

# Emotional Suffering of Surrogating Mother: An Analysis through the Malayalam Film “Dasharatham”

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## Abstract

Surrogacy, as we know it today, has only been around for the last 30 years. At the same time Dasharatham is a 1989 Malayalam Indian dramatic film written by A. K. Lohithadas and directed by Sibi Malayil. Its a movie born before the time. Anni is the central character who is the surrogate mother. We analysis emotional suffering of a mother based on the movie “Dasharatham” . The analysis is based on the study conducted by Tehran, Tashi, Mehran, Eskandari, & Tehrani on two main themes and four sub themes: acquired experiences in pregnancy (feelings toward pregnancy, relationship with family, relatives and commissioning couple) and consequences of surrogacy (complications of pregnancy, religious and financial problems of surrogacy).Aditionally a theme “ Emotional attachment of mother towards baby” is also included.

**Keywords:** Sarrogation, mother, emotions, biological father

Dasharatham is a 1989 Malayalam Indian dramatic film written by A. K. Lohithadas and directed by Sibi Malayil. The film mainly features Mohanlal, Rekha and Murali. “*Dasharatham*” is widely regarded as one of the best films from the writer-director duo Lohithadas-Sibi Malayil in Kerala film industry.

“Dasharatha” ( Sonof King Aja of Kosala) originally was king of the Kosala Kingdom and a descendant of the “Suryavamsha dynasty” in Hinduism. According to the *Ayodhyā Kāṇḍa* of the *Ramayana* (in chapter 34, verses 10–13), King Dasharatha had around 350 wives, three of whom were his favourite queens Kausalya- chief queen, Kaikeyi, and Sumitra. In none of them ‘Dasharatha’ has no children. Dasharatha was the ruler of Ayodhy, although he was without a son to continue his dynasty. In order to have a son, he made the decision to perform an “avamedha”(Avamedha representing military, royal and pan-Indian aspects, it was only 1 step from acquiring a Universalist and cosmologic dimension). Sumantra, his charioteer and advisor, informed him of a prophesy stating that by bringing

the sage Ryauga to Ayodhya, he would have sons. In order to satisfy the prophecy, Dasharatha went to Ayodhya, where the daughter of king Romapada, Sita, was wed to Ryauga. He sent Ryauga to Kosala and gave the Brahmins orders to conduct the avamedha. Following the proper completion of the avamedha, a Putryi was conducted in order to achieve sons. A person holding a bowl of celestial porridge appeared from the fire during the performance. Dasharatha distributed half of the porridge to his wife after being instructed to do so. The deity instructed Dasharatha to distribute the porridge to his wives, so he did so by giving half to Kausalya, half to Sumitri, half to Kaikeyi, and the final half to Sumitri once more. Rama was born to Kausalya, Bharata to Kaikeyi, and the twins Lakhmana and Shatrughna to Sumitri.

"Dasharatham" movie has somewhat resemblance to the story of epic character "Dasharatha". According to the classics and reading it is understood that most of the times women suffer for infertility. Just because of the thought that women are completely responsible for giving progeny. "Kuttikkuppayam", often known as "Short Dress," starring Prem Nazir, Madhu, Sheela and Ambika is a 1964 Indian drama film in the Malayalam language, which was written and directed by Moidu Padiyath and based on his book Kaneer Panthal. At the box office that year, the movie was a huge financial hit is also discussing the same issue.

### **History of Surrogacy**

Surrogacy can be defined as a type of pregnancy in which a woman carries and gives birth to a baby for a person who is not able to have children. In a surrogate pregnancy, eggs from the woman who will carry the baby or from an egg donor are fertilized with sperm from a sperm donor to make an embryo.

Surrogacy, as we know it today, has only been around for the last 30 years. However, the idea of surrogacy has been around for much longer — even tracing back to Biblical times. In modern assisted reproductive technology (ART).

In Biblical time the tale of Sarah and Abraham in "The Book of Genesis" contains the first reference to surrogacy. Despite being married, Sarah and Abraham were unable to have children of their own. As a result, Sarah asked her servant Hagar to give birth to Abraham's child. This is a standard surrogacy situation.

In an ethically questionable way, the first successful artificial insemination of a woman was completed, in 1884. The first ethically completed IVF embryo transfer was successful in 1975. The first baby conceived through IVF transfer was born in 1978. 1978 – Louise Brown, the first "test-tube baby", was born in England, the product of the first successful IVF procedure. The first surrogacy arrangement was made between a traditional surrogate mother and the affected parents. Elizabeth Kane (a nickname) got remuneration to it. Perhaps the most famous case in surrogacy history is the "Baby M." case, involving a traditional surrogacy in 1984, agreeing to pay her \$10,000.

In India, the hone of surrogacy isn't unused, in spite of the fact that it was already uncontrolled due to a need of clear enactment. The successful delivery of the primary IVF child, Kanupriya assumed name Durga, in Kolkata on October 3rd, 1978, gave India's populace trust for surrogacy as an elective regenerative strategy. In 2002, commercial surrogacy or informally 'Rent a Womb' practice, was legalised in India. Now Union Cabinet approved the Surrogacy (Regulation) Bill. The new Surrogacy Act (2021) restricts many Intended Parents to apply for surrogacy in India.

Wary of stringent provisions in the Surrogacy (Regulation) Bill which, once enacted, would make commercial surrogacy impossible, childless couples in the state Kerala are increasingly opting for

it. Of the more than 45 IVF centers in state, around 20 who offer the facility have reported an increase in number of couples who commission surrogate mothers to carry their child. Infertility specialists said that from two to three cases of surrogacy on in each infertility centre in the last 10 years the number has jumped to 20 to 25, on an average, in 2017 according to the Indian Society of Assisted Reproduction (ISAR), Kerala after two to three failed IVF sessions, the couple decides on surrogacy,” said Dr Parasuram Gopinath, scientific director, CIMAR Fertility Centre. Asia Pacific presents lucrative opportunities for key players in surrogacy market. India is more compare to cheaper than other countries (Omkar, Apoorva ,2020) The global surrogacy market generated \$112.80 million and is projected to \$201.40 million , growing at a CARG of 6.1% from 2016 to 2025

Numerous ethical questions have been raised with regards to surrogacy. They generally stem from concerns relating to social justice, women's rights, child welfare, and bioethics, etc.

### **Movie Plot**

In 1989, when surrogacy was illegal in India, Mohanlal's Dasharatham was made. Its talks about a woman's dilemma during surrogacy also.

In short plot it explains an orphaned eccentric billionaire, Rajeev has his own weird taste in everything. Poor knowledge of his family relationships, he struggles to achieve his goal of becoming a father without getting married.

The movie “Dasharatham” is about Rajiv Menon (Monalal), an alcoholic womanizer who was born rich and has no purpose in life. With no parents to guide him, Pillai, a trusted proprietor, runs the family business. That time he started to detach from luxury lavish life and a need arise for a baby. A good friend, guide and philosopher Dr. Hameed (Sukumaran) advises Rajiv to borrow his womb. They meet Chandradas (Murali), an ex-football player who urgently needs money for surgery, and his wife Annie (Rekha) agrees to have Rajiv's child through artificial insemination. Neither Charandas nor Annie are happy with this decision. This is clearly a desperate solution to their financial needs. At first, Annie just wanted to get through the ninth month of her pregnancy, give up the baby and move on with her life. He's completely obsessed with the idea of having children, finally calling someone his. However, by the time the child is born, Annie is emotionally attached to the life that is taking shape inside her womb, and she refuses to part ways with the baby.

### **Emotional consequences to surrogate mother**

People choose surrogacy for many reasons. These reasons range from medical conditions that make it difficult for some women to conceive naturally, to helping same-sex couples and singles use pregnancy surrogacy to complete their families.

Deciding to become a surrogate is perhaps one of the most life-changing decisions one can make as a woman. In addition to the medical risks of surrogacy, there are sometimes emotional issues that prospective surrogates must consider. Pregnancy itself can be a difficult process, but some women find surrogacy more emotionally challenging because they can't go home with the child they've lived with for nine months.

Here I selected study of Ahmari Tehran H, Tashi S, Mehran N, Eskandari N, Dadkhah Tehrani T. -Emotional experiences in surrogate mothers: A qualitative study as a base for identifying emotional consequences of surrogate mother. They are Feelings toward pregnancy- Coercion to have no feeling to baby and Fear and worry about being baby abnormal/baby health (relationship with family, relatives

and the main parents of fetus- Fear of husbands reactions in marital relationship , Doubt about informing her own children of the pregnancy type, Worries and concerns about informing the relatives and friends and consequences of surrogacy (complications of pregnancy, religious and financial problems of surrogacy). Other than this one another aspect also analyzing in this study. "Emotional attachment of mother towards baby". surrogate mother develop an attachment with the child at first that (Probasco,2021). After all, she has been carrying the child for several months and will soon give birth, which is a very emotional experience. In Emotional experiences in surrogate mothers: A qualitative movie analysis is doing to find out the base for identifying emotional consequences of surrogate mother.

### 1. Feelings toward pregnancy

During pregnancy, our body changes a lot. One may love some changes and feel uncomfortable with others. It experience of a lot of physical changes during pregnancy, or only a few. One will probably have emotional ups and downs during pregnancy. Some physical and emotional experiences are common to a particular trimester (stage) of pregnancy. Aside from emotional ups and downs caused by rising hormone levels in the first three months, the feeling of growing a new life can be exciting and awe-inspiring. It is also common to feel anxious, vulnerable and overwhelmed by the big changes that pregnancy and a new baby will bring.

- **Coercion to have no feeling to baby**

In Dasharath, heroine Anni consents to surrogacy only with the intention of financial support for her husband's survival. Her husband Das comforts the worried Anni by saying "Your mind and body are all mine". "Pregnancy's growth of an embryo is just a tumor that has been growing for ten months," he says. Anni agrees. They do not feel any emotional attachment to the state of pregnancy or to the child to be born. They do not feel any emotional attachment to the state of pregnancy or to the child to be born. She considers it only as a burden to bear. When Anni finally becomes pregnant after multiple miscarriages, the biological father, Rajiv, is overjoyed. Anne addresses the baby as "Damn" and wishes she had gotten it after ten months, and then becomes very emotional. Throughout the film, Anni's attachment and duty to her husband is only somewhat evident. They are not worried at all about the life of the baby in their stomach. We also see that Anni is not ready to follow any of Rajiv's instructions for the sake of the baby's safety. It is the conviction that the child is not theirs and the realization that it must be returned once and for all that prompts them to do so. But Anni's husband was much more conscious about her condition. He once even scared about an abortion and the legal side of it.

- **Fear and worry about being baby abnormal/baby health**

One of the unpleasant and uncomfortable emotional experiences of uterine donors was fear and anxiety about the baby's abnormalities. In this film, a biological father is presented who is more concerned than necessary. While talking about moving Annie to another place for the safety of the baby, her husband says "If there is an abortion for any reason, consider it our carelessness, what will you have to say". The husband's mother also corrects it and says "If anything happens, it will be said that we did it on purpose" Anni also accept it.

## 2. Relationship with family, relatives and the main parents of fetus

Surrogacy is something that only lasts a few months, but the discomfort and rift it can cause in relationships can be huge. Sometimes it can be cut off permanently. This conditions are able can have a major psychological impact on the woman who pregnant through surrogacy.

### • Fear of husbands reactions in marital relationship

The fear of husband's reactions in marital relationship is one of the emotional experiences in uterus donors. Anni has got a husband (Chandra Das) who provides full physical monthly support. Anni's husband is the one who gives full support to Anni when she is mentally depressed and understands their situation. Anni's husband is also very respectful. We can also see that anni has morning sickness. Anni has complete trust and complete love for her husband. But the servant's words that "I share in their happiness no matter how much my wife is pregnant" discouraged Anni. At one place, Das also says, "Not my child, but my anni's child." Anni is hurt by such comments coming from her own husband. But towards the end, there is a rift between Anni and her husband apparently when Anni comes back to her own home with her baby. Das also warns him not to forget that he is a husband. Das opens up that his life is full of self-esteem and indolence. Anni is taken aback when Das says that he is the one who gave away his own wife as a concubine in front of the locals. Das is not ready to accept the baby. They come to the decision of breaking up. In the end, Anni gets angry in front of the unanswerable question of whether she wants her husband or her baby. Realizing anni's dharma grief and mood, biological father Rajeev returns the baby to Anni.

### • Doubt about informing her own children of the pregnancy type

In this movie, Anni is the wife of a football player named Chandradas. So there is no confusion regarding informing her own children of the pregnancy type. Anni is also seen saying that when they have children, they will grow up together

### • Worries and concerns about informing the relatives and friends

The opinions and reactions of the surrogacy volunteers' family members, relatives, and friends on the surrogacy problem varied. From the beginning, Anni intends only financial gain to bring her husband back to life. Therefore, they are not ready for any closeness as their biological parents. She doesn't bother to speak politely. From her situation, it can hardly be considered a big mistake. Anni is also convinced that she is choosing this path because there is no other way. Whatever it is, Anni, Chandra Das and the family are afraid of the society. An example of this is the mother-in-law's frustration that "things happen that are not even heard of". There are passages about having to listen to ridicule from the community and his own wife as a concubine in front of the locals. The 1990s was a time when Kerala gave more importance to social thought and action and many new elements emerged economically and socially. Liberalization, privatization and globalization are starting to be implemented in India. As a result of this, new knowledge in the field of science was also transferred. These changes were also reflected in Kerala. But the concept of surrogacy was more than the common people could understand. It was going to create confusion among families, relatives, friends and locals. In most cases these people were depicted as eccentrics.

### 3. Consequences of surrogacy

- **The complications of pregnancy**

A fertility clinic's job entails an embryo transfer pregnancy to become a gestational carrier. There are dangers and negative effects associated with surrogate pregnancy, just as with other medical process. The primary health risks of surrogacy can be common pregnancy side effects, such as morning sickness, general discomfort, swelling and soreness. Additionally, there can be similar side effects to some of the required surrogacy medications .More serious health risks of surrogacy could include: Gestational diabetes, Damage to reproductive organs, Hypertension, Miscarriage. there are potential risks associated with the IVF process. These can include: Slight bleeding, Cramping, Infection. Gestational surrogates may experience: Depression during or after the pregnancy, Difficult and confusing feelings of loss at the end of the process, Tension with your spouse and/or children, Challenges while forming a relationship with the intended parents. Surrogacy contracts are an important part of the process, and by working with a law-firm-owned surrogacy program (Southern Surrogacy, 2020).In this film, we can see the physical and psychological factors that can be caused by surrogacy. We can see a definite agreement between the biological father Rajiv and the surrogate mother Anni.

#### **The Religious and financial problems of surrogacy**

According to a rough estimate, there are about 4,200 religions in the world (Campanelli, 2017) . When we come in to the scenario of religion Catholic Church does not advocate for surrogacy. Instead, the Church teaches that children are a gift from God, only to be conceived and carried naturally by a married husband and wife. Any addition of a third party to this process is considered immoral. The way Muslims perceive surrogacy might vary greatly. Some academics contend that the practice resembles adultery and that the kid has no legitimate ancestry, while others assert that surrogacy is an essential component of the concept that individuals have a duty to do all they can to maintain the human species. Hinduism has varying perspectives on surrogacy, like many other religions. In general, infertility treatments may be permitted, such as artificial insemination when the husband's sperm is used.

In order for the surrogate moms to experience their pregnancy happily, it is essential that both the commissioning couples and the surrogates have a legal contract that clearly defines their roles and obligations and ensures that any financial obligations are met. (Abbasi , Salehi and Mashayekhi )

- **Having no obvious religious legitimation and social acceptability**

One faith, Catholicism, is the largest in the world and is the only one that forbids surrogacy without any restrictions. According to a 1987 document from the Roman Catholic Church, "Children are a gift and a blessing from God and that although science makes some things possible, it does not make them right." The Catholic Church also forbids IUI, IVF, ET, and ICSI. .It can be understood that anni's family also belongs to the Christian sect.\_We can see Anni's mother-in-lawpraying, "Jesus forgives the unheard of."In the Catholic Church's view, the marriage bond is between a wife and husband. Children are gifts from God for the parents, not the third party.

At the time of this movie's release, surrogacy was very, very rare. Once literally a taboo, the idea of barren women 'renting a womb' to realize the joy of motherhood. The story takes place during that period. Anni's family is afraid of the community.\_We can read it through the words of the mother-in-law through the words of the husband. Her husband Chandra Das is seen worrying about the slurs and insults he faces in the society. Anni's family stands by her in the face of her engagement

- **No enough payment for expenses by the main parents**

Anni's husband Chandra Das was a patient. Anni considered surrogacy as the only way to generate the Rs.1.5 lakh needed to treat him. She also says that she will agree only if she gives that amount. No matter what, the biological father Rajive is willing to pay any amount to make his wish come true. He is willing to pay more than what is stated in the legal note. He goes above and beyond for anni's care and health, even though anni is not interested in any of it. He is also willing to pay for Anni's husband's further treatment.

#### **4. Emotional attachment of mother towards baby**

At first anni doesn't consider the baby growing in her stomach as just a tumor but at one point anni starts to love the baby. Anni is getting closer to the baby as the days pass by. She doesn't bother Chandra das who comes to say goodbye and is busy with the baby's affairs. When the baby starts eating, anni is very upset when the biological father Rajeev says that "I can go now" anni says "I won't leave my baby and this is her son that she gave birth to." Anni tells her husband that she is a womb for Rajeev but she is a mother. She says that she will not give the baby to biological father Rajeev even if the whole world is against it. Can the first born son in his womb not be his own? Anni asks her husband Das. Anni is going through a lot of mental stress during this period and the Andeans are also afraid that maybe they will slip into the depression. She was not ready to give up the baby for any reason. Since there was no law in India at that time regarding such a situation, the verdict was against Rajeev and it was psychologically beneficial to Anni.

#### **Conclusion**

According to records, Kanupriya assumed name Durga, in Kolkata on October 3rd, 1978 is the first successful surrogacy. Dasharatham is a 1989 Indian Malayalam-language drama film written by A. K. Lohithadas and directed by Sibi Malayil. According to this, this film has been released in a gap of 11 years. Therefore, it was a film born before its time. It was not a commercial success at that time. That time most of the people considered surrogacy as a taboo. Religions also take part in it. The south Indian actress "Rekha" at her age of 19 acted the character "anni" in mesmerizing way. Her performance along with Mohanlal and Murali make it as a classic movie. Positive and negative experience of surrogate mother portrait in this movie however, surrogacy needs special care in various aspects that its management is very important and requires deep consultation to select suitable host. It will be better if counseling should be continued for surrogate mothers during and after pregnancy.

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