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Kodiyettom
(The Ascent)
(INDIAN-B&W)

Variety

1-31-79
New Delhi, Jan. 16.

Trivandrum release of Chitralkha Film Cooperative production. Features entire cast. Written and directed by Adoor Gopalakrishnan; camera (B&W), Ravi Varma; editor, M. Moni. Reviewed at New Delhi Film Fest, Jan. 15, '79. Running time, 130 MINS.

With: Gopi, Lalita Azeez, Kaviyoor Ponnamma, Adoor Bhavani, Vilasini Suseela.

A remarkable film from the Southern part of India, Malayalam, where a spurt of unusual filmmakers was revealed at the recent New Delhi Film Festival. This one looks at a drifter who lives off his sister's earnings, plus a few odd jobs, and helps about the village and has time to pay with children, sell his vote and attend religious festivals.

He is not exactly simple-minded but uninformed. He admires a kindly widow who has an attachment to a rich man, unknown to him, and he finally gets married at his sister's insistence. But he is unable to change and goes about his old ways neglecting his wife who leaves him when she is pregnant.

He then gets a job with a harsh truckdriver and slowly begins to change as he first sees life outside his village. He is profoundly hurt by the suicide of the widow he had always admired. He begins to try to see his child and take things to his wife.

Film is full of fine observation that transcends its Indian setting to make a statement on that ever-green theme of a man finding identity and possibly maturity. Pic is slow but always revealing and full of poetic insights into the characters, place and time giving it universal impact that should reveal the director, Adoor Gopalakrishnan, at European film fests. —Mosk.