealth, but quite rebelliously from the wealth of the rich. In short, the act becomes one of subversion of the existing power and strips the economically powerful lot off their extravagance and luxuries. This in turn exposes the economic lapses in a society, the callousness of the governments (Kings or rulers of the times); especially to the specific, poverty-stricken subjects of a state or kingdom who then in turn would be evoked to accept thieving as morally legitimate. These are what one would call the ‘least’ lot of a society that often go unnoticed either by some lapse or the other in governance or at times even deliberately oversight the same due to a lapse in communication between the governments and its subordinates that are competent yet lose sight or track of the impoverished social niches.

Such an act that Kochunni chooses to do thereby is reflective of a communist Kerala in the making that is to permeate into the future Keralite social structure and (hopefully) alter its economic structure too in due course.

Kochunni, though was the son of poverty-stricken parents, whose father constantly resorted to thieving in order to satiate the hunger of his wife and son yet was brought up by his mother who never told him of his father's illegal exercises nor did she urge or encourage him to thief like his father. Therefore, it is crucial to understand the psyche of young Kochunni much before he resorted to felony. For instance, Kochunni's deep interest to learn the Keralite martial art form known as Kalari is initially rejected by the Gurukkal of Kalari. Hussein Karady

in his Malayalam novelette “Kayamkulam Kochunni”, relates a conversation between the two where the Gurukkal has been misinformed that Kochunni’s father was not merely a thief but also a miscreant and a rascal (whose son Kochunni, could be no lesser than the father) to which Kochunni defensively replies that he hasn’t thieved until then and that he is deeply interested in learning the martial art form.

Having learnt the art, he utilises the art form to scale a high wall at Nambiyar’s house, while still an employee at his shop- a job recommended by the Tamil Brahmin at Evoor referred to as Namboothiri. He does this as he had to sell a certain quantity of jaggery, for use in a local temple, when the temple priest, who is a regular customer comes to the shop for a purchase. Unfortunately, Nambiyar, the owner of the shop, though initially is impressed by Kochunni’s uprightness in declaring his knowledge of Kalari and of having scaled the walls of his ‘Valaya vedu’ or “Big house’, he suspiciously anticipates the possibility of Kochunni misusing his Kalari skills to rob his house someday. Though appreciative of Kochunni’s bold and open declaration, he politely advises him to quit his job at his own will and lets him go. The loss of his job- the only means by which he had survived until then, becomes a turning point in Kochunni’s life.

Ousted from his job, Kochunni meets his friends at their usual rendezvous where they inevitably ruminate on the pros and cons of how they could thrive further and about the feasibility of thriving on the rich. Kochunni wonders why his honest confession of having scaled the walls of Nambiyar’s house should have been chastised to the extent of being ousted from his job. Was it wrong to have learnt Kalari, he wonders, for considering the moral uprightness in scaling the wall of “valaya vedu” that too for temple purpose and the question of integrity involved therein, he is unable to decipher the exactitude of its corrosiveness on legal customs. It is while on the threshold of poverty that criminality inevitably strikes. Then one by one a certain inclination towards felony trickles in from each of Kochunni’s friend.

One among them called Vadakeedathu Kochupilla, equally valiant and daring as Kochunni ponders about how long they would survive without a job. The discussion highlights the misdoings of the rich. The rich deem it a fault for men like Kochunni to learn Kalari. While on the one hand, the poor die of starvation, on the other, the rich throngs materials and food stuff and pay low wages to the poor. Kochupilla reiterates his ruminations about the custom of hoarding food and wealth by the rich several times at which Kochunni responds in the positive in the following words: He says, “What Kochupilla says is right. The hunger of the poor of this land should be satiated. For this, it is okay to commit a few small misdoings wrongs”. (Karady

36-37). Thus begins Kochunni's strategic professionalism in felony. Thereby Philanthropy, innate to Kochunni's nature and life is exercised to keep himself and his friends economically steeped in the society, through felony. One among the three specific philanthropic functions

The most interesting discussion on Kochunni's psyche and his economic status are humorously critiqued by a blogger, in his Maddy's ramblings titled as Kayamkulam Kochunni- the Robin Hood of Kayamkulam on November 4th 2012. In this, Maddy mentions, that Kochunni soon was married and for the next twenty years, with two more mouths to feed, he lived as a brigand, feared by the rich and fondly remembered by the poor, unfortunately living in hiding. Maddy further says that,

the lived among people who mistrusted him. Soon he joined or formed a gang that took to smuggling or robbery. . . .the small port of Kayamkulam was always in league with pirates and smugglers. Well, soon that progressed to breaking into homes of the rich people or threatening and coercing them to pay upfront to avoid attacks. Kochunni thus earned a lot but spent all of it, as soon as he got it or for that matter gave it away to his friends and other needy people.

When one has surplus money than just enough then the next step is to find avenues to spend it. Kochunni spent it apparently on liquor and women especially a particular woman at Keerikat called Karthiani. However, it is also important to understand that Kochunni, stopped womanising and lived with his wife who begot three boys and a girl as his children as would fittingly become of his humanitarian attitude. But, the remorse with which he returned to a saner life was much after the murders he committed of his mother-in-law who accused him of wronging her daughter; and of his mistress who betrayed him by exposing his hide-out as well as cuckolding him, with yet another man.

What seems to be ambiguous in Kochunni's nature is his impulsive attitude and his brilliance in tackling situations, which were both reasons for the adoration and contempt that people had for him. This in itself was a remarkably strange awe that one would feel for something that is both spectacular, awesome- yet both sinisterly as well as serendipitous. Wilson, observes that "self-image of a person "is typically moulded during childhood. . ." [and adds that] ". . .people are more willing to act upon compassion when there is some self-interested justification for their behaviour" (9). Such was Kochunni's dealings with the poor for whom he thieved, for none other than Kochunni knew the pinch of hunger. His philanthropic draw emanated from the pain of poverty and passion for humanity and quite innately too Kochunni seems to bear in what Schyut says, as that "which may be tied in with

stewardship and a sense of social responsibility for the well-being of the society as a whole. .
.” (Schyt 125-126).

Conclusion

Analysing Philanthropy from what Briselli says about philanthropists in general, it is observed that Philanthropy functions and survives not on an external recognition, but on the intent of making a social difference, donating to where one’s passion and interests lie as well as for ensuring the benefit that the receiver enjoys from one’s generosity.

Philanthropy, apparently, represents a unilateral transfer. In an exchange, something is transferred from party A to party B and something else from B to A.

. . If we drop a dime in the blind man's cup, it is because the blind man gives us something. We feel a certain glow of emotional virtue, and it is this that we receive for our dime . . . Even if we look upon the transaction as an exchange, however, it is clearly a very curious one. The dime in the cup is a clear enough transfer of assets from the donor to the recipient.

What passes from the recipient to the donor, however, is mysterious.

There is no conservation of assets here. . . . This phenomenon, of course, is not peculiar to the situation of the pure gift. It is true of almost any transaction or exchange involving services . . . It begins to look, therefore, as if some of the peculiarities of Philanthropy penetrate rather deeply into the economic system”
(Boulding 57-58)

The commonality in the economic inequality of the times and its related contexts bring Kochunni and Robin Hood, to the same plains and urge them with a sense of altruism. Kochunni was born into an underprivileged family and as a young man his times were roughed up by the economic disparities and stereotypical social taboos that glared into his life. While, in the case of Robin Hood, it is more of the discriminatory British schemes and their condescending attitude against the Scots that stipulates his outlaw identity and makes him one, good or bad as he was. However, both men figure almost in similar economic contexts that urge them to act generous. Their deprived status itself urges them to self- appeasing altruism as well serve to endorse meaningful political amendments for all unjust and unfair malpractices. Besides, their common strategies in duping the authorities and in sustaining themselves through the contentious ambiguity of indulging in ‘altruistic felony ’what makes Robin Hood distinct is his conflict with the local sheriff, his animosity with the clergy, his partisanship of the lower classes. The emotional glow provides a sense of self-appeasement

that in turn evokes a lasting awe about oneself, while in the social context what one receives is the sensational power which emanates from the admiration of the receiver, and the admiration of the onlookers that emphasizes a strong conviction of making a vital difference to a callous world.

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