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## **Kamala Saththianadhan and the *Indian Ladies' Magazine*: women's editorship and transnational print networks in late colonial India**

In 1901, a new women's magazine in English launched itself into the populous and multilingual world of Indian print culture. Taking its cue from the turn of the century, it presented itself as a novel space for a community of women who could express their thoughts and perform their evolving modernity in its pages. Published under the editorship of Kamala Saththianadhan (1879–1950), the *Indian Ladies' Magazine* quickly evolved into a platform where the future of Indian womanhood was fiercely debated. Despite a steady stream of subscribers and positive reviews in other journals, the *Indian Ladies' Magazine* folded in December 1918 due to a combination of personal and financial reasons.<sup>1</sup> Deeply committed to the venture, Saththianadhan attempted to revive the journal again in 1927–1938 when she handed over more editorial control to her daughter Padmini Sengupta by officialising her position as the Assistant Editor, though she had been involved in the production of the magazine in some form or the other from its very inception. This final run did achieve moderate success, though it no longer had the edge and excitement of the first run. Publishing anonymous writers alongside household names like Sarojini Naidu, the *Indian Ladies' Magazine* made a crucial and sustained intervention in the ongoing conversation about the public and private roles of Indian women at a time when both colonial rule and patriarchal notions of domesticity were being unsettled. In spite of this singularity, both Kamala Saththianadhan and the *Indian Ladies' Magazine* have largely been relegated to the margins of history, mentioned only fleetingly in accounts of women's involvement in the making of modern India.<sup>2</sup>

This essay focuses on Saththianadhan's editorial persona and the first run of the magazine (1901–1918), arguing that this first iteration provided its editor and its contributing authors a significant platform for advocating social reform, creating a community of readers

and fashioning the New Indian Woman. The *Indian Ladies' Magazine* was at the forefront of the print and political landscape of pre-Jallianwala India, and poised to intervene in the larger debates about women's education. However, by the second series in 1927, as the political landscape shifted, the journal's emphasis came to feel too limited, too depoliticised, not sufficiently anti-colonial or even sufficiently critical of conventional gender roles: there was no sharply articulated or consistent denunciation of colonial policy, and even the educated woman that the magazine had championed was seen as essentially fulfilling a domestic destiny. This sense of the periodical's datedness, indeed a kind of slow ossification of its politics, comes across in an episode recounted by Padmini Sengupta in her biography of Kamala Saththianadhan. She describes how her mother had often reminisced about her "fond friendship" with Sarojini Naidu and her pride in the fact that "it was her Magazine that had the honor of first publishing" many of her poems.<sup>3</sup> However, the two women drifted apart over the years as Naidu became more active in nationalist politics and was feted internationally for her work. Naidu's remark that "[t]he Magazine was once one of the most important publications in the country [...] but it is needed no longer now," is poignant in noting the periodical's shifting prestige and readership, as its radical newness in the 1910s became stale by the 1930s and it no longer spoke to or for a new generation of women.<sup>4</sup> Naidu's dismissive remark also gestures towards the productive but complicated relations that Saththianadhan developed with other women reformers, both Indian and British, and how these collaborations were often double-edged.

The last few years have brought welcome attention to the *Indian Ladies' Magazine* with Deborah Anna Logan's book-length study of the periodical and Barnita Bagchi's recent work on Sengupta's writings, especially her biography of her mother.<sup>5</sup> Logan's book has a wide scope that treats the *Indian Ladies' Magazine* as a serious publication in its own right as well as a record that reflects its editor's personal and professional development. Till the publication of Logan's work, the only existing, though long out-of-print, biography of

Sathianadhan was written by her daughter. However, as Bagchi has noted, *The Portrait of an Indian Woman* (1956) is as much a biographical portrait of Sathianadhan as it is a memoir of Sengupta's own childhood and youth, and indeed serves as a remarkable historical document of women's education in that period. Logan adds to this biographical account, yet most of her understanding of Sathianadhan's life and career is rooted in Sengupta's book. While her work has brought much-needed attention to Sathianadhan and her journal, it remains rather protective of its subject. I take a more critical stance on the *Indian Ladies' Magazine*, appraising it both as a radical editorial venture as well as one that is finally unable to stay in step with its changing political moment.

Given how little Sathianadhan and the *Indian Ladies' Magazine* are acknowledged in literary canons and historical scholarship, sites that determine the field itself – what we read, and therefore what we can write about – it is impossible to begin without some biographical context. By returning to Sathianadhan's career, this essay participates in the recovery of this exceptional woman and her equally exceptional periodical enterprise, asking us to see the inventiveness at work in both: Sathianadhan's careful self-formation and the editorial strategies she used to propel her magazine into the literary marketplace. Tracing the entwined stories of the *Indian Ladies' Magazine* and its editor also involves a consideration of the ways in which both challenge gender and generic conventions, insisting on carving out a space for women's articulations of self. Though any semblance of a complete life is not possible, the first section of this essay will attempt to piece together Sathianadhan's career and the inception of her magazine through the fragmentary and slanted sources we have access to, so as to recognise its importance in contemporary debates about women, family and public life; the second section will, in the absence of publishing records or correspondence, look at the magazine itself to bring to light Sathianadhan's editorial practice of partnering with other periodicals; and the third section will show how the New Indian Woman and a community of readers emerged from these pages. Such a work of recovery and

recuperation relies on a long history of feminist scholarship and its insistence on collaboration. This is as true for my critical practice, which will extend Bagchi and Logan's work as well as that of preceding scholars of Indian women's history, as it is for Sathianadhan's own method that depended on journalistic connections, transnational feminist networks, intergenerational support and an extended community of friends. Literary historians like Shobna Nijhawan, Francesca Orsini, and Vasudha Dalmia, and scholars of late colonial India Geraldine Forbes and Tanika Sarkar, provide not only the grounding for my research but also a template of what a feminist hermeneutics looks like.<sup>6</sup>

### **I. Becoming Kamala Sathianadhan: mother, author, editor**

Simply titled *The Portrait of an Indian Woman*, Padmini Sengupta's book was published by the YMCA's publishing house in Calcutta with a preface written by Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, the first vice president of India after independence (1952–62) and subsequently the second president of India (1962–67). Sathianadhan emerges from this hagiographical account as deeply committed to women's emancipation but eventually putting her family and home above her public calling. Like the title itself that keeps the subject of the book nameless, suggesting the "everywoman" role that Sengupta attempted to ascribe to her mother, Radhakrishnan's words too emphasise her ordinary domesticity. Though he mentions her work for women's rights, he stresses how the importance of the book lies in the fact that it "gives us the picture not of an angel or a saint but a simple good woman, who treated domestic obligations as of higher importance than public service."<sup>7</sup> From the preface onwards, then, the real potential and radical energy of Kamala Sathianadhan's work and the choices she made to live a financially independent life become flattened and contained in this narrative about domesticity and motherhood. She is a "simple good woman," who recognised her family as the microcosm of the society she aspired to change. Nevertheless, this attempted taming is scarcely successful given that her mothering and domestic management

were a far cry from the order advocated in the *Indian Ladies' Magazine*, even in her daughter's own account. Though she was always a devoted and loving mother, her own ambitions that are underplayed in this retelling and the financial situation of the family made for some unusual domestic arrangements. In many ways this biography is typical of the sanitised life-stories of literary women that would otherwise be too troubling: familial pressure actively shaped Elizabeth Gaskell's biography of Charlotte Brontë, and culturally inscribed ideas about women's morality influenced the popular biographies of George Eliot, Elizabeth Barrett Browning and Christina Rossetti, who all feature heavily in the *Indian Ladies' Magazine*. Closer home, women like Pandita Ramabai and Sarojini Naidu were frequently held up as exemplars, and their biographical records were similarly tidied up for consumption by the general public.<sup>8</sup> At the same time, Sengupta's biography is a useful source for mapping out the career of this unusually driven woman. So while it may disappoint as a linear, chronological, even factually precise account, it does offer a number of details that have helped to fill in the empty spaces of the story I am hoping to reconstruct, so as to bring to light a woman who was ambitious and energetic, but also often fractious, controlling, and conservative.

Kamala Saththianadhan was born Hannah Ratnam Krishnamma and seems to have taken on the name Kamala around the time of her marriage to Dr Samuel Saththianadhan in 1898. Samuel Saththianadhan was a leading educationist and reformer, and a widower twenty years older than Kamala when he married her; she was 18 years old and he was 38. He came from a prominent Tamil Christian family that had keen and wide-ranging literary interests, besides being well-educated and deeply committed to social reform, much like the Krishnammas who were Telugu Christians. Studies of the Saththianadhan family by E. M. Jackson and Eunice de Souza have focused on their religion in order to understand the life of early Tamil Christians, stories of conversion, and negotiations of coverts between European and Indian traditions.<sup>9</sup> These are both sympathetic considerations of these men and women on

their own terms, and take account of the fact that the entire Saththianadhan family wrote fiction and non-fiction, essays, diaries, short stories, folk-tales, and translated from Sanskrit and Tamil. Their writings reflect the predicaments of Indian Christians and missionaries, probe the Indianness of the Indian Church, and deal with issues like education for women, child marriage, and caste. Samuel Saththianadhan had studied at Cambridge, like Kamala's (or rather Hannah's, at this point) two brothers, and returned to Madras in 1881 after completing his law degree. Almost immediately on his return, his parents arranged his marriage to Krupabai Khisty, who is better known than his second wife as the first Indian woman to write a novel in English.<sup>10</sup> Krupabai was studying to be a doctor at the Madras Medical College and lodging with the Saththianadhans when Samuel came home. While she was ultimately unable to complete her medical studies, Samuel was awarded the Chair of Logic and Moral Philosophy at Presidency College, University of Madras, around 1890. Frequently in poor health, Krupabai died in 1894.

The marriage between Kamala and Samuel Saththianadhan was also an arranged match, and the fiercely independent Kamala agreed to it only on the condition that her husband would let her complete her education.<sup>11</sup> In her biography, Sengupta conjectures that her mother would have been reluctant to agree to marry at the age of 18 but her grandfather must have undoubtedly persuaded her to marry this man who was so well known in the Christian and reform communities in South India. Curiously, Sengupta reads this momentous event in her mother's life through her novel, *Padma*, where the father of the heroine persuades his daughter to choose "the wiser course" of a marriage that had been arranged between the two families: "I have never talked to you about your marriage; but remember, it is a holy institution, and also, how happy your mother and I were..... I would have liked you to choose for yourself, but it cannot be."<sup>12</sup>

This novel was presumably written by Saththianadhan after her marriage, but the date of publication is unknown. However, even a cursory analysis makes visible the configuration

of the lotus motif in Saththianadhan's life and work. The title of this eponymous novel *Padma* means "lotus," and the pseudonym used by Saththianadhan for this publication is "Lotos." The name Kamala also means lotus, though it remains unclear whether it was chosen by Hannah herself or bestowed by her husband Samuel. In an unexpectedly gothic turn, Kamala was also the title of the second novel written by Samuel Saththianadhan's first wife Krupabai, and told the story of a young Hindu woman who had married a man educated in England. Published in the *Madras Christian College Magazine* in 1893–94, *Kamala*, together with Krupabai's first novel *Saguna* (1887–88), was often reviewed by contemporary critics as a New Woman novel.<sup>13</sup> Muthiah is not alone in suggesting that it was Samuel Saththianadhan who renamed Hannah, recalling the novel that Krupabai had written.<sup>14</sup> Logan too notes this link and claims that Hannah became Kamala "[f]ollowing the Indian tradition of a husband renaming his bride."<sup>15</sup> However, though such traditions of renaming the bride at her wedding do exist in certain communities and regions, it was not a particularly popular custom either in Tamil Nadu or amongst Indian Christians. When such changes did happen in this rather tight-knit community, it was usually in order to Anglicize an Indian name. So it had been with Samuel's mother Anna Saththianadhan, who was born Annal Arokiam, though the christening had preceded her marriage by some years. In the case of Kamala, the opposite is true: the change of her first name from Hannah to Kamala effaced her Christianity rather than affirming it.

This issue of naming is important to how Saththianadhan develops her authorial and editorial personas. In the late 1890s, she wrote a series of articles on Hindu heroines for the *Madras Christian College Magazine* using her maiden name Hannah Ratnam Krishnamma. The last of these, published in 1900, two years after her marriage to Samuel Saththianadhan, is signed Kamala Saththianadhan as expected. However, her lost novel *Padma*, also written after her marriage, is published under a pseudonym. In 1901, with the setting up of the *Indian Ladies' Magazine*, she confidently takes on her editorial persona as Kamala Saththianadhan,



displaying it prominently on the front cover of the magazine and shoring it up through her editorial notes. She also contributes to other journals under this name and uses it to publish another novel, *Detective Janaki* (1944), further consolidating her reputation. However, at times to populate her incipient periodical and at times to generate a discussion with other contributors, she keeps alive the figure of “Miss Hannah Ratnam Krishnammah, M.A. (Madras).”<sup>16</sup> “Padma” and “Padmini” (the diminutive of Padma/Lotus) are also frequently used pseudonyms in the magazine, and it is likely that some of the anonymous pieces were also penned by Saththianadhan. The lotus as a motif also figures prominently in the headers of the early volumes of the magazine and the frontispiece which becomes its most characteristic feature (figure 1; I will return to this in section three).

In 1906, Samuel Saththianadhan had been on his way from America to Japan, giving a series of lectures on Indian philosophy, when he was suddenly taken unwell, dying alone in a Japanese hospital at the age of 46.<sup>17</sup> This tragedy was compounded by the loss of financial security when Arbuthnot’s Bank crashed in the same year. Kamala Saththianadhan lost a large amount in this crisis and her mother lost her entire life’s savings. Deciding not to join the household of either of her brothers as a dependent, she sought employment under terms that would be acceptable to her exacting standards of respectability. In 1911, she accepted the post of tutor to a local Rani, teaching her English and Sanskrit. This post allowed her complete financial independence to set up her own household with her aging mother and her two young children (figure 2). However, despite running her ramshackle household, managing a gardener and two servants, preparing classes for her pupil, and home-schooling her children, she continued to edit the *Indian Ladies’ Magazine* till 1918. Padmini Sengupta recalls the excitement of the arrival of the magazine in the post and the frenzy of activity that ensued:

large packages of the journal would arrive each month, and we would avidly scan the pages. Our next task would be to sit and roll each journal separately for the post. How vividly I can see the neatly stacked piles rising before us, and my brother and I and the servants sitting on the ground busy with our task of rolling, gluing and stamping while Kamala and “Nani” [granny] would sit back and watch us.<sup>18</sup>

The magazine was increasingly becoming, despite its efforts to seem professional and its proclamations of support from a large and active network of readers and writers, a home affair. Sathianadhan’s children, her mother, and the domestic help at the large establishment of the Rani would be put to work on each new issue of the magazine. Indeed, her mother encouraged Padmini to write for the magazine, and it is there that she practised her journalistic hand before she became the magazine’s co-editor for its second run in 1927.

However, despite this enormous effort from the entire family and the now depleted network of friendly readers and contributors, Sathianadhan was forced to stop the magazine in 1918. There was a last-ditch attempt to raise funds to cover the financial overlay required to run the journal through a concert at the end of 1917. The announcement in the magazine did not mince its words:

There will be a concert at the Victoria Hall in Madras on the 7th February, in aid of the *Indian Ladies’ Magazine*. [...] The cost of paper and printing has risen considerably, and yet the annual subscription of the magazine has not been raised, being what it was at the very beginning, viz. 4 Rs. a year including postage. The I.L.M. is being edited in the interests of the women of India. It is the only English magazine of the kind in India. It has been in existence for nearly 17 years now; and though we are sure it is far below what it should be, yet we have been doing our best for it. With more money in hand, a wider scope will be possible for the magazine.<sup>19</sup>

The outcome however, was not quite as successful as Saththianadhan had hoped for and in the next issue, the magazine printed the following notice:

We are glad to announce to our readers that the proceeds of the concert roughly amounted to Rs. 700. Out of this, Rs. 250 went towards expenses, which were of various kinds. The remaining Rs. 450 will be divided, Rs. 150 being 1/3rd of the proceeds going to the War Fund, and Rs. 300 going to the Magazine. The latter amount falls short by about Rs. 80 in paying up the debt of the I.L.M. for the year 1917.<sup>20</sup>

With this deficit in funds, it is no surprise that Saththianadhan discontinued her editorial venture at the end of the year, after putting out increasingly flimsy monthly editions. In addition, the years from 1919 to 1927 were too busy and peripatetic for the contracting Saththianadhan family to allow Kamala to continue her editorial work: in 1917, she had left the Rani's service and accepted a post as the principal of the Married Ladies' Classes in Madras; in 1919, she and her children left for England so that they could get an English education and her son William could successfully pass the Indian Civil Service Exam (which was held in England till 1922); around 1921, Saththianadhan and her daughter returned to India briefly because of Nani's illness, only to arrive two days after her death; in 1923, mother and daughter sailed back to India, leaving Bill to finish his probation in England; soon after Bill's return in 1924, Saththianadhan joined him at his post as the Assistant Collector of Tanjore, moving along with him as his career progressed.

Sengupta recalls her mother's excitement about the changes that had taken place in India in the intervening years and her strong desire to restart her magazine while also noting her anxieties about its relevance in this changed time. In 1927, the magazine was finally relaunched, however Saththianadhan's apprehensions were prescient and her outlook now

seemed out of step with an intensely politicised period. The politics of Indian nationalism meant that her ideological leanings that attempted to build bridges between Indian and European women by avoiding explicit confrontation, and her attempt to develop the “inner life” of her readers through literature, felt a little old-fashioned.<sup>21</sup> Logan indicates a complex set of factors that account for the end of the *Indian Ladies’ Magazine*: Sathianadhan’s declining health and her reluctance to actively participate in public events coincided with a surge in political activism and an attitudinal shift in the notion of womanliness.<sup>22</sup>

Sathianadhan struggled with this change that had occurred in the gender and racial topography of the India she found on her return. The time in England gave her a personal experience of blatant racism and imperial hierarchy, to an extent that she found little pleasure in walking on Hampstead Heath on a bank holiday for fear of being stared at and was reluctant to sit near children on public transport in case they point and jeer. Indeed, a new prickliness to the nuances of race relations between the British and Indians took hold of her on the sea voyage to England: “Racial feelings which we had never felt in India now began to take hold of us and some of us became quite revolutionary.”<sup>23</sup> Yet, despite the real sting of these incidents described in some detail in her serialised memoir for *The Hindu*, on her return to India she remained disapproving of the unrest and indiscipline caused amongst students by the political struggle. As Sengupta recalls, her mother insisted that “students should not take part in politics [...] at the expense of abandoning or jeopardising their studies.”<sup>24</sup> This social conservatism with its fear of public defiance and emphasis on discipline ran side by side with Sathianadhan’s increasingly anti-imperial and proto-feminist thinking. The second run of the magazine then has rather different counterpoints, so the following sections will focus on the first run of the magazine from 1901 to 1918.

## **II. Positioning the *Indian Ladies’ Magazine*: friendships and collaborative networks**

Kamala Saththianadhan's life is far less tidy than it appears in the pages of Sengupta's biography: she fashioned herself in particular and peculiar ways that resist easy narration, in part because of how fabulous and multiple her self-making was and in part because of how it rests on a kind of collectivity. Despite her clear connections with the milieu's literary and political elite – Radhakrishnan's encounter with Saththianadhan for instance occurred when he was awarded a medal she had endowed in memory of her husband, Samuel Saththianadhan, at Madras University<sup>25</sup> – Saththianadhan's mark on Indian history is barely legible. An examination of the editorial strategies she employed in her magazine clearly shows how the *Indian Ladies' Magazine* imagined itself a part of a larger, transnational debate about women's rights, as well as the importance it placed on the process of reading and writing in its conceptualisation of the New Indian woman. This section will focus on the collaborations and networks that the magazine set up and showed off in its pages. Some of these were based on personal relations between Saththianadhan and other women activists of the day, others were professional associations with British women's magazines, and then there were more diffuse and provisional connections that signalled the *Indian Ladies' Magazine's* ideological stance by engaging in wide-ranging conversations about gender and domesticity in Britain and India. However, even as Saththianadhan used these alliances to her advantage to further the reach of her magazine and broadcast its aims to a wider readership, these collaborations were sometimes more complicated than they seem on the surface.

It is remarkable that during the early years of the twentieth century, the *Indian Ladies' Magazine* published the works of Sarojini Naidu, Toru Dutt, Cornelia Sorabji, Pandita Ramabai, Lady Harnam Singh, Elizabeth Adelaide Manning and Annie Besant amongst others, collaborated with a number of British and Indian periodicals, and actively participated in discussions about women's changing roles in the public and the private spheres. As mentioned earlier, in the early years of the magazine, Naidu was a staunch supporter and close friend of Saththianadhan, and nearly every issue in the inaugural volume included a

poem by her. Similarly, Manning and her periodical found frequent mentions in the *Indian Ladies' Magazine*. Manning had been involved with the National Indian Association since its formation in Bristol in 1870 by Mary Carpenter, and took over as its honorary secretary and the editor of *The Journal of the National Indian Association* in 1877 after Carpenter's death. Renamed *The Indian Magazine and Review* in 1891, the journal "provided a unique public space in Britain for debates on Indian women's education and colonial social reform more generally".<sup>26</sup> Articles written by Manning were published in Sathianadhan's magazine, as well as reprints of articles published in Manning's journal. The two journals also printed advertisements for each other, announcements about the work the other was doing, and the *Indian Ladies' Magazine* was favourably reviewed in *The Indian Magazine and Review* as a 'useful' magazine with popular illustrations.<sup>27</sup>

A more formal partnership with the British magazine *Womanhood* (1898–1907), a very different kind of periodical from Manning's, was announced in August 1902. Rather costly at sixpence per issue, this monthly magazine assumed a more exclusive tone and was aimed at the New Woman; it was "designed to cater to the new generation of college educated, upper- and middle-class women whose interests ranged from art and literature to social philanthropy, suffragism, and sport."<sup>28</sup> In conjunction with *Womanhood*, the *Indian Ladies' Magazine* organised a contest for the best essays on the topic of social intercourse between Indian and European women. This was an existing series when the contest was opened, and women especially were repeatedly asked to send in contributions on the topic. The essays were to be judged under four categories (Anglo-Indian ladies, Anglo-Indian gentlemen, Indian ladies, and Indian gentlemen), and the winning essays were to be published in the magazine and receive a silver medal, a bronze medal, and a bound copy of *Womanhood*.<sup>29</sup> Through this contest, the two periodicals become part of the effort "to bridge the gap between domestic and Anglo-Indian spheres [by] offering spaces where competing voices could be heard."<sup>30</sup> The articulate and thoughtful reader who responded to this question

was herself a version of the New Woman, and this collaboration with *Womanhood* visibly aligned Sathianadhan's magazine with a larger, transnational movement for women's rights. However, despite this desire to discuss the parameters of the New Woman in the Indian context, Sathianadhan's own relationship with the subject was more complicated. The internal evidence provided by the magazine shows how there was no univocal view on the New Woman, and even as this series of essays attempted to delineate this figure, other articles in the magazine undercut the effort. For instance, the second issue of the *Indian Ladies' Magazine* had published an article on Marie Corelli's speech criticising the New Woman. This speech was lifted directly from the pages of *Lady's Realm* (1896–1915), an upmarket women's magazine featuring fiction, poetry, fashion, home decor, as well as participating in the celebrity journalism that was to become increasingly important at the end of the century in Victorian Britain.<sup>31</sup> The anonymous writer of the article (likely to be Sathianadhan herself) professes that *Lady's Realm* was "a high class English Journal for ladies, which we should like to see more widely known in India."<sup>32</sup> This compliment to a journal without the progressive politics of *The Indian Magazine and Review* or *Womanhood* raises questions about Sathianadhan's own commitment to these ideas, while giving credibility to Corelli's argument. As the article put it, "Miss Corelli detests the New Woman and holds them up to ridicule, but she has much to say in favour of the Advanced Woman."<sup>33</sup> In other words, while Sathianadhan is keen to open up the *Indian Ladies' Magazine* to what becomes a long-running exchange on the topic, her own stance seems more ambivalent and reserved, more interested in measured reform than radical change.

Besides these explicit connections with British periodicals with a range of ideological and political leanings, the *Indian Ladies' Magazine* gained cultural currency in the Indian periodical context too. It was favourably reviewed in a number of Indian magazines in both English and vernacular languages, and proudly published these appraisals as they appeared. The August issue of 1901 quoted at length the *Indian Social Reformer* (Bombay) celebrating

this venture as an “excellent undertaking” brought about by its editor “with the co-operation of others of her own sex,” alongside reviews from the *Indian Witness* (Calcutta), the *Hindu* (Madras), the *Times of Malibar* (Calicut), the *Indian Witness* (Calcutta), the *Mysore Herald* (Mysore), the *Daily Post* (Bangalore), *The Indian Daily Telegraph* (Lucknow), and *The Voice of India* (Bombay).<sup>34</sup> There were also attempts to reach a wider readership both in terms of geographical and linguistic reach, and the September 1901 issue of the magazine noted in its “News and Notes” section that: “Arrangements have been made with the *Tamil Zenana Magazine*, the *Indian Christian Intelligencer* (Tamil Weekly, Madras), the *Malayalam Manorama* (Kottayam), and the *Vidyâ Vinôdini* (Ernakulam) for the translation of some of the articles that appear in the *Indian Ladies’ Magazine*. The article on ‘Love’s Bride: a Fancy’ has appeared in the *Malayalam Manorama* and the ‘Vedic Maiden’ in Tamil in the *Indian Christian Intelligencer*.”<sup>35</sup> Some of these magazines like, the *Tamil Zenana Magazine* and the *Indian Christian Intelligencer*, were connected to the Indian church and publicised the work that it did in the community. However, these magazines were not simple mouthpieces of the church and its missionary activities, but in fact negotiated their Christian perspective in the larger political and cultural landscape in more complex ways.

A noteworthy example here is the translation-based relationship with the *Tamil Zenana Magazine*, or to use its full title *Mātar Maṇōrañciṇi* or *The Tamil Zenana School Magazine*. Translated as “Brightener of Women’s Minds,” it was published in Madras from 1899 to 1917, under the editorship of C. S. Ramaswamy Iyer, and attempted to reach the middle- and upper-class women who lived in the separate women’s quarters. The works that it reprinted from the *Indian Ladies’ Magazine* ranged from cultural and literary articles like “Queen Victoria and Queen Alexandra” (September 1901), “Elizabeth Barrett Browning” (November 1901) and “Ravi Varma the Indian Artist” (March 1902) to those with a clear social and political agenda like “The Education of Women” by Annie Besant (January 1902) and the speech given by Kamala Saththianadhan at the Madras meeting of the National Indian



Association (April 1902). These articles were conspicuously credited to the *Indian Ladies' Magazine* to begin with, though the accreditation stops after the first few years of the collaboration even as the exchange and reprinting of articles continues. Indeed, the *Indian Ladies' Magazine* borrows from *Mātar Maṇōrañciṇi* on at least one instance without crediting it: “Dengue Fever” by Mrs. Winckler-Kings, M.D., is published in *Mātar Maṇōrañciṇi* in October 1902 before being reproduced in the *Indian Ladies' Magazine* in the following month.<sup>36</sup> It is entirely possible though that both magazines had copied this article from elsewhere, and thus were full participants in the frenetic world of transnational print where plagiarism was the norm. As Margaret Beetham points out, “Every publication relied on others for copy, either directly through the ‘scissors and paste’ method by which much provincial journalism was said to survive, or indirectly as one paper commented on or attacked another. [...] Periodicals reviewed each other, ran literary gossip columns and employed writers to interview each other.”<sup>37</sup> Since it was not possible for these magazines to rely entirely on contributors, and though editors like Sathianadhan wrote an enormous amount of copy themselves, looking to other journals for items to reproduce, with or without citation, was essential to their survival. Perhaps this accounts for a more unexpected collaboration with the *Kayastha Samachar* (Allahabad) in October 1901 when the two magazines simultaneously published a series of twelve articles on the “Women of Shakespeare,” written by Kamala Sathianadhan. The Kayasthas were a caste grouping in north India and this publication was originally meant to be a mouthpiece for the concerns of the community, though almost from the start it placed these issues in a larger national context.<sup>38</sup> On the surface, the *Indian Ladies' Magazine* and *Kayastha Samachar* had very little in common both in terms of their scope and their readership, so this surprising co-publication speaks in part to Sathianadhan’s renown, her magazine’s influence, and her editorial strategy of multiple collaboration to ensure copy as well as to increase the magazine’s traction.

Sathianadhan was particularly interested in forging links with Indian women's magazines. The second half of the nineteenth century saw an explosion in Indian print culture across all languages and women's magazines too started to come into their own.<sup>39</sup> Initially these were almost entirely edited and written by men for the benefit of women, though women as editors and writers increasingly began to make a space for themselves in this new, dynamic, heteroglossic genre. The earliest of these magazines were launched by men involved with movements for social reform, and thus had an explicit reformist agenda and presented a specific model of womanhood that was to be emulated by its ostensibly passive female readers. Periodicals that were edited and written by women began to emerge at the turn of the century, at the historical juncture where there was a discursive shift from social reform to nationalism. During this period of increasing political consciousness, Indian women's periodicals across a number of languages became a medium for elite and middle-class women to think in new idioms, communicate with strangers, and find a collective identity beyond their limited social and familial circles.<sup>40</sup> On the one hand these magazines were able to reach the women in the *zenana*, and on the other, they were able to draw them out into the space that they opened up, a platform for women to write about their lives and experiences in a multiplicity of ways – in articles, fiction, poetry, memoirs and letters.

Sathianadhan makes a deliberate, indeed a calculated effort, to link herself to these new magazines that were written for women, by women. An anonymous review of Mrs V. Atchamamba's Telugu book *Lives of Noble Women*, presumably written by Kamala Sathianadhan, notes in particular two women's magazines with female editors: Srimati Hardevi, the editor the *Bharata Bhagini* in Hindi and Srimati Sarala Devi, the editor of the *Bharati* in Bengali.<sup>41</sup> An editorial note reproducing a review of *Bharati* from the *Indian Witness* (Calcutta), commended it as "one of the brightest magazines published in Bengal," and another reprinted review from the same periodical noted the importance of *Antahpur* ("Women's Quarters") edited by Hem Kumari Choudhuri, also in Bengali.<sup>42</sup> Bengali was

particularly prolific in terms of periodical print at the end of the nineteenth century, but it is evident that Sathianadhan made a concerted attempt to find out about and reach out to women's magazines in other Indian languages as well and note their shared aims. So it is with delight that a new Gujarati magazine *Sundri Subodh* is welcomed "into the ranks of Indian Journalism," despite its stylistic fault in using rather difficult vocabulary; the Telugu language *Hindu Sundari*, edited by Mosalikanti Ramabai, is cited in an article on "What is being done for and by India's daughters;" and an Urdu women's magazine *Khatoon*, co-edited by the husband and wife Shaikh Abdullah and Wahid Jahan of Aligarh, is commended to the readers as a "high-class Urdu monthly conducted in the interests of Indian women" even though it mostly dealt with "subjects having a practical bearing on modern Musalman life."<sup>43</sup>

### **III. The New Indian Woman: creating a community of readers**

Sathianadhan's personal friendships with influential women like Sarojini Naidu and E. A. Manning, her participation in wider transnational print networks, as well as her active advocacy of women's magazines in Indian languages show something of her reach as well as the ambition of her magazine. The *Indian Ladies' Magazine* from the very beginning attempted to constitute both the New Indian woman in its pages as well as a new readership, by effectively forging bonds between a newly emergent yet heterogenous community of women bound together by common interests. Kamala Sathianadhan's first editorial column served as a manifesto for the journal:

In launching *The Indian Ladies' Magazine* on the troublous waters of Indian Journalism, a few words of explanation are necessary as to its aims and objects. The main object of the Magazine will be to help advance the cause of the women of India. The new influences that are at work in this land, owing to its connection with Great Britain, have not appreciably

affected the women of the land; the men having been benefitted more largely than the women in the matter of education and social development. But a nation of educated and enlightened men alone is an impossibility; and, if the people of India are to advance, and take their right place among civilized nations, they should realise that “the woman’s cause is the man’s: they rise or sink together”.<sup>44</sup>

In this address, Saththianadhan is carving out the space that this new magazine will occupy by clearly recognising the different discourses that shape it: the social reform magazines that attempted to ameliorate women’s status within the family, putting them on a pedestal but without essentially changing the status quo; the missionary magazines that focused on similar issues but saw Indian women as totally lacking in agency and so often assumed the authority to speak for them; and British women’s magazines that circulated in India amongst European and upper-class Indian women, and established new forms of femininity and spheres of female action. The *Indian Ladies’ Magazine* inherits something from all of these but also reworks this inheritance to create a disparate readership and a hybrid New Woman who will speak to these readers.

Saththianadhan uses the vocabulary of the social reform journals that fought for issues that would come to be central to the *Indian Ladies’ Magazine* (issues like women’s education, child marriage, and widow remarriage), but also moves away from these previous magazines by referring diplomatically to the influence of Great Britain – a reference to both Christianity as well as the Victorian model of conjugal life. While providing patterns for domestic economy along separate spheres and an educated and educating mother, the writers of early reform journals like *Bamabodhini Patrika* (1863–1922) and *Balabodhini* (1874–77), in spite of all their emancipatory rhetoric were more intent on establishing the authority of the male head of the household than empowering women. Krishna Sen argues that the main dilemma facing the *Bamabodhini Patrika* was the question of how to negotiate the claims of

the home with that of the outside.<sup>45</sup> Adding to this argument, Vasudha Dalmia points out that whenever any of the women portrayed in *Balabodhini* overstepped the domestic boundary, they were roundly berated and taken to task for misbehaving; “this male editorship accounted for the extremely controlled, even censored, nature of the subject matter offered” in their pages.<sup>46</sup> This kind of intense control and censorship is not only overturned in the *Indian Ladies’ Magazine*, it is shown to be based on an unquestioned male authority that itself needs to be slowly challenged. This is part of the reason why Sattianadhan continues to publish material that she doesn’t fully agree with; even though she sometimes undercuts divergent views by placing them alongside a different perspective, for her the unequivocal purpose of the magazine is to open a space for discussion that will be led by women, facilitated by her as a clear-sighted and objective editor.

The inaugural address of the magazine also echoes the language of missionary magazines in the reference to enlightenment and civilisation. The idea of “liberating” Indian women was undertaken as the “civilising project” of Christian missionaries and British reformers in the nineteenth century, and these magazines were all published by religious organisations pre-eminently as non-commercial ventures. By the end of the nineteenth century, the women’s sections of missionary societies began producing magazines specifically for women, describing missionary work undertaken overseas. This investment in uplifting Indian women also involved Indian Christian women themselves and focused particularly on what was referred to as Indian “home-life”. And so, “preexisting elite Indian notions that linked women and the interior of homes were reconstituted along the lines of newly introduced Western ideals of feminine domesticity.”<sup>47</sup> What then made women’s periodicals in India crucially different from their English counterparts was that they negotiated not only gender roles and national identity but also the consequences of imperial rule and missionary activity. This was a particularly interesting and complicated issue for the *Indian Ladies’ Magazine* since Kamala Sattianadhan herself was a Christian and the

magazine was published by the Methodist Episcopal Press in Madras. Indeed, it was an issue she was deeply conscious of and had tried to puzzle out in the collection of short stories she had co-authored with her husband, *Stories of Indian Christian Life*.<sup>48</sup> Focusing on the conundrum of Indian Christianity where the teachings of the Bible often co-existed with inherited Indian traditions, and the moral superiority bestowed by Christianity was entangled with ingrained caste hierarchies, these stories represent a lively and close-knit community, one that Sathianadhan also targeted as part of her readership.

Additionally, this opening gestures towards the close relationship between imported British periodicals and Indian print culture. By the middle of the nineteenth century, India was the single largest colonial market for British publishers, as Finkelstein and Peers have pointed out, and the Indian English-language press suffered competition from imported British periodicals.<sup>49</sup> Unsurprisingly, the *Indian Ladies' Magazine*, like other Indian women's magazines of the period, was an inheritor of the conventions, format, and expectations of Victorian women's magazines. The title of the *Indian Ladies' Magazine* itself echoes that of the *Lady's Magazine*, a hugely successful English periodical that ran from 1770–1832, boasting a longevity that was unusual in the period. As Jennie Batchelor observes, the magazine explained its own popularity “as a consequence of its reliance upon a network of amateur anonymous or pseudonymous ‘Female Correspondents,’ who provided the bulk of the magazine’s diverse content free of charge.”<sup>50</sup> Further, it claimed to be a magazine that catered to an exclusive community of female readers and writers who had been excluded from previous publications.<sup>51</sup> Other commercially successful ventures like the *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine* (1852–1879) with its emphasis on domestic management and fashion, is also an important counterpoint to understanding the *Indian Ladies' Magazine's* aims and trajectory. In her study on domesticity and women's advice manuals in colonial India, Judith Walsh argues that the late-nineteenth century witnessed the spread of a global, transnational domestic discourse that was European in origin and colonial

in development.<sup>52</sup> This idea of domesticity is a key component of the *Indian Ladies' Magazine* and its introduction notes, though without the kind of zeal it expresses for women's education, that it will also "aim at being useful to Indian wives and mothers; a column will be devoted to domestic matters, such as cookery, needlework, the bringing up of children, etc."<sup>53</sup>

However, it is crucial to remember that the Indian periodical culture that emerged at this moment did not merely mimic British forms, rather the relationship between them was reciprocal as is evident in the very productive and long-standing collaborations Sathianadhan forged. In this case, even as the *Indian Ladies' Magazine* nods to middle class and mainstream British women's magazines like the *Lady's Magazine* and the *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine*, it does not reproduce their domestic ideology entirely. After all, despite Sathianadhan's reluctance to fully endorse the figure of the New Woman as envisioned by British women writers, she was still a staunch advocate of women's education and the need for an enlarged role for women in the public sphere. In her own magazine then, the New Indian Woman becomes an important focal point for larger debates about women: not as strident and or sartorially remarkable as the British New Woman, but still an independent, modestly fashionable, and intelligent figure who can hold her own both in the home and the world.

This ideal materialises in the pen and ink drawing on the cover of the magazine (figure 1). She stands erect, holding in her hands an issue of the *Indian Ladies' Magazine*, but instead of reading it, she seems caught in mid-thought. Looking sideways, past the margin of the page, her gaze does not meet that of the reader, but rather invites the reader to consider her. Her belted sari along with the full-sleeved, high-necked, and frilled blouse, speaks of her modest femininity. Her attire, emphasising her figure while keeping her fully clothed, and her line of sight, suggesting interiority without posing a direct challenge, reveal something of the stance that the magazine would attempt to take in the following years. It also echoes the appropriate clothing advocated by missionaries in India – combining a Victorian-style blouse

and a sari – like the kind that Saththianadhan herself wears in this photograph (figure 3). The woman on the frontispiece wears no jewellery, and there are no markers of her marital status (there is no *bindi* on her forehead, no *sindur* lining the parting of her hair, no *mangalsutra* around her neck). Her hair is neatly pulled back. But even this image of the modern woman uses a more familiar iconography – the lotuses at her feet recall the goddess Padmini, translated from the Sanskrit as “she who sits on the lotus,” and therefore literally refers to the Hindu goddess Lakshmi. The lotus is central to Lakshmi’s mythology for it is a symbol of spiritual perfection and the ability to rise above worldly contamination. Its roots lie in the mud deep under water, but its flowers float above the water’s surface. She is a potent goddess, containing every possibility. In the foreground of the image is a palm frond, a Christian symbol used as a festive emblem on Palm Sunday. And above her, complementing the lotuses underneath, are the overhanging passionflowers, referencing the passion of Christ. Delineated in a rectangular frame, this strong image of the new woman who will read and write for this magazine and participate in its larger discussions, seems to already be in tension with the heavily symbolic floral patterns overlaid on it.

Kamala Saththianadhan’s attire in the photograph is strikingly similar to the frontispiece drawing and embodies the kind of professionalism that she advocated with such passion in her magazine. It was taken some time in the six-year period between 1911 and 1917, when she worked as a governess for a Rani in a small mofussil town. In her biography, Sengupta describes her mother, in contrast with the opulence of the Rani, as “dressed more soberly in the style of the Indian Christians of the day, in a high-necked blouse with leg-of-mutton sleeves and a sari draped over a heavy skirt. Her choice of colours were usually black, grey or a deep red, for being a widow she did not wish to wear gayer hues. In her ears, however, gleamed a cluster of diamonds.”<sup>54</sup> This cropped portrait seems to have captured something of the grit that belies the sobriety of her manner. Unlike the illustrated woman,



Sathianadhan's gaze unflinchingly meets that of the viewer, seemingly having made up her mind about the closed book clasped in her hand.

The open book held aloft by the New Woman on the front cover of the magazine and the closed book held in Sathianadhan's hand like a talisman suggest the importance of reading and writing in the *Indian Ladies' Magazine*. The New Indian Woman that the magazine is attempting to create is a version of the kind of reader Sathianadhan envisions for her magazine: a woman who reads widely, both the work of other amateur contributors as well as eminent professional writers like Naidu, and attempts to put her own thoughts into writing. We get a glimpse of this reader from the quote at the end of the magazine's opening paragraph cited above: "the woman's cause is the man's: they rise or sink together." This is a reference to Tennyson's *The Princess* (1848), a narrative poem about women's access to university education that Armstrong categorises both as "a burlesque and a feminist tract."<sup>55</sup> This seems like a peculiar choice of quote for her inaugural address, and is worth examining in some detail.

A fairy tale set in a more contemporary framework, it tells the story of Princess Ida who leaves home to found a university for women instead of marrying the Prince she had been betrothed to in childhood. Wishing to claim his promised bride, the Prince sets out with two friends to infiltrate the university disguised as women. On their discovery, war breaks out between the two kingdoms; the Princess' side wins but her university has in the process become a hospital for men wounded in the war. From his convalescent bed, the Prince encourages the Princess to accept his offer of marriage, and as her voice chokes and her forehead sinks,<sup>56</sup> the Prince consoles:

"Blame not thyself too much," I said, "nor blame  
Too much the sons of men and barbarous laws;  
These were the rough ways of the world till now.

Henceforth thou hast a helper, me, that know  
The woman's cause is man's: they rise or sink  
Together, dwarfed or godlike, bond or free:  
[....] If she be small, slight-natured, miserable,  
How shall men grow?"<sup>57</sup>

Ida's final words, usually interpreted as a self-deprecating acceptance of her mistake, are more ambiguous:

"I have heard  
Of your strange doubts: they well might be: I seem  
A mockery to my own self. Never, Prince;  
You cannot love me."<sup>58</sup>

While most critics read these lines as Ida accepting the hand of the prince, even as she is ashamed at her unworthiness, perhaps these words may be taken at face value. In keeping with her previous independence, and indeed defiance, this speech points out that the two are so different that he really cannot love her.<sup>59</sup>

Tennyson was a favourite in the *Indian Ladies' Magazine* and over the years there are numerous articles on him. An essay on "Tennyson's Ideal of Womanhood" written "by the Editor" appeared in the December 1901 issue and focused on *The Princess*.<sup>60</sup> However, instead of aligning with the view that women's education was important but should not unsettle gender norms, Sathianadhan provides a sympathetic but critical reading of the poem, arguing that Tennyson's "idea is that woman is but the complement of man, not his equal;" while women's "first duties" lie at home, must they be thwarted when they "try to develop their intellectual tastes?"<sup>61</sup> She concludes, "the Prince is not worthy of the Princess. [...] We feel that Ida is accused of too much, we feel that her submission is too much, that the Prince

is too condescending, that in fact, the poet shaped the events to suit his own ideas. Ida only asked ‘space and fair play for her scheme.’ If this had been given, and if her scheme had been pruned of some faults natural to such a venture, the College would have been a useful institution with the Princess as a perfect head of it.”<sup>62</sup> This unexpectedly radical reading is refreshing, and feels at odds with the way in which the oft-quoted phrase from the poem appears in the introduction and elsewhere in the magazine. Reddy argues that “both the poem and the magazine merely wish to modify the status quo, not disrupt it and both ultimately argue for privileges, not rights,” and this is indeed the right reading of the introduction, but it is totally upended in Sathianadhan’s essay.<sup>63</sup>

At one level, this reference to Tennyson is a way for Sathianadhan to gain credibility as a literary and widely-read writer and editor, who assumes the same of her readers (or at least aims to make the *Indian Ladies’ Magazine* a means to that end) but it also shows how the act of reading can be unsettling and interpretation can be a work in progress. This quote as well as the way in which it is used to imply different meanings in different contexts in the magazine also suggests the role that poetry will play in the *Indian Ladies’ Magazine*. While in the introduction it advocates a note of reform rather than revolution, in the later article Sathianadhan pries it open to show how the structure of the poem and the gender conventions it functions within cannot be anything other than unjust to Ida. Although the introduction advocated for the education and equality of women, it cautiously and with a great deal of political acuity avoided the supposed radicalism of the English suffragettes partly by its canny use of this reference. However, in a different context the poem itself could be put to very different use. In this, the magazine shows itself to be not only a platform where urgent issues could be openly discussed without a hierarchical and univocal approach, but also presented itself as a readerly and writerly model to its audience. It uses poetry to appropriate a certain cultural authority for itself, but it also encourages its readers to write it and interpret it in ways that reflect the lived reality of their own lives.

Reddy sees this as the creation of a new femininity, a “lyric subject,” and Logan conceives of the magazine primarily as a literary magazine.<sup>64</sup> It is certainly true that it expends much energy, and column inches, on suggesting reading material to its subscribers and reviewing new titles – there are reviews of Anglo-Indian writers like Flora Annie Steel and Philip Meadows Taylor, British writers like Margaret Oliphant and Mary Corelli, and canonised authors like Shakespeare, Chaucer, as well as George Eliot, Charlotte Brontë, and Elizabeth Barrett Browning. Essays on Indian mythological tales, and writers of classic Indian tales like Kalidas and Tulsidas were also frequent. Equally, original poems by Sarojini Naidu sit side by side with the amateur efforts of pseudonymous and anonymous contributors. The magazine actively solicited such literary contributions and letters from its subscribers, and within a few issues instituted the regular “Our Special Contributors’ Column” to publish these writings, alongside the section “Literary Notes” which was penned by the editor.

However, to consider the publication in only these terms diminishes the obvious political stakes at its core: the formulation of a space with a socially interactive and participatory framework and the creation of a new language of public discourse suited to women. In this process, as Nijhawan argues, the “boundaries set by patriarchy, colonialism and nationalism” were reset: “More than other literary genres, the polyphonic character of the women’s periodical, its spread and diverse modes of transmission, and its capacity to engage immediate issues of public interest were conducive to public interventions.”<sup>65</sup> For the *Indian Ladies’ Magazine*, this “public intervention” could be practiced in safer and more imaginative ways through literary writing:

It is hoped that *The Indian Ladies’ Magazine* will afford a medium for the expression of the best thoughts and aspirations of these ladies, and that it will also be the means of developing

the literary talent among them, of the existence of which recent years have given remarkable indications.<sup>66</sup>

The literary writing then is fundamental to the project of the magazine, but it is not the key stimulus. Indeed, it is an element that will strengthen women's ability to express their political and imaginative thoughts with the kind of complexity required for them to become fully participant in the current political moment. However, Saththianadhan is too keen a bibliophile and too committed a writer to see it in merely functional terms and not recognise its potential to open up unforeseen opportunities. To disconnect this literary writing from local politics is deeply problematic, for such an analysis obscures how Indian women confront and critique the work of their contemporaries. It is in this matrix of the literary and the political, with its mix of inherited tropes and lived reality, that the New Woman begins to take shape.

Kamala Saththianadhan's editorship then reveals both the improvised and ad hoc nature of the venture's logistics well as her sophisticated understanding of her own role. Relying on informal and intergenerational family networks, far-flung friendships and alliances, and professional collaborations, she turns her magazine into space for lively discussion. Alongside women's magazines in other Indian languages, the *Indian Ladies' Magazine* is central to professionalising women's writing and encouraging new literary expressions. Indeed, it was here that Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain's "Sultana's Dream" was first published in September 1905, encouraged by the magazine's call for new writing.<sup>67</sup> Speculative both in terms of its genre and its language of composition – it is feminist utopian narrative that was Hossain's first attempt to write anything let alone in a language she had learned without any formal schooling – it is now considered the a classic of Indian science fiction. Hossain went on to become a pioneering educationist, social activist and writer but it is no accident that her first foray into this world was through the *Indian Ladies' Magazine*.

The emotional and imaginative dimensions that were offered by the fiction and poetry that it published in its pages were as important to the redefinition of gender roles as the essays, letters and speeches published on the topic. In fact, they highlighted the personal nature of these discussions which otherwise might have seemed too distant from the routine lives of its readers.

#### IV. Coda

In her biography of Sathianadhan, Sengupta attempts to make sense of the *Indian Ladies' Magazine's* declining fortunes, ascribing it to her mother's lack of understanding of the periodical as a business venture which needed advertising and a robust circulation to succeed. "And yet – had the Magazine failed?" she asks.<sup>68</sup> While she does not unequivocally answer this question with a "no," she poses a series of rhetorical questions that leave the answer to the reader: "Had it not been the pioneer organ of women's journalism in English in India, had it not fought for the rights of women, the happiness of the home, for justice and honesty, for unity in domestic, social and political fields, for the spread of enlightenment and education, for a healthy happy uninhibited outlook on life?"<sup>69</sup> Logan reacts directly to the provocation: 'Of course, the answer to these questions is yes,' before noting Sathianadhan's contradictory politics.<sup>70</sup>

However, this question of evaluating Kamala Sathianadhan's life and her magazine in terms of success or failure seems a particularly gendered one. Even though the answer to Sengupta's question (or rather chain of questions) is in the negative, the fact that she asks it at all is telling. She expects, indeed knows, that Sathianadhan will be judged first by the fact that her periodical was a "failed" venture, that collapsed in part because of financial pressure, not a magazine that ran successfully for years before being discontinued. The fact of its absence from scholarship on the history of modern India further seals this assessment. From the perspective of conventional gender norms, failure or flaw has been the accepted model for

women's enterprises, for feminine success is always measured by difficult-to-achieve standards – Kamala's journalistic and editorial career can only be celebrated by those who know her because they do not come at the expense of her domestic life, as Sengupta repeatedly explains. It is difficult to not see this forgetting, and indeed Sengupta's extended explanation, as a result of patriarchal history writing and the understanding of history itself as a sequence of major political moments, for there is a cultural mechanism at work that allows a seemingly minor woman editor to be obfuscated. Further, the fact that her own transformation from Hannah Ratnam Krishnamma to Kamala Sathianadhan, from a gifted student to a professional writer and editor, is not self-evident. It requires us to see things that are not readily available, to read into passing encounters and lifelong friendships, and recognise that this becoming is not simply a change of a natal name to a marital name, but a considered and complex refashioning of the self. This self however, is one that is not modelled on the idea of the self-made man of genius, but is rooted in collectivities and networks, produced through personal and professional collaborations. Kamala Sathianadhan's legacy then is one that is far from marginal and indeed a crucial part of the recovery of women's work that is essential to any serious consideration of India in the early twentieth century. Feminist scholars who have propelled my thinking have been central to redressing this imbalance and bringing attention to similar figures existing in these shaded areas of history. My own recuperation of Kamala Sathianadhan acts as a reminder of women's forgotten resourcefulness as much as the archival and textual exploration of one woman's life and an attempt to reanimate her lost periodical.

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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> It became a quarterly magazine from 1913–1917, in order to reduce costs, before returning to a final monthly run in December 1917. Moreover, Kamala Saththianadhan had decided to move to England for her children's further education and was able to set up home in London in 1919 once the wartime restrictions around travel had been lifted.

<sup>2</sup> Geraldine Forbes refers to the *Indian Ladies' Magazine* as “an excellent source for information on the role of women in the Indian Social Conference and the early women's organizations” in *Women in Modern India* (265), and quotes briefly from its pages in “Caged Tigers” (527); Barnita Bagchi calls it “a major source for understanding the history of Indian women's education” (“Towards Ladyland”, 747); Antoinette Burton refers to it in passing (“The White Woman's Burden”, 303), and Mrinalini Sinha notes Saththianadhan's bristling editorial intervention on Katherine Mayo's controversial *Mother India* (1927) that detailed the social ills of the country (140). Radha Kumar describes it as ‘a moderate feminist journal’ (53), though she introduces Kamala Saththianadhan as a novelist rather than editor (49). None of these scholars, however, write about the periodical itself in much detail.

<sup>3</sup> Sengupta, *The Portrait of an Indian Woman*, 42.

<sup>4</sup> Running into her in 1938, Sengupta confronted Naidu about why she had withdrawn from the journal, for if she had continued to support it, it might have survived. *Ibid.*, 43.

<sup>5</sup> Deborah Anna Logan, *The Indian Ladies' Magazine, 1901–1938: From Raj to Swaraj*; Barnita Bagchi, “Tracing two generations in twentieth century Indian women's education through analysis of literary sources”. Two unpublished PhD theses also focus a chapter each on Saththianadhan's magazine: Sheshalatha Reddy's “The Poetics of Nation and Empire: Imagining ‘India’ in English,” and Emily Anne Janda Monteiro's “Communal Formations: Development of Gendered Identities in Early Twentieth-Century Women's Periodicals.” Mytheli Sreenivas includes the *Indian Ladies' Magazine* in her study of Tamil women's magazines, but it only features a brief analysis.

<sup>6</sup> Logan's methodology too is an example of this, particularly in the inclusion of the appendices that list the specifications of the *Indian Ladies' Magazine*, the press releases that noted its presence, and a catalogue of its publication and subscription history. These not only show the labour of archival work but are also a generous act of scholarship that offer further avenues for research.

<sup>7</sup> Preface to *The Portrait of an Indian Woman*, ix.

<sup>8</sup> Incidentally, Padmini Sengupta also penned the biographies of these two writers: *Sarojini Naidu: A Biography*, and *Pandita Ramabai Saraswati: Her Life and Work*.

<sup>9</sup> The story of the Saththianadhans for both Jackson and de Souza begins with Rev. W.T. Saththianadhan (1830–1892), about whose conversion both his son Samuel and Samuel's first wife Krupabai have written: Samuel Saththianadhan, *The Rev. W.T. Saththianadhan: A Biographical Sketch*, to which is appended ‘The Story of a Conversion’ by Krupabai Saththianadhan (Madras, 1893). However, equally important is the role played by W.T. Saththianadhan's wife, Anna Saththianadhan, who was involved in setting up schools for Hindu girls and zenana visits, and wrote a popular child-rearing manual *Nalla Tay (The Good Mother; 1862)* in Tamil. It went through four editions, remained in circulation for sixty years, and was translated into other Indian languages. Following the model of English-language epistolary advice books, Eliza Kent calls it “a good example of the hybrid imagination of Indian Christians whose intermediary position between Western and Indian cultures enabled them to communicate Western ideals of feminine domesticity through idioms and illustrations that were meaningful to their Indian audiences.” Kent, *Converting Women*, 146.

<sup>10</sup> Krupabai Saththianadhan, *Saguna* (1892).

<sup>11</sup> Sengupta, *The Portrait of an Indian Woman*, 28.

<sup>12</sup> Lotos, *Padma*, Methodist Publishing House, Madras (date unknown), 40. Quoted in Sengupta, 28. I have been unable to trace this novel.

<sup>13</sup> Priya Joshi argues that the two novels are driven by the protagonists' emerging consciousness, and ‘encourage both a participation in and a critique of the worlds that [they] inhabit’ (*In Another Country*, 199).

<sup>14</sup> Muthiah, 23 October 2011.

<sup>15</sup> Logan, *The Indian Ladies' Magazine*, n.3 xxx.

<sup>16</sup> See for example the article on “Is the Indian Lady Graduate a Failure?” in the March 1902 issue; other articles written by “Miss Krishnammah” appeared frequently as well, though these might have been penned by her sister Sundaram.

<sup>17</sup> The magazine published his obituary in the June issue commemorating his life and noting his involvement in the venture: “The readers of the *Indian Ladies' Magazine* have good reason to specially regret his death, for it is to his active help that the Magazine owes its continued and vigorous life. Everyone who has had anything to do with the making and upkeep of a journal must know what an anxious time the first few months of the Magazine's existence must have been to the Editor and her enthusiastic husband. He spared neither time nor trouble nor money

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to make it a success and the loss of his sustaining and invigorating help will indeed be felt much” (T. V. Subrahmanyam, “The Death of Dr. Sathianadhan,” 347).

<sup>18</sup> Sengupta, *The Portrait of an Indian Woman*, 8.

<sup>19</sup> “A concert in aid of the Indian Ladies Magazine,” *Indian Ladies’ Magazine*, December 1917, 122.

<sup>20</sup> “The concert in aid of the Indian Ladies’ Magazine,” *Indian Ladies’ Magazine*, January 1918, 149.

<sup>21</sup> “Introduction,” *Indian Ladies’ Magazine*, July 1901, 10.

<sup>22</sup> Logan, *The Indian Ladies’ Magazine*, pp. 242–245.

<sup>23</sup> Kamala Sathianadhan, ‘My Impressions of England’, *The Hindu*, 1925; quoted in Sengupta, *The Portrait of an Indian Woman*, 110.

<sup>24</sup> Sengupta, *The Portrait of an Indian Woman*, 160.

<sup>25</sup> Radhakrishnan mentions this in his preface to *The Portrait of an Indian Woman*, x.

<sup>26</sup> Burton, *At the Heart of the Empire*, 57.

<sup>27</sup> “Literary Notes,” *Indian Ladies’ Magazine*, December 1903, 196.

<sup>28</sup> Parratt, “Athletic “Womanhood,” 141.

<sup>29</sup> The term “Anglo-Indian” in this context refers to British residents of India rather than Indian Christians or biracial persons.

<sup>30</sup> Finkelstein and Peers, *Negotiating India in the Nineteenth-Century Media*, 15.

<sup>31</sup> Terry Doughty, in *Dictionary of Nineteenth-Century Journalism in Great Britain and Ireland*, 342.

<sup>32</sup> “Miss Marie Corelli on ‘Sovran Woman,’” *Indian Ladies’ Magazine*, August 1901, 43.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> “An Indian Lady’s Appreciation,” *Indian Ladies’ Magazine*, August 1901, 49. It was also reviewed positively in London-based periodicals like the *Daily Telegraph* and *The Times*, and published the following notice in February 1902: “We receive several kind greetings and messages from editors of journals far and near. The Paris paper, *La Fronde*, conducted by ladies, sends us a greeting, as also one of the leading Journals of Canada; and the Indian Journals, Anglo-Indian and Indian, have always a kind word for our venture. The Christmas number in particular has been received with enthusiasm, and we take this opportunity of thanking one and all the journalists for their encouraging words.” “News and Notes,” *Indian Ladies’ Magazine*, February 1902, 249.

<sup>35</sup> “News and Notes,” *Indian Ladies’ Magazine*, September 1901, 55.

<sup>36</sup> In June 1904, the *Indian Ladies’ Magazine* published a fuller review of the *Tamil Zenana Magazine*, remarking on its reach because of being in Tamil and its cheapness: “It is a healthy, homely and instructive companion to zenana ladies. The handling of subjects is practical and popular and admirably adapted for the useful education of Indian ladies.” “Editorial Notes,” *Indian Ladies’ Magazine*, June 1904, 385.

<sup>37</sup> Beetham, *A Magazine of Her Own*, 123.

<sup>38</sup> Carroll, “*Kayastha Samachar*.”

<sup>39</sup> Puri, “Women’s Magazines and the Making of the New Indian Woman, 1860–1930.”

<sup>40</sup> For Hindi women’s periodicals, see Shobna Nijhawan, Francesca Orsini, and Vir Bharat Talwar; for Urdu women’s periodicals, see Gail Minault; for Tamil women’s periodicals, see Mytheli Sreenivas; for Bengali women’s magazines, see Himani Bannerji; for Gujarati women’s periodicals, see Sonal Shukla.

<sup>41</sup> “A Telugu Work by an Indian Lady,” *Indian Ladies’ Magazine*, September 1901, 78.

<sup>42</sup> However, the *Bharati* review continued: “It is a great pity that the articles dealing with Indian politics are usually so full of bias and prejudice against the Government. This, however, in the present state of mind of the educated Bengali is, we suppose, to be expected. But, in general, the magazine is worthy of all praise, and show the capabilities of Indian womanhood in high-class editorial work.” “Editorial Notes,” *Indian Ladies’ Magazine*, August 1901, 50. “News and Notes,” *Indian Ladies’ Magazine*, February 1902, 249.

<sup>43</sup> “News and Notes,” *Indian Ladies’ Magazine*, November 1903, 160; “What is being done for and by India’s daughters,” *Indian Ladies’ Magazine*, January 1904, 228; “News and Notes,” *Indian Ladies’ Magazine*, July 1905.

<sup>44</sup> “Introduction,” *Indian Ladies’ Magazine*, July 1901, 9.

<sup>45</sup> Sen, “Lessons in Self-Fashioning,” 177.

<sup>46</sup> Dalmia, “Generic Questions,” 409.

<sup>47</sup> Kent, *Converting Women*, 127.

<sup>48</sup> This is a collection of twelve short stories, six written by each author.

<sup>49</sup> Finkelstein and Peers, *Negotiating India in the Nineteenth-Century Media*, 11. For a sense of the Indian periodical marketplace, also see the *Victorian Periodicals Review*’s special issue on “The 19<sup>th</sup>-Century Press in India”, guest edited by Julie Codell, Summer 2004.

<sup>50</sup> Batchelor, “Connections, which are of service,” 245.

<sup>51</sup> Though in actuality it was supported by a “mixed-sex though female-dominated community of authors”, much like the *Indian Ladies’ Magazine*. *Ibid.*, 263.

<sup>52</sup> Walsh, *Domesticity in Colonial India*, 13.

<sup>53</sup> “Introduction,” *Indian Ladies’ Magazine*, July 1901, 10.

<sup>54</sup> Sengupta, *The Portrait of an Indian Woman*, 2.

<sup>55</sup> Armstrong, *Victorian Poetry*, 108.

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<sup>56</sup> Tennyson, *The Princess*, VII. 230–31.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, VII. 239–44, 249–50.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, VII. 315–18.

<sup>59</sup> While the poem has most often been read through the lens of Victorian gender norms, Linda Hughes points out the importance of recognising the five new versions or iterations of *The Princess* that were published in just over the space of five years, demonstrating not only Tennyson's investment in high-speed printing technology but also his ambiguity about the initially radical gender politics of the poem. Hughes, "Replicating Tennyson's *The Princess*".

<sup>60</sup> "Tennyson's Ideal of Womanhood," *Indian Ladies' Magazine*, December 1901, 158–160. Other articles on Tennyson include: "Tennyson's *In Memoriam*: A Study," July 1902, written by "Miss. H. R. Krishnammah, M. A."; "Thoughts on Tennyson" by "V. E.," July 1903; "The True Ideal of Womanhood" by "Nalini," September 1903; "The Poetry of Tennyson" by an anonymous contributor, June 1904; "Tennyson's Dora" by Stephen Balm, July 1904; "Some Pictures from Tennyson" by "Padmini," March 1907; and so on.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 159.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 160.

<sup>63</sup> Reddy, "The Poetics of Nation and Empire," 98.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 107; Logan, *The Indian Ladies' Magazine*, 61.

<sup>65</sup> Nijhawan, *Women and Girls in the Hindi Public Sphere*, 5.

<sup>66</sup> "Introduction," *Indian Ladies' Magazine*, July 1901, 10.

<sup>67</sup> "Sultana's Dream," *Indian Ladies' Magazine*, September 1905.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 45.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>70</sup> Logan, *The Indian Ladies' Magazine*, 243.