

# Narayaneente Moonnaanmakal: A Qualitative Content Analysis

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## Abstract

This study examines the 2025 Malayalam film **Narayaneente Moonnaanmakal (The Three Sons of Narayani)**, directed by Sharan Venugopal, through qualitative content analysis. The film, belonging to the family drama genre, reflects the complexities of familial bonds, sibling relationships, and the cultural significance of inheritance disputes. Particular attention is given to how the film portrays cousin relationships, societal taboos, and caste-based discrimination. By analyzing character portrayals, themes, and cinematic techniques, alongside secondary sources such as reviews and interviews, this paper highlights the film's cultural resonance and contribution to discussions on kinship, resilience, and social change.

**Keywords:** Malayalam cinema, family drama, qualitative content analysis, kinship, societal stereotypes, inheritance.

## INTRODUCTION

Cinema serves as a mirror to society, reflecting values, conflicts, and cultural transitions. Malayalam cinema, in particular, has often explored intimate family dynamics and social issues. The film *Narayaneente Moonnaanmakal* is set in rural Kerala and explores themes of sibling relationships, cousin love, caste discrimination, and inheritance disputes.

This paper investigates how the film engages with familial relationships, breaks certain societal stereotypes, and uses cinematic techniques to represent emotional depth. The study also contextualizes these themes within Kerala's cultural framework, where inheritance and kinship often shape social conflicts.

## Research Methodology

### Research Design

This study employs **qualitative content analysis** to explore the film's narrative, character arcs, and symbolic elements. A descriptive and interpretive approach is applied to identify underlying meanings and cultural reflections.

### Sampling

The film was chosen for its strong representation of sibling bonds, parental relationships, and cultural stereotypes. Specific scenes addressing familial conflict, love, caste, and reconciliation were selected for close analysis.

## Data Collection

- **Primary Data:** The film itself, viewed repeatedly to capture thematic nuances.
- **Secondary Data:** Reviews, critiques, and interviews with the director and cast, used to contextualize audience reception and critical interpretations.

## Analytical Framework

The study uses **thematic analysis** to identify recurring motifs such as:

- Family and relationships
- Love and societal taboos
- Inheritance and disputes
- Caste discrimination
- Emotional resilience and reconciliation

## Findings & Analysis



### 1. Character Analysis

- **Vishwanathan (Alencier Ley Lopez)** – Eldest son, embodies patriarchy and caste prejudice. His declaration, “Our family honor is more important than anything else,” reflects his rigid mindset, prioritizing societal expectations over emotional well-being.
- **Sethu (Joju George)** – Second son, unmarried caretaker, symbolizes reconciliation and wisdom. Despite being underestimated by his brothers, he emerges as the most emotionally perceptive character. His statement, “All relationships are ephemeral,” encapsulates his philosophical outlook on human bonds. The line not only affirms his awareness of Athira and Nikhil’s love but also positions him as a mediator who accepts relationships beyond societal norms.
- **Bhasker (Suraj Venjaramoodu)** – Youngest son, estranged due to interfaith marriage, represents resilience and return to roots.
- **Athira (Garggi Ananthan)** – Daughter of Vishwanathan, carries generational aspirations and suppressed struggles.

- **Nikhil** – Cousin of Athira; their relationship challenges societal and cultural boundaries.

## 2. Themes

- **Family Bonds** – The film foregrounds emotional ties between siblings and the role of inheritance in shaping conflict. A poignant scene between Sethu, Athira, and Nikhil illustrates the film's central message. When Sethu remarks, "All relationships are ephemeral," he acknowledges the fragility of human connections while simultaneously supporting Athira and Nikhil's relationship. This dialogue serves as a turning point, revealing his role as a bridge between tradition and modernity.
- **Societal Taboos** – The cousin relationship challenges Kerala's cultural conventions, sparking debate on kinship definitions. The love between Athira and Nikhil confronts cultural restrictions. In a heated exchange, Athira asserts, "Love does not need approval from bloodlines," highlighting the film's challenge to Kerala's kinship norms. This line underscores the film's attempt to disrupt conventional perspectives on cousin relationships.
- **Caste and Discrimination** – Vishwanathan's attitude reflects entrenched caste hierarchies in rural communities.
- **Inheritance and disputes** – Rift between the brothers and the scenes showing where Bhasker tries to kill his mother, Viswanathan witness the situation and he admits that he has already tried to kill his mother, so that everything will have an end.

## 3. Cinematic Techniques

Use of muted tones, lighting, and music enhances the portrayal of emotional turbulence.

## 4. Other Reflections

- Even though Sethu stands different from the other brothers, everyone cannot be Sethu. Bhasker is the representation of common man's self which wants to improve in life executing the needed efforts for the said as well as having the confrontation of normal downfall in life. Bhasker is not a toxic parent, not a toxic husband but he is perceived to be a toxic brother. He reacts only when he is provoked by his eldest brother.
- Narayani is reflected to be a supportive mother from the deeds of the brothers. Otherwise, Sethu would have got another face. Bhasker would be totally vanishing from the family and the Viswanathan's toxicity would have gained a higher degree.

## Conclusion

Narayaneente Moonnaanmakal contributes to Malayalam cinema's long-standing tradition of addressing familial and social conflicts. By exploring sibling relationships, cousin love, caste discrimination, and inheritance struggles, the film reflects pressing societal concerns. The inclusion of dialogues in this analysis demonstrates how language and expression serve as crucial carriers of meaning in cinematic narratives.

The study shows how cinema can both mirror and challenge cultural norms, providing opportunities for dialogue and reinterpretation of kinship and identity in Kerala. Future studies may expand this analysis by comparing similar family dramas across Malayalam and Indian regional cinema to better understand how narratives negotiate tradition and modernity.

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