



MANONMANIAM SUNDARANAR UNIVERSITY

***DIRECTORATE OF DISTANCE AND CONTINUING EDUCATION,
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M.A. ENGLISH SECOND YEAR

NATIONAL LITERATURE IN TRANSLATION

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M.A. ENGLISH SECOND YEAR
NATIONAL LITERATURE IN TRANSLATION

OBJECTIVES

- To enable the students to learn and appreciate the literatures written in different native languages and varied cultures.
- To help the students learn the texts written in various languages in India and understand their socio-cultural identities.
- To familiarize the students with the different regional literary movements of India.
- To illustrate regional consciousness in the reading of literary texts.

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Unit I - Poetry

Subramania Bharathi's "The Victory Drum"

C. Subramania Bharathi was a poet of Tamil Nadu who was also a freedom fighter and a social reformer. He is considered as one of the India's greatest poets. His songs on nationalism and freedom of India helped to rally the masses to support the Indian Independence Movement in Tamil Nadu. Bharathi lived during an eventful period of Indian history. It is to be noted that a new age in Tamil literature began with him. His pen touched almost all fields of modern poetry, including prose-oriented poetry. His songs are in the form of dramas, short stories, novels and polemical essays.

Bharathi was a born lyricist. Songs came to him as naturally as the proverbial tender leaves to a tree. His poems, which are on freedom movement have passed into the Tamil language heritage. While analyzing the nature of Bharathi's poetic output, it is clear that most part of his compositions are classifiable as short lyrical outpourings on patriotic, devotional and mystic themes. The spirit of patriotism is the core essence of his poems. He kindles a kind of patriotic fire in people to fight against British domination. "The Victory Drum" is one of the fine examples of his national spirit.

Critical Appreciation:

"The Victory Drum" is about humanity's triumph over the state of constant fearfulness and ignorance by discerning knowledge. People should live in the light of knowledge without hiding, which gives such confidence to frighten away death. Bharathi says, "The demon fear we have ejected, the snake deceit we have killed," to highlight how people overcome the state of fear which has poisoned them like a venomous snake. And finally, they have killed the snake of

fear with the light and power of knowledge. Bharathi further says, knowledge gives power to people to raise against slavery, casteism and fear. “The Vedic blaze which lights our days” shows how the light of knowledge leads to liberty and peacefulness. According to Bharathi, free thought, expression and action without fear or favour is freedom. “All earth with bliss has filled” depicts the feeling of oneness to human and earth. Living creatures and all of earth belong to human beings and vice versa. Through this feeling of oneness human beings envision themselves in everything, which builds euphoria. He also adds that human beings should stand united and dance to display that they are free from the fear of slavery.

Freedom is the strength to follow one’s own path. It is strength to lead a good life. When this real freedom is observed there will not be any discrimination. Bharathi’s words “The crow and sparrow our kin; One with us mountain and sea” favors this opinion. The poet conveys the message that the very notion of independence is removed far from the adverse values of fear and slavery. This message is announced through the drum, which was a form of long-distance communication in the ancient days. He exclaims:

Beat the drum, beat the drum,

Beat the drum of victory!

This royal proclamation shows how unbound patriotism and feeling of oneness will create a sublime path for nobility which is far away from slavery and casteism. Being a great national poet Bharathi had unbounded patriotism and love for his country’s tradition and culture. His poems are full of optimism and fearlessness. Bharathi as a poet, journalist, freedom fighter and social reformer had made a great impact not only on the Tamil society but also on the entire human society. He followed what all he preached, and it is here that his greatness is manifested.

His prophecy during the colonial period about the independence of India came true after two and half decades after his demise. His vision about a glorious India has been taking a shape in the post-Independence era.

Sundara Ramaswamy's "An Artist at Sea"

Sundara Ramaswamy who was fondly called Su.Ra, emerged as a distinct, definitive voice in Tamil literature when his short story "Muthalum Mudivum" appeared in 1951. In his literary career, with a seven-year hiatus in between, he succeeded in leaving an indelible mark on literary genres like the novel, short story, poetry and literary criticism. He was a pioneer of modernism in Tamil poetry and wrote poems under the pseudonym Pasuvaiyya. Ramaswamy drew inspiration from writers like Pudumaipithan, Manikodi and other writers who had ushered in modernism for Tamil fiction. His writing style is unique, compelling, and humorous. The publication of *J.J. Sila Kurippukal* is considered a watershed moment in Tamil literature. The novel was a literary sensation in Tamil as well as in Malayalam when the translation appeared. The eight issues of the magazine *Kalachuvadu* which he edited and published serves as a platform for new writings in Tamil.

Critical Appreciation:

Sundara Ramaswamy's "An Artist at Sea" metaphorically talks about man's unquenchable thirst to fulfill his myriad wishes, which is purely generated from selfishness. The poet through the "waves" in the seashore tries to depict the attitude of modern people and their vain chase to attain their wishes to be filled. Self-centeredness makes human beings to crave for a world that may satisfy their physical desires only, and not sublimating it.

The poet says that man gets such “waves” of physical and materialistic desires one after another and running behind these to feel fulfilled. But he will end in vain. Man’s wish list has no end; it will keep continuing. Understanding this reality, man should change his attitude to control his mind not the uncontrolled desires.

Humans are being provoked and tempted to march on the high road of fantasy. His peaceful state of mind lies in his learning to control his mind. The “waves of desire”, “waves of lust” and the “waves of thought” are the dreadful appetites that are ready to consume the good qualities of humans. And, human beings must learn to control these desires which are deeply rooted in their heart.

The poet further highlights that humans require self-denial, forgiveness and rising above selfish physical desires. But in the present materialistic world, it is not possible. The selfishness within him hisses, “I, I” and rises up tall “Me, Me”. Selfish love makes him psychologically ill and he lives for the worldly demands, and gradually becomes more and more materialistic. Human beings lead a life that society demands from them and there is no way to go against the social demands. Such destructive rage is blind and unproductive. Those who want to get rid of these desires, lust and greedy thoughts are shattered by the “merciless shore” (society). The “salt dissolved in you is mere salt” highlights the natural inclination of human beings towards the physical happiness. They demand immediate pleasure rather than a longtime wellbeing. The writer warns his readers to get rid of the worldly waves as human beings have a natural tendency to fall to their pleasure-seeking emotions and this detachment will take them to sublimity.

O. N. V. Kurup's "A Requiem to Mother Earth"

Otraplakkal Neelakandan Velu Kuruppu (1931-2016), popularly known as O. N. V. Kurup or ONV, was a poet, lyricist and Professor of Malayalam literature. After graduating in Economics from Kollam, he moved to Thiruvananthapuram to pursue a Master's degree in Malayalam literature and later served as Professor in various prestigious government colleges across Kerala. A noted progressive writer with a humanist perspective, ONV was a prolific writer with over fifteen anthologies of poetry, in addition to over 1500 songs written for movies and KPAC dramas. He was the recipient of many civilian and literary awards including the Padma Shri (1998), Padma Vibhushan (2011), Jnanpith Award. (2007), Kendra Sahitya Akademi Award (1975), Kerala Sahitya Akademi Award (1971), Odakkuzhal Award (1990) as well as the Ezhuthachan Award, Vayalar Award, Asan Prize. Soviet Land Nehru Award and Medal of Pushkin.

Critical Appreciation:

The poem "A Requiem to Mother Earth" discusses the various ways in which people destroy earth for their selfish motives. The speaker is the poet himself and it is addressed to the Mother Earth.

Stanza1:

The death of Earth is very close. It is not yet dead, but the poet wishes that the soul of earth may rest in peace. This is a lament that he inscribes in his heart for the death of Earth in the future. It is not only to Earth but also to his death that will happen(happened) before the death of Earth.

Stanza 2:

In future, Earth will lay dead under the shadow of the “dark poison-flower of death”. There will be no one then, to mourn the death of earth. No one will be able to moisten earth's lips with our tears. And, the poet exclaims:

Therefore, I inscribe this to you:

Here is a wish, Mother Earth,

Not yet dead,

In the imminence of your death,

May your soul rest in peace!

So, the poet is inscribing this lament on his heart before the death of Earth, the mother. He hopes that the soul of Mother Earth will rest in peace.

Stanza 3:

Earth is the mother even to Parayi (There is a belief that all castes in Kerala is born to Parayi). Parayi gave birth to twelve children who then became twelve clans. He says:

You bore countless children

Who cannot live in amity!

You saw them with your own eyes

Eating one another.

Earth bears a lot of children and her children are unable to live in unity. The earth witnesses them killing one another. The Mother Earth is helpless, and she sheds tears by seeing her children fighting with each other. After eating each other, they started eating Mother Earth. But she stood unresistingly bearing all the sufferings.

Stanza 4: Mother Earth nourished her children by the resources in her (suckled them at your breast). But after they became stronger, they found out that earth can be exploited and they started drinking blood (a reference to death of Poothana) from her sacred heart.

Stanza 5:

The poet addresses Earth as the favorite bride of the sun. He says that the children of Earth tore her bridal finery given by sun into pieces. They were like beasts that “clawed” at her body and feasted on her blood. As they dance on her, one can feel the rhythm of death everywhere.

Stanza 6:

In this stanza, there is a reference to Oedipus, the Greek who married his mother unknowingly. His story is outdated. Now the children of mother earth strip her naked, and sell her in market for a drink. They strip Mother Earth with axes.

Stanza 7:

Because of cruelty done by humans, the stability of ecosystem is lost. The sun shines brightly and its rays are fiery. June clouds search for water. The month of December is not cold. There is no flower in April. The climate has changed and so the seasons. June is believed to be a rainy season, but there is no rain now. In the winter season there is no coolness and in spring, no

flower. Rivers in the forest are in search of swirling currents and the rhythm of creation is lost. The poet compares life to a person, whose chariot wheels are stuck on their course (reference to warrior Karna). As long as he has sense, it is the sweet memories that remain in him. He took shape and life from earth (1. Earth as mother who gave birth to humans. 2. Reference to creation of mankind in Genesis. God made man out of mud). From the first drop of honey and herb on his tongue to the last drop of water at the time of death, everything is taken from earth.

Stanza 8:

The poet wonders at the beauty of nature. The earth is able to capture the beauty of sun in a dewdrop on karuga leaves. His fantasies are grown in the shades of trees and the wind that trod upon sea.

Stanza 9:

The poet describes different forms of earth he has seen. The earth makes cradles and sings lullabies for thousands of tender fruits. She swings in several orchards (In Malayalam word kavu is used instead of orchards). She leaps on the tip of the leaves of banyan tree. She calls with hands like five-petal leaves and coo like temple doves. The earth set rhythm for the soul of poet like waves in streams. She decorates poovaka, ilanji and konna with flowers. She frightens him like an owl and soothes him like a cuckoo. She arranges different colours to draw various figures in our mind (beauty of nature) and make the evenings appear golden. Her beauty disappears into the woods every evening and returns every morning. She gives life to humans and feeds us with nectar. She crafts poems from the eggs of birds in the heart of dense forest. She carries the poet (humans) so gently like lotus leaf carries a drop of water. The poet knows all these things.

Stanza 10:

Earth is compared to a swan that holds music in her wings and the poet's glory shines from the tips of her beautiful wings. But her death is near and the crow of death has drunk even the nectar of her truth.

Stanza 11:

The Mother Earth must walk along the solar highway (earth's orbit) with tonsured head and bundles of shame on her shoulder. She became an outcast because she gave birth to children who raped her. She has to face death.

Stanza 12:

The Earth is not yet dead. But this poem is a requiem to its impending death. The poet will not be there to mourn the death of Earth. He will not be able to moisten earth's lips with his tears. So, the poet is inscribing this lament of his heart before the death of Earth, the mother. He hopes that the soul of Mother Earth will rest in peace.

Kedar Nath Singh's "Where Would I Go"

Kedarnath Singh (7 July 1934 – 19 March 2018) was an Indian poet. He was also an eminent critic and essayist. He was awarded the Jnanpith Award (2013) and the Sahitya Akademi Award (1989) in Hindi for his poetry collection, *Akaal Mein Saras (Cranes in Drought)*. His poetry is characterized by simple, everyday language and images that string together to convey complex themes. "Where would I go" is one such simple poem that celebrates

everyday life to enjoy freedom. The poet wishes to stay in the world just like simple things. He observes things around him very keenly and cherishes everyday experiences. He desires to be a handprint on a door that beautifies a house. Similarly, he wants to be “hidden in the smell of a suitcase” placed on an old ledge.

The poet further says that he does not want to go from this beautiful world, instead he, “will remain buried in a register book under the letters,” where his permanent address is written. As a keen observer, he uses images from domestic life, music, and everyday activities to probe universal themes. The poet desires to be a donkey’s bell and boatman’s nail as these simple objects prompt the poet to hold his place in this world. He further questions his readers where he would go leaving these wonders of everyday life and simple objects. Just like the birds that enjoy their daily routine, his consciousness also joins with them to fly away with them. In this poem he probes the uncertain life of human being and before leaving this world, he asked his readers to enjoy freedom and simple life. The wonders of world, the identity of the self, freedom and love are the images he picturizes in this poem.

Nilmani Phookan’s Three Poems:

Nilmani Phookan is an Indian poet in Assamese language and an academic. His works are replete with symbolism. He is inspired by French symbolism, and is a representative of the genre in Assamese poetry. He is considered Assam’s most distinguished living poet. He has written thirteen volumes of poetry, and has won ten regional and national awards, including the Sahitya Akademi Award for Poetry in 1981 and the Padmashri from the Government of India in 1990. Phookan has been described as a “sage-like presence” in Assamese literature. His canvas is

vast, his imagination mythopoeic, his voice bardic, his concerns ranging from the political to the cosmic and from the contemporary to the primeval.

Poem One:

Most of the poems of Nilmani Phookan, who created a new era of modern Assamese poetry, are rich in quality and have a beautiful picture of nature. Through poetry, he explores life, youth, love, joy, the world's most common mysteries, nature and many other subjects. In the first poem, he elegantly portrays the myriad beauty of nature. When rain saturates the soil, grass sprouts in the cracks of the huge boulder. Grasses grow naturally from the ribs of the Mother Earth as the soil receives enough water with the rains. But when Earth slides down, it changes the fertile condition of the earth.

There seems to be a hope for the earth when grasses grow in descending and ascending order, that is, up and down. The growing grasses signal the life on Earth. The poet says that even the silent tower in the Narakasur hill will laugh with the little whisper of the grasses. So, the earth seems to be bounteous with the rain as life regenerate in it.

Poem Two:

Nilmani Phookan, is born amidst the wide expanse of soft and bountiful green through which nature unfolds itself in Assam. The rhythm of his life is developed in the countryside with its homespun speech, rituals, folklore, music and dance. He struck a perceptive relationship with nature, life and reality, and slowly it blossomed into an awakening of life, thought and sorrow. The village has constantly stirred his mind, heart and imagination. But the situation has changed the stones being hard, water cold, sky flaring up "like a live ember" and the earth slowly turning to sand.

People forget the scars that are made on Mother Earth, but in turn the earth remembers and loves its destitute children and sheds silent tears. The violence on people and earth seems horrible, day and night become hours of pain and agony. And the poet asks how he would live in this “gory time”. After bloodshed and war, people who are selfish celebrate their victory without realizing that their victory is a doom to mankind. The poet questions “and who among the earth will attend it?”. It shows his deep agony on bloodshed. The poet further says that the poets have become partakers of the boundless energy, hopes and aspirations, the pride, joy, triumph and eternity. But his poetry seems empty while comparing with the profound meaning of nature or the “chirping of the cricket”. Nature’s voice has to be listened; it is not the time to sleep but the time to awake.

Poem Three:

In the writings of Nilmani Phookan nature plays an important role. The captivating sight of its hills and valleys, the appealing look of its teagarden even the mighty Brahmaputra adds charm to his poetry. His poetry revolves round simple themes like nature which includes its flora and fauna, and creatures like insects, folk culture, folk dance and folk song find place in his poetry with its various magnifications.

The poet describes the water from the clouds that stretches far beyond the horizon. This sight adds beauty to the crown of nature. And when the water reaches out down the plantain leaf, it trembles. The poet gives feminine features to the cloud by saying “when you let fall your hair” the rain pours down. Rain is often associated with hope and prosperity, so with the rain seeds sprouts in the mind of the poet. Dove, jasmine and grass enjoy the arrival of rain. It makes the earth fertile, so there will not be any adversity. Owing to the fertile condition child, old men and

other people smile. The sun and the moon eternally turn the earth with love. The river goddess Da Parbatia rejoices by the rain and welcomes it.

UNIT II - Prose

Muthu Mohan: A Foreword from Ponneelan's *New Dharshans*

Ponneelan is the pen name of Kandeswara Bhaktavatsalan, a Tamil writer from Tamil Nadu, India. He is a Marxist and was influenced by Tamil Communist leader P. Jeevanandham in his younger days. He became a teacher and retired as the Deputy Director of School Education for Tamil Nadu. He won the 1994 Sahitya Akademi Award for his novel *Pudhiya Dharisanangal*. Dr. N. Muthu Mohan, Madurai Kamaraj University has written the "Foreword" for *New Dharshans*. In the foreword, Muthu Mohan mentions that Ponneelan has emerged from the Tamil Progressive camp with new word, new meaning and new taste. In the present-day society, people demand short novels as they are busy with their lifestyle. But Ponneelan's *New Dharshans* breaks this notion and demand a popular appeal.

In *New Dharshans* burning political, cultural, economic and even affairs of worldwide issues have been engraved. Soviet Perestroika and the changes that occurred there have made the communists throughout the world to reassess their theory, life and their relationship with people. This impact is found in India. In *New Dharshans* the politics of the Emergency period is staged like a street drama in an experimental manner.

Ragavan, the protagonist of *New Dharshans*, is the man who fondly founded and nurtured the Youths Association in the village. But when the Emergency Dictatorship spreads out its ugly tentacles without any humanitarian consideration, the bureaucracy and the police implement the Twenty Point Programme to the whims and fancies of rich Congress capitalists. Only then Ragavan understands the adverse condition of Emergency and he quits the Communist party. The Communist party also understands that their support to Indira Gandhi is a grave

mistake as her party does not help common man. *New Dharshans* seems to be an eye opener and puts forward some basic interrogations like the ethical need of sincerity, democracy and humanism.

The Congress man Sukumaran opines that Indira Gandhi's failure to accept Allahabad court verdict and resigning her premiership is a sign of cultural degeneration. The belief of the Communists that Emergency is a prologue to Socialism has become the reason for their fall. Unable to join hands with any group and unable to gather people around him, he suffers his defeat. The "assessment" of Sukumaran disturbs the conscience of Ragavan. It torments him. The dogmatic approach of some of his comrades, their bureaucratic attitude and hypocrisy deepen his agony. So, he leaves the Communist party.

Chelliah has a perpetual search as to who is true: Naxalite Regurajan, Marxist Rangasamy or Communist Ragavan. But he observed that Congress- Communist coalitions bring nothing but misery to people. The novel also depicts the horrible caste relationship existing in Indian villagers. The Big Street people of the novel highlight this concept. The incident in the novel, beating and chaining of Sukumaran is a fine example of caste system. Sukumaran seems to be a victim of casteism in India.

In the construction of the novel, there is yet another dimension. It is a psychological dimension not known to others. In the novel, it is expressed through the mental vacillations of Chelliah, Sukumaran and Ragavan. The characters in the novel are free, frank, independent and fearless. In this novel, Poneelan has attempted a democratic creative process. Giving freedom to the various voices of life is something connected with the faithfulness of the artist to truth and Poneelan has succeeded in this.

Srilata and Swarnalatha Rangarajan: *Lifescapes: Interviews with Contemporary Writers from Tamil Nadu*

1. Bama 2. Sivakami.

A unique anthology by K Srilata and Swarnalatha Rangarajan, *Lifescapes: Interviews with Contemporary Writers from Tamil Nadu* presents the experiences and views of seventeen contemporary Tamil women writers whose works explore the implications of being a female in Tamil Nadu today. The writers in this volume draw attention to the inseparability of issues like gender, body politics, caste hegemony, mythopoesis and environmental justice in their writing.

Bama is a Tamil Dalit feminist, teacher and novelist. She rose to fame with her autobiographical novel *Karukku*(1992), which chronicles the joys and sorrows experienced by Dalit Christian women in Tamil Nadu. She subsequently wrote two more novels, *Sangati* (1994) and *Vanmam* (2002) along with three collections of short stories: *Kusumbukkaran* (1996), *Oru Tattvum Erumaiyum* (2003) and *Kandattam* (2009). In addition to this, she has written twenty short stories.

Bama's writings focus on themes related to caste domination and social discrimination. Her significant contribution is that, she not only transgresses caste boundaries, but also demolishes the conventional exclusions of language and genre. She spent some years in a convent as a nun before becoming one of the celebrated Dalit writers. She proudly says that the stories that she listened from her grandmother and teachers. *The Bible* is a source of inspiration for her to take up pen for writing. She writes not under any pressure, but for her passion.

Difficulties in life:

Leaving her job as a teacher, Bama spent some years as a nun in the convent. But she left the convent after seven years. This was the toughest time in her life. She was mentally and psychologically tired and felt as an alien in the outside world. Not willing to give up she took up a job in Madurai for thousand rupees. She was unable to return to her native village because leaving the convent is considered as a disgrace and shame to her parents. She struggled miserably in Madurai and longed to go back to her hometown. Fr. Mark, a Jesuit priest from her village helped her to get a job and asked her to write her mixed feeling in a book, and this was the time she liberated herself in the world of imagination. Fr. Mark helped her to publish her writing in the form of a booklet priced at twelve rupees.

Bama as a Dalit Writer

Kumudam magazine interviewed and published an article on her. Bama was very candid in the interview and openly revealed her Dalit identity. By this time she was working in a school as a Mathematics teacher, and the parents of her students treated her very badly just like her neighbors as she was a Dalit. This sort of discrimination she faced with educated people too but in a subtle way. The novel *Karukku* received great attention during this period. It was a great motivation for her.

Bama as an environmentalist:

The lifestyle of Dalits is embedded in nature as they are closely connected to the soil. The children of the Dalits do not know the framed structure of family, but they are aware of the

nature around them. This is true in her life too. She further says, whether a Dalit or not a Dalit, a writer is always connected to nature.

Religion in Bama's writing:

According to Bama, religion is liberation not suppression. And she says compassion, gentleness and grace are the virtues that one can learn from Christianity. People who suppress others need to face their oppression too. When she talks about religion from a feminist perspective, she makes it clear that she loves God, not like Priest and nun, as they treat badly because of her caste.

Readers Response:

After reading her novels, many of her readers responded to her that they felt it was their own story. She voiced for the Dalits and women through her writings. Namakkal Revathy wrote her autobiography gaining inspiration from Bama. This seems to be a great acceptance to her because many writers gain inspiration from her writings. There are a lot of Ph.D works on her writings, and the academicians have accepted that her works changed their world view. The novel *Sangati* is considered as an autobiographical novel by critics. Bama was not bothered about the categorization or the criticism of her use of language. She writes in her own style in Tamil. The renowned writers like Prapanchan, Komal Swaminathan and Sujatha give a great review to her writings.

Reviews on *Sangati*, *Kisumbukkaran* and *Vanmam*.

Sangati is a story of strong Dalit women who have their own way to protect themselves. They scream aloud before their husbands beat them, as a means of self-defense. She portrayed these types of characters from her real-life experience. When one undergoes difficulties and

suffering resistance and protest will come naturally. It is an instinct present in all people. This sense of protest and fun can be seen in *Kisumbukkaran*. Bama further talks about *Vanmam* which is not only about internal conflicts. There is a tendency in every human being to suppress the inferior. This sort of feeling is present in the Dalits and the marginalized. Pallars consider parayirs below them and parayirs consider Arundathiyars inferior to them. Arundathiyars consider Kuravars to be inferior to them. This hierarchy is found in the society. Nearly twenty percent of India's population consists of Dalits, yet they remain separated and nobody allows their unification. There is no such thing as equality anywhere. She demands resistance at a collective level for a social change. Due to the competitive spirit prevalent in the educational institutions, they are not concerned about the social change.

Commonalities of Indigenous Culture:

Most indigenous cultures share a commonality and in Dalit culture and Native American this bond can be seen. These cultures share a communal life. People love each other's freedom and respects dignity without any defined structure like darkness/ fair. They have a reciprocal relationship. This reciprocal relationship is needed in a family structure.

Role of Teacher and Writer:

For Bama, it was a dream to become a teacher. She gained inspiration from many of her teachers especially Josephine. Bama loves to be a primary teacher; her students are her boosting tonic. She cherishes their innocence and expressions. Her work *Thavittu Kurivigal* is based on the stories of her students. So as a writer and teacher she gains inspiration from the oppressed and her students. Her teaching career served as a fodder for her writing career.

Sivakami

Sivakami is an Indian Dalit-Feminist writer, former IAS officer and activist who predominantly writes in Tamil. Her notable works include *Pazhayana Kazhidalum*, *Kurruku Vettu*, *Nalum Thodarum* and *Kadaisi Mandhar*. Apart from being one of the most prominent Dalit novelists in India, she has also constantly voiced her opinions on contemporary social and political issues. She is an author of six novels and more than sixty short stories.

Email interview with Sivakami by K. Srilata and Swarnalatha Rangarajan.

Sivakami as an outsider based on her work *Pazhayana Kazhidalum*: Her Response

In Sivakami's opinion, objectivity is very crucial especially when the subject matter of a novel is sensitive and political. If she has not followed an objective view, her conclusions would not be appropriate. *Pazhayana Kazhidalum* was written in 1986 but published only in 1988. Sivakami's concerns were both literary and political. As there was no much change in the condition of Dalits at that point, it was imperative for her to offer a few suggestions. She says that a selfless, dedicated leadership committed to the cause of the downtrodden was the need of the hour, which would also result in establishing an egalitarian society. Sivakami further says that her novel was the first novel in this kind and her past associations with left movements influenced her greatly. Further her field experience as an IAS officer also helped her in formulating solutions to problems. All these ideas were examined in *The Grip of Change*.

The novel *Unmaikku Munnum Pinnum*:

Unmaikku Munnum Pinnum is based on the experiences of several officers in the Indian bureaucracy. Sivakami always considered the government to be a massive and powerful tool for social change. She further says that the government should be led by socially-minded people who work to ensure that everyone in the country enjoys a better standard of living. But unfortunately, her experiences with the higher authorities were bitter. Her experiences taught her that government functionaries do not have the capacity to take autonomous decision. The Dalits and tribal people struggle because of such government functionaries.

Role as a Feminist Dalit Writer:

Sivakami believes caste and class are definitely linked particularly and they find their manifestation in the behavior of individuals which stems from their cultural backgrounds. Any strong and dedicated feminist or social movement has the responsibility of articulating the inextricable connection between caste, class and patriarchy, and devising strategies to eliminate factors that impede concerted action towards freedom and equality. According to her, a Dalit feminist writer is committed to the creation of an egalitarian society and is always ready to fight the evils of the caste and class ridden patriarchy. But always the reality is that the writer gets little support. Cases of Surekha and Nirbhaya are evidences of the failure of women's organizations.

Sivakami's views on main stream feminism:

Women's movements have started emphasizing that women's rights are human rights, but there is no coming togetherness. This could be seen as concrete evidence of the strained

relationship between the main stream feminism and Dalit feminism. Main stream movements argue that while implementing 33percent reservation in state assemblies and parliaments it should be applied on the basis of merit and not caste. This demonstrates that there are as many divisions as there are castes in the mainstream feminist movements. Therefore, unless women from various categories join together, there will not be any changes.

Environmentalism in *Nilam Sila Anubhavgal*:

Sivakamy's commitments to land right issues began with the publication of *Pudhiya Kodangi*. In a survey that Sivakami conducted, it was found that almost every household has land related problems. Thus, the Dalit Land Rights Movement was established with multi-pronged goals. *Land to the Dalits* by S. Anandi, *The Book on the Panchami Land Struggle* by Rev. Father Mark and Prof. Thangaraj's articles helped Sivakami immensely in writing the book. Subsequently, *Udal Arasiyal (Body Politics)* appeared in *Pudhiya Kodangi* as a serial, and was published later with the help of Kutti Revathi. This was followed by a series of article in *Kumudam Theeranathi* under the title *Pengalum Arasiyalum (Women and Politics)*. These works were published as a book by Anangu, a publishing house found by Malathi Mythiri.

Sivakami attended several seminars on land rights and visited many houses in Tamil Nādu for the Land Rights campaign. She met the former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, and Sri Jai Ram Ramesh, former Minister for Rural Development and Dalit Adikar Manch. But her bill on Land Reform never saw light.

Film Experience in Oodaha:

Sivakami made a film Oodaha which was very expensive in the 1990s. It won The President's award. But she could not continue with it as it required a lot of money and time.

Connection between Land and Gender and the importance of women's right to land:

Her creative writing in a way, is woven around land issues. *The Grip of Change* and *Taming of Women* are the fine examples of this category.

Sivakami's Social Activism:

Sivakami expresses her concern on the loss of agricultural lands to commercial real estate growth. The tribals in the forest are also facing severe environmental problems due to poor enforcement of laws, and are subjected to harassments by forest animals. She further says, her hand book on tribal land rights expresses a concern not only for tribal people but also for the denudation of our forests.

Role of Pudiya Kodangi in Dalit writing:

In 1995, when the World Tamil Conference was held at Thanjavur, Sivakami prevailed upon Iraiyanbu IAS to have a session on Dalit literature. She requested Dalit writers to contribute papers for it. There was no magazine or journal which could publish all the conference papers, and so Pudiya Kodangi, a literary quarterly was started to publish them.

Religion for Humanity:

Sivakami expresses her views on religion, Many Dalit families do not visit temples on regular basis, but due to the influence of main stream culture they do it now. Blind belief is always impossible for a mind that interrogates. She further says that one must dedicate his/her life for the service to humanity rather than engage in a futile search for God.

Bal Gangadhar Tilak's *Freedom is My Birth Right and I Shall Have it*

Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak, one of the firebrand freedom fighters and the strongest proponent of “purna swaraj” or “total self-rule”. His “Swaraj is my birth right and I shall have it” caught the imagination of a country fighting to free itself from the colonial rule. In 1905, Bengal, Bihar and parts of Orissa were partitioned by Viceroy Curzon, which enraged people all over India. This led to the birth of the Swadeshi Movement, which boycotted British institutions and goods.

The Congress in the first twenty years was “moderate” in its objectives and methods. During this period, it demanded a greater voice for Indians in the administration of the government. It wanted the Legislative Councils to be made more representative, given more power, and introduced in provinces where none existed. It demanded that Indians will be placed in high positions in the government. For this purpose, it called for civil service examinations to be held in India as well, not just in London. The demand for Indianization of the administration was part of a movement against racism, since most important jobs at the time were monopolized by white officials, and the British generally assumed that Indians could not be given positions of responsibility. Since British officers were sending a major part of their large salaries home, Indianisation, it was hoped, would also reduce the drain of wealth to England. The early Congress also raised a number of economic issues. It declared that British rule had led to poverty and famines: increase in the land revenue had impoverished peasants and zamindars, and exports of grains to Europe had created food shortages. The Congress demanded reduction of revenue, cut in military expenditure, and more funds for irrigation. It passed many resolutions on the salt tax, treatment of Indian labourers abroad, and the sufferings of forest dwellers caused by an

interfering forest administration. All this shows that despite being a body of the educated elite, the Congress did not talk only on behalf of professional groups, zamindars or industrialists.

The Moderate leaders wanted to develop public awareness about the unjust nature of the British rule. They published newspapers, wrote articles, and showed how the British rule was leading to the economic ruin of the country. They criticized British rule in their speeches and sent representatives to different parts of the country to mobilize public opinion. They felt that the British had respect for the ideals of freedom and justice, and so they would accept the just demands of Indians. What was necessary therefore, was to express these demands, and make the government aware of the feelings of Indians.

By the 1890s many Indians began to raise questions about the political style of the Congress. In Bengal, Maharashtra and Punjab, leaders such as Bipin Chandra Pal, Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Lala Lajpat Rai began to explore more radical objectives and methods. They criticized the Moderates for their “politics of prayers”, and emphasized the importance of self-reliance and constructive work. They argued that people must rely on their own strength, not on the “good” intentions of the government; people must fight for Swaraj. Tilak raised the slogan, “Freedom is my birth right and I shall have it!” Freedom is birthright. So as long as it is awake in a person, he can be considered as a spirited person. No weapon can cut this spirit, no fire can burn it and no water can wet it, no wind can dry it. This principle will not disappear even if it seems to be killed.

UNIT III – Short Stories

D. Jayakanthan's *The Heroine*

The Heroine and Other Stories is an impressively great collection of various eloquent stories by D.Jayakanthan. Originally written in Tamil, the stories are translated by Deepalakshmi J with an influential foreword by Ambai. Born on 24th April 1934, in Cuddalore, Tamil Nadu, Jayakanthan was a writer, journalist, film-maker, critic, orator and activist. Recipient of Padma Bhushan (2009), Sahitya Akademi Award (1972) and many more awards and honorary titles, he is an indelible inspiration for many. His stories depict a genuine and effortless essence of Indian society and people. His protagonists are common men and women, yet their stories are remarkable. He dropped out of school at the age of nine, and went to Madras, where he joined the Communist Party of India. In a career spanning six decades, he authored around forty novels and two hundred short stories, apart from two autobiographies. Outside literature, he made two films. In addition, four of his other novels were adapted into films by others. His early works were first published in the party newspaper *Janasakthi*, and soon other magazines like *Sarasvathi*, *Thamarai*, *Santhi*, *Manithan*, *Sakthi* and *Samaran* published his works. His early works focused on the plight of slum dwellers who were settled in and around the party office.

Jayakanthan wrote his first short story for a Tamil magazine titled *Sowbakiyavathi*, which got it published in 1953. Following early success, he started writing for mainstream magazines such as *Ananda Vikatan*, *Kumudam* and *Dinamani Kadir*, where he published a number of short stories particularly in the 1960s.

Jayakanthan's short stories greatly reveal his lifelong concern for the common folk like their little joys, sorrows, dignity and sense of honour even in the face of adversity. His early

writings are very authentic as he lives with the slum dwellers in his young age while he worked as a compositor in the printing press. His major theme is to sing the glory of man and he is very much committed to life. Most of his stories also display his greater concern for the equality of women as evident seen throughout his works.

While reading the short stories and novels of Jayakanthan, one must think of the socio-political reality of his period. The *Heroine* is a story of Madhuran and her husband Sitaraman. She is a homemaker who loves her husband. Sitaraman develops feelings for his office colleague Kamla who has no parents. So, she easily falls into the trap of Sitaraman. One day she goes to meet Madhuran who forces her emotionally saying, "I beg you to share your life with me, Akka." Suddenly, Madhuran became conscious of her rights. She replied Kamla, "Please go tell him there's no room for him in this house anymore . . . Betrayal is not as painful as having to face the smile of the traitor. That is hell. My kids and I are not dependent on anybody." Madhuran throughout the course of the story seems to be a dependent to her husband. But at this point she emerges as an independent women and waves goodbye to her husband forever. Encouraged by an "illiterate" Madhuran's courage, Kamla also decides to break up with her lover Sitaraman. This story delves into the depths of the human psyche, revealing the hidden strengths ordinary people find within themselves when faced with extraordinary circumstances.

Critical Appreciation:

Jayakanthan is influenced by great personalities like the revolutionary poet, Bharathiyar, the principles of Swami Vivekananda and Maxim Gorky, the ideology of Mahatma Gandhi and uniquely influenced by Marxism and the Communist ideology. He is widely acknowledged for his social and revolutionary concerns through his short stories as they depict the sufferings and exploitations of the poor in a capitalist and exploitative society.

Through this short story, he depicts the sufferings and exploitations undergone by women in a patriarchal and exploitative society and definitely his ideas are more progressive in nature, and his concerns are for the development of women. If one analyses the women characters in this short story, one can understand that both the women characters are the victims of patriarchal society. In the case of Kamla, her uncle takes all the decisions in her life as she has no parents. Jayakanthan shows how women are exploited or how their mindset works because of the influence of system and customs.

Sitaram enjoys absolute freedom and grabs the money that Kamla had for her children Latha and Uma. And his office bachelors were astonished by the way a family man spend money as, "Sitaram is a family man only marriage to women like Madhura that, he is able to live such luxury that they (bachelors) are unable to afford, though they are single". It is a social satire about men exploiting both women and their economic security. In this regard, Jayaraman as a socially concerned person, in an award function confesses that his works focus on the problems in the society and comments that, "my stories, in general are problems' problem." Dr. A.P.J Abdul Kalam during the 38th Gnanapeeta award presenting ceremony to Jayakanthan comments:

As mentioned by Jayakanthan himself, his objective in writing is to meet out the demands of Time and the uplift of the society from time to time... The greatness of a country rests on its thinkers who surpasses the ravages of Time and works for the Progress of the society and Jayakanthan is one such thinker... He never cares about the comments of the common lot... he never writes what his audience expects him to write... he writes what his profession and duty dictates and enjoys absolute freedom of expression.

Jayakanthan also instructs that woman must not be approached as the store house of Beauty and the source of fulfilling desires by men; society and women themselves must shed

away such notions in them. Freedom of women is not concerned with women alone, but it is an issue concerned with the development and progress of society. Men and women concerned with the progress of society must participate and work for the equality of both genders. Men and women are not rivals or enemies; freedom for women is possible only in an unexploited society wherein equality of gender is viable.

The responsibility and efforts of individual woman is highly mandatory to achieve freedom and to enjoy individuality and identity in the society. Jayakanthan's objective in portraying the character Madhuras is to bring in faith among the readers. He is of the opinion that writers, who are unable to give birth to faith through their writings, can better skip writing. When Madhuras resist continuing with her fifteen years long marriage life, it is in a way a big stop to women dependency.

This short story raises many questions about the beliefs, attitudes and ideology of the middle-class women. But, at one point of time they realize their exploitation and revolt. It is a revolt against patriarchal system and the values it represents.

Ananda Moorthy's *Ghatashradda*

Udupi Rajagopalacharya Ananthamurthy (21 December 1932 – 22 August 2014) was an Indian contemporary writer and critic in the Kannada language. He was born in Thirthahalli Taluk and is considered as one of the pioneers of the Navya movement. In 1994, he became the sixth Kannada writer to be honored with the Jnanpith Award, the highest literary honour conferred in India. In 1998, he received the Padma Bhushan award from the Government of India. He was the Vice Chancellor of Mahatma Gandhi University in Kerala during the late 1980s. He was one of the finalists of the Man Booker International Prize for the year 2013.

Most of Ananthamurthy's literary works deal with the psychological aspects of people in different situations, times and circumstances. His writings supposedly analyze aspects ranging from challenges and changes faced by Brahmin families of Karnataka to bureaucrats dealing with politics influencing their work. Most of his stories are a reaction of individuals to situations that are unusual and artificial. Results of influences of sociopolitical and economic changes on traditional Hindu societies of India and clashes due to such influences – between a father and a son, husband and wife, father and daughter and finally, the fine love that flows beneath all such clashes are portrayed by Ananthamurthy in his works. This is evident in his short stories like "Ghatashraddha". His writings examine the nature of a traditional society that is trying to modernise itself. His works are widely discussed not just in Kannada, but in the country and outside too. His works speak not just of a society, but also of individuals and their many realities.

"Ghatashraddha" presents before us a community of persons who are interlocked with each other through various complex relationships namely, caste, economy, gender, social hierarchy, women subjugation, religious questions and the blind superstitious belief of the

brahmin community. The entire story of “Ghatashraddha” is narrated through the voice of the little boy Nani. Nani was staying in an “agargaha” to learn mantras and to finish his “upanayana”. Sheshagiri Udupa was his teacher, who is the father of the young widow Yamunakka. Yamunakka has an affair with a village school teacher, who is from Tumkur, stays at Shivapura and comes to school everyday on his bicycle. During Ramanavami he had played a harmonium at the temple. He was lean, tall and looked like a townsman. The silence and deep sigh of Yamunakka got a new meaning with the new relationship. The other two brahmin boys in the Agrahara, Shastri and Ganesha were observing the relationship of the young widow with the school master. Just like other brahmins they were also rigid in following the customs and adamant to accept a woman’s independence.

Most of the nights the village school master comes to meet Yamunakka. As Moorthy portrays, “A voice called out softly ‘Open the door.’ It could only be a brabma rakshasa in the darkness, coming in the inauspicious direction and knocking on the door... Yamunakka got up. I (Nani) clung to her hand begging her not to go. She got up and went.” She got pregnant with the school master. Her lover arranges abortion for her and disappears from the village. The elders discover Yamunakka’s secret and her father performed her funeral rites or ‘ghatashraddha’ while she was alive as she violated the rules and custom of their brahmin community. She was thrown out of caste. But the strange thing is that the social system that condemns a young widow with such cruelty, accepts the remarriage of her old and widowed father with a girl enough to be his daughter.

Critical Appreciation:

The story traces the belief of a community in omens, superstitions, traditions and customs and how the Brahmins are rigid in following the rituals and caste system. The story vividly

portrays caste sanctimoniousness, the Brahmin ways of life, the smug hypocrisy of the people and the inhuman cruelty. Generally, tradition is taken to be an orthodox and conservative setup of everyday life in which no respect is given for the freedom of expression of one's potentiality, personality and growth. The result is either unconscious or conscious suppression of one's self. The character Yamunakka's suppression of emotion is evident throughout the story.

Traditional societies categorized women into good and bad, and indoctrinated both women and men to such an extent that by and large they came to accept these categories. A meek, docile, passive, obedient, virtuous, humble, kind and self-sacrificing woman was considered good. A bad woman was one who was bold, adventurous, active, articulate, and intelligent and questioning; the conduct of such a woman was not appreciated in a society which was shaped by men who laid down the norms of behaviour. The social norms that condemn a young widow for getting married and carrying a baby, accept marriage of her old and widowed father. Sheshagiri Udupa, as he is a man the society, the caste system and the Brahmin community accepts his marriage with a girl enough to be his daughter. Ananthamurthy is bold enough to question the orthodox belief of Brahmins. He believes in individual freedom and self-love. Ananta Murthy does not shy away from accepting that he criticizes Brahmins. He says, "Hurting Brahmins for me born and brought up as a Brahmin, is not an issue that I like, but is inevitable. My writings like Samskara, "Ghatashraddha," Bharatipura, have hurt Brahmins... What I've written are the essential truth that Brahmins must face".

In a conventional Indian society just like Brahmins, women are passively accepting their subjugation. Even they are not ready to break the conventional norms that were framed by the caste head. For instance, in the story, the little boy, Nani reveals everything about Yamunakka's pregnancy to his mother. But the mother replies "Dirty widow! why did she have to get

pregnant?” Didn’t mother get pregnant? why shouldn’t Yamunakka get pregnant? why all this ruckus, I wondered”. Ananthamurthy condemns the caste system that suppress women’s rights. Even Yamunakka’s lover, Parbu also inflicts injustice to a woman like her. He tries all possible ways to get the baby aborted. “There, they had laid out Yamunakka on the floor, naked. Only the place one pissed had been covered. Her belly was smeared with cow dung and on it they had placed an earthen lamp... Parbu gently covered the lamp with a bowl and said, “Let it be. Let it draw”. When Yamunakka was enduring the pain of abortion, Parbu disappears from the village. Woman is treated as merely an object of pleasure. No caste or social system practically protects a woman from exploitation.

According to Anantha Murthy, the main function of a community’s head is to work for the upliftment of the individual. Caste system hinders the consonance with the liberty, equality and fraternity. In social aspect of the issue Anantha Murthy says that caste system is for man, but man is not for caste system.

Gopinath Mohanty's *Tadpa*

Gopinath Mohanty (1914-1991) was a renowned Odia writer and winner of many prestigious awards like Padma Bhushan and Jnanapith for his contribution to Indian literature. The story "Tadpa" depicts the culture and lives of the tribes, Dongria Kondhs.

The story begins with a group of seven 'outsiders', including two earnest, well-meaning officials and a researcher coming back from their one week stay on Niyamgiri, a jungle tract and hill, situated at five thousand feet altitude in Odisha. They seriously discuss the problems faced by Dongria Kondhs and possible solutions. They come across Tadpa, a Dongria Kondh youth, and get to know many things about their customs and social life. The meeting leaves them confused, Yet, learning nothing from the encounter the group goes on discussing their plans.

Tadpa is on his way in the evening to Penubali village to participate in dance and song with a Dhangdi. The group consists of seven people: Parashuram, the Development Officer, athin, tall and experienced man and the leader of the group, who has been to many hill sites while planning welfare schemes; Professor Bharata, an anthropologist who has studied the social systems of several tribes and published books on the same subject. Haripani, a local official at the foot of the hill; Madhusudhan, the forest guard, aged fifty-eight, the guide of the group who knows about Niyamgiri hills and three chaprasis. They have gather the information that the Dongria Kondhs are primitive people and the Dombs join them through trade. They have taken notes of how the Dombs cheated them by selling liquor in exchange for orange trees, jackfruit trees, a pineapple garden or a banana plantation. They have gathered detailed information about the tribals' houses, food, dresses, ornaments and a detailed idea of their lifestyle by talking with them through their interpreter, Madhusudhan.

In describing the tribal as 'illiterate' they are assuming the superiority of the mainstream modes of knowledge as the only ways of understanding the world. However, the mainstream knowledge has mainly been rational, utilitarian and politically oriented, and sees the world in fragments. On the contrary, the knowledge and wisdom of the tribals are intuitive and holistic and help them to live harmoniously with nature, without bringing about ecological imbalances. Mohanty points out the 'unintentional' mistake of the mainstream individuals while understanding and designing developmental programs for the tribals. The group is acute about innovation but innocent about the consequences that will follow for the tribals. Their optimism about opening up the tribal hinter lands for development by laying roads is naïve indeed.

Roads bring not only 'help' but also the exploiters. Their attempt to save the Kondhs from their 'misery' and the exploitation by the Doms, will also bring the shark like exploiter. More regrettably, Hari Pani wishes that mineral deposits would be discovered so that big factories like Rorukela could be opened, and that would change the 'backward' tribals. Mohanty's prophetic comes true in the form of Vedanta refinery in the Niyamgiri hills. What Hari Pani fails to see is how the ills of civilization would inevitably invade the tribal way of life and change its very character, leading to its disintegration, as was witnessed during the British rule. Whenever factories were set up to exploit the resources in tribal homelands, the tribals were evicted, dispossessed or even killed off, and their lands were contaminated.

Parasuram observes that the tribals are "poor, illiterate, ... almost like animals". Though his observation shows concern, there is a hint of condescension and complacency about his own perception, and a lack of real knowledge and understanding of the inner world of the tribals. There is a deep distrust in him about the tribals' knowledge systems. In describing the tribal as 'illiterate' they are assuming the superiority of the mainstream modes of knowledge as the only

ways of understanding the world. However, the mainstream knowledge has mainly been rational, utilitarian and politically oriented, and sees the world in fragments. On the contrary, the knowledge and wisdom of the tribals are intuitive and holistic and helps them to live harmoniously with nature, without bringing about ecological imbalances. Mohanty points out the 'unintentional' mistake of the mainstream individuals while understanding and designing developmental programs for the tribals.

The group of educated and civilized men has failed to notice that Tadpa's people have a well-developed culture of respecting men and women in their own community and treating others with unreserved affection and humility. They are not ready to acknowledge that the 'primitive' culture is so naturally rich with such ideas. Towards the end of the story Tadpa comes close to the group and asks them to give him twenty-five paise. After taking the money, he thanks everyone and goes on his way, singing. As the group walks ahead, they notice the coins they have given to Tadpa on the ground. At first, they think he may have lost them. However, Madhusudhan explains that the tribals have no value for money, they treat it as pebbles. Asking money is a sort of showing intimacy, the way children do. The group does not know what to make of Tadpa's act. Mohanty concludes the story, in hazy moonlight Niyamgiri hill seemed to have fallen asleep, as if it was a dream and not a reality. The road lay ahead of them. The story shows that the mainstream society, despite its best intentions, cannot have the means to understand the tribal mind, unless it unlearns many of its assumptions. Tadpa, the tribal, represents an uncomplicated, natural and self-sustaining culture that can point out to the mainstream the things it (the mainstream) has lost.

Critical Appreciation:

Gopinath Mohanty chronicles the endless plight of tribals and oppressed milieu, who endeavors a marathon struggle against adverse situations. He is considered to be an authority as the strength of his tribal narratives has its source in reality. He has deep faith in humanity and hence concentrates on the plight of the aboriginals and offers an extensive detail on their life style, and the consequent suffering that they endure through neglected living. His long association with the tribals of Southern Odisha, especially with the aboriginals of Koraput, has given him an impetus to reveal their customs, traditions, superstitions and their plights as well. He sincerely attempts to bring out their trials and tribulations to survive against the adverse situations; sometimes against natural calamities and sometimes against manmade despondencies. His inordinate talent lies in presenting tribals' quintessential struggle against all oppression and exploitation, and at the same time in restructuring their ways of living without accepting defeat; it is their commitment and tenacity to struggle which makes them worthy of admiration.

The short story, "Tadpa" highlights the mindset of the tribals. These stories reflect Mohanty's great love for the tribals, his deep sensitivity to their struggle for existence, their pride and predicament and the impact of new waves of political transformation sweeping through rural India which eventually influenced the tribals immensely. The short story, "Tadpa", has been gleaned from the collection of short stories *The Bed of Arrows*. Mohanty questions the futility of bringing light of civilization to the life and culture of people who are inherently superior to the so called civilized and developed cultures. The story explores the problem of land alienation and deprivation which has increased in magnitude and complexity with the migration of non-tribal peasant farmers. The tribal has an innate sense of honesty and morality, he trusts one and all with the result that "wily colonizers" exploit his goodness and cheat him through devious means to

usurp his land. The communication, network of roads has facilitated the influx of non-tribal invaders resulting in “internal colonization.” Largely the tribals have to depend upon the whims and fancies of the local forest officials who manipulate and distort the actual land records adding fuel to the fire of discontentment among the tribals.

For a tribal, the land is the mother-goddess, the life giver and sustainer, in short, the embodiment of life itself. The educated and civilized society on their encounter with the Dongria tribal youth, Tadapa, is made to ponder about the presence of unique incomprehensible tribal values of goodness and simplicity. Neglecting agriculture at the cost of urbanization and undermining the values of humanity, the story holds mirror to lopsided development projects in the name of tribal development.

The forested slope of Niyamgiri hills is the abode of Dongria Kondhs who have inhabited the place since eternity. The Dongria Kondhs call themselves Jharnia meaning those who live by the Jharana (streams). Hundreds of perennial streams flow from Niyamgiri hill and there are hundreds of Dongria villages by the streams. The Dongrias are considered to be the protectors of these streams, hills and jungles by the people of nearby plains. Apparently, there is no trace of civilization here as there was “no dispensary, no post office, no shops, no police station, no well or tank and not even a tiled roof, let alone a regular building”. They are one of the Scheduled Tribes, notified by the government as primitive tribal groups, and thus have special protection. The total population, according to 2001 census, is 7952 and they are regarded as an endangered tribe with pristine and distinct language and culture.

The Kondhs and the Dombs are the main tribals who maintain their distinct culture amidst modernity. The unique naming ceremony of Kondhs is rooted in their past traditions established under the Mahapuru’s blessings where a name is chosen while reciting mantras and

throwing rice grains one after another into a pot and the choice of words is finalized on the name of which the grain stands erect in the pot. Mohanty has effectively thrown light on their social system of having a unique self-sufficient lifestyle. He narrates:

The menfolk wore a loin cloth which was embroidered by the women in their small looms. Women wrapped a six-foot saree round their waist and when they stepped out fully covered themselves with it. The menfolk's clothes were always dirty, the hair on their head unkempt. Men wore rings on his nose and shells and small beads in the ears. The portion of the head just above his forehead was shaved clean and the hair was made into a knot around a comb. He wore chains of colourful beads around his neck, a pick axe on the shoulder, six-inch-long knife was tucked at the waist and he held a sturdy stick made of local wood embroidered in part. The women wore garlands of thin glass beads of any colours and other ornaments of brass and alloy.

It is pertinent to point out that their tribal values are an outcome of their unique association with nature. Centuries of isolation has made them what they are today. They are pristine in the sense as Madhusudan, the interpreter says, "They (Dongria Kondhs) won't have anything to do with injustice or falsehood. They are totally committed to their duties but they won't change their habits. They won't brush their teeth or perform ablution or go to school or give up drinking. Any advice in this regard would fall on deaf ears".

What is noteworthy in this regard is that the non-tribal outsider's aim simply is not to change them for their good, although apparently, they have their plans for improving their lifestyle by making them more civilized, their true aim has neo-colonist/imperialist designs, as Hari Pani, the local officer reverberates, "When forests open up, civilization enters those who come from outside to serve them - and you need plenty of them - need housing, drinking water

and other facilities. All this must begin coming up together with an investment of twenty or twenty-five lakhs: dispensary, piggery, orchards and some factories. And fortunately, if some mineral deposit could be discovered then another Rourkela could be started and it won't take long for people to change". The last line in the above quote contains the genesis of problems for the tribals. All efforts to ameliorate their condition and lifestyle springs from the greed and self-interests of the outside world in the resources of the forests. What has happened to the tribals as a result of outside influence shows the inadequate and nonjudicial interference in the tribal belts. The Dongria Kondhs are proud of their economic independence and freedom from want. They attribute their wellbeing and contentment to the Niyamgiri hills and their bounty. They see any change in their ecology as a potential threat to their very culture. They worship and protect Niyamgiri Mountain and consider themselves the royal descendents of the mountain god.

"Tadpa" brings forth the erased and peculiar traits of the neglected tribals. A peculiar trait of Dongrias is their mindset which is always content and blissful. They have an unflinching faith in the ancestral and natural spirits but also believe in the eternity and oneness of the soul. There is no difference between human being, animal, trees or any other natural agent because the supreme soul expresses itself in every natural form. They have developed the idea, that is, although the forms are manifold the soul cannot be compartmentalized. It seems to be synonymous with the platonic concept of "unity of being." The world is a family to them and nature is the supreme power. The Dongrias are free from inhibitions of sex and love and both boys and girls are allowed to choose and spend time together with approved social sanction. Songs and dances become the base for their hearts to choose their life partners and later marriages are solemnized. This particular custom of choosing their bride is called dhangdi-bent.

To the outsiders the value system may seem strange or outrageous but the reality is that it is rooted in the simplicity of heart and honesty of soul. Dongria lifestyle since times immemorial is due to their untouched existence, they are superstitious and ignorant, they have a fear of the unknown, and they have acceptance for everyone - the nature which sustains them, the beasts of jungle whom they consider brothers despite being a threat to their life. They have learnt and accepted life without any questions of judgment. Probably this is the reason for their bliss which is ever flowing in their heart in spite of the fact that they live in the midst of disease, danger and inconveniences.

The attempt to bring progress and modernity in their lives is marked by a number of practical problems, and as the author opines, "Opening schools or shops, building roads, allowing an alien set up in their midst will somehow adversely affect them. The idea of bringing light of progress may not be controlled by them as with them will come the inevitable change which is largely ill devised as liquor may earn more but the saving habit would take ages to develop".

The things that are important in civilized society can be categorized under the titles of wealth, security, and success. Whereas in tribal culture the important things are traditions and beliefs, and their success lies in survival, both their own survival, and the survival of their culture. Vedanta, an MNC has been trying to mine Niyamgiri's bauxite since 2003. The Company built a refinery at the foot of the hills and started on the conveyor belt that would bring bauxite out of the hills. The Kondh villagers removed from their homes for the refinery have suffered threats and intimidation. They have lost both their land and their means of supporting themselves. To the Dongria, Niyam Dongar hill is the seat of their god; to the Vedanta it is \$ 2 billion of bauxite. The Dongria tribals believe that Vedanta has come here to destroy the

Dongria, they do not have any right to touch the mountains, “even if they behead us, we will not allow them to do this.” Like other displaced tribal people worldwide, they would also lose their present good health, their self-sufficiency and their expert knowledge of the hills, forests and farming system that they have nurtured for long. The story is a critique of civilizing mission of government and subverts the value of money which is hallmark of the civilization. This short story deploys and exploits the stereotype of the native as someone who is very fond of liquor, has no interest in civilization, is like a child at the mercy of his/her benefactors, the educated superiors who are not only capable of analyzing the Dongrias and their problems, but are also equipped to prescribe the much needed, the much-awaited solutions.

Mohanty here presents a mysterious land with illiterate and uncivilized people and feels that it is not our privilege but moral responsibility to try to find out what is good for them. Thus, the forces of modernity serve as the social, historical and cultural inter text for this short story as they were for many of the early twentieth-century literary texts.

UNIT IV- DRAMA

Badal Sircar's *Bhooma*

Badal Sircar is recognized as a promising writer in Indian literature. He has not only lifted but also enriched the Indian theatre. He is a strong voice of oppressed and downtrodden classes. He has written more than fifty plays. Basically, he has written his plays in Bengali but later on many plays were translated into English. His plays address the social issues and reflect the bridge between the rural and urban life. *Bhooma* is known as the best literary masterpiece. It gives a painful picture of oppressed class.

Sircar's *Bhooma* originally written in 1974, was translated in English by Samik Bandyopadhyay in 1983. Badal Sircar has changed the definition of Indian theatre as he established third theater in India. He was born in 1925 in a middle-class family. He grew up by watching monstrous and brutality of Calcutta city, and he describes Calcutta as "a monster of a city, but monster that is alive." He did acquire civil engineering in 1947. He worked at Damodar Valley complex but he was not interested in job. His writing was mainly influenced by Polish playwright Grotowski. He wrote *Solution, X, Ram Shyam Jadu, Baropishima, Shanibar, Evam Indrajit, Baki Itihas, Pralap, Tringsha Shatabdi* and *Pagla Ghoda*. He was a pioneer of Third theatre which mainly deals with the voices of peasants, tribal and rural classes. His plays are really shed a light on materialistic world and oppression of subaltern class.

Bhooma reveals the problem faced by peasants and rural classes in Rangabelia village. It is based on actual experiences of his friend, who was heading a village school as head master in Rangabelia. The play basically revolves round materialistic world, exploitation of peasants, and inequality towards rural class. The play is set in the Sundarbans district in Calcutta. It reflects the

post-colonial background and epitomizes the suppression of subaltern classes. In *Bhooma* Sircar presents the harsh realities of peasants of Rangabelia village and inferior position of rural classes.

In *Bhooma* Sircar addresses the issues of peasants and rural class. The play has six characters. They all represent the subordination and exploitation of peasants and rural class in the name of power and class. The suffering of rural man is not entertained by the bureaucracy. Badal Sircar presents the exploitation of subaltern class. A stenographer represents pains and agonies of lower-class men. Stenographer works in Samson and Blackbird Company. He has only 455 rupees salary. He wanted 20000 rupees loan form bank. The manger asks many questions in order to check his loan liabilities. When the stenographer tried to satisfy the bank manger by his wise answers however, he did not ready to grant his loan permission. The bank manager laughed at him and asked silly questions:

Five: How many workers?

Five: liabilities?

Five: What have you mortgaged?

The manger is engaged in scrutinizing all his liabilities and a raise question over his loan and asks him, "You can't have it without security! Get the shed back first; if everything else is satisfactory you can up to 10,000 on it." The stenographer's loan is not sanctioned by bank manager as he is from lower class and he had no power to pursue the mind of the bank manager. He becomes a victim of class. He is subordinated due to his societal position. On the other hand, the Bank manager asks Mr. Mukherjee not to worry as it is only a formality, and there is no

question of securities. The two events indicate that lower classes are subordinated in the name of power and class.

Bhooma also reveals the subordination of peasants. Villagers in Rangabelia are exploited by the upper class. Sircar points out the gap between the urban and rural classes. Peasants live in Rangabelia. They still have a little land for farming. The village has no proper road, no facility of doctor and the electricity has not yet reached there. On the other hand, India has successfully sent its first artificial satellite Aryabhata into the orbit and metro rail will soon be introduced to Calcutta. Sircar cries for subaltern classes those who have been waiting since generations and generation for electricity, transportation system and better road.

Peasants cultivate kharif crop which is totally depended on rain only. They yield wheat and paddy only once in a year one. Due to the lack of water, they could not cultivate the land whereas Calcutta city will be witnessed for a second Hooghly bridge. The farmers actually produce gold but they have treated like beggars. They do not receive any support from the banks. They live under tension. They think constantly about interest of bank. Having toiled the whole year, they still live in poverty. They are longing for help. Sircar feels sympathetic for the subordination of farmers. The efforts of farmers are not valued. It is obvious through the following conversation:

One: Three million rupees, only three million, million rupees-on loan. We need water.

Give us water. We need fertilizers. Give us fertilizers. Give us fertilizers. Give us land.

We need water. Give us water.

Two: This earth has sucked up so much blood already, hasn't it?

One: Yes, hollow earth. Down, deep down, drop by drop this blood has seeped through and gathered in a subterranean reservoir. (Three Plays,74)

Nobody sees the tears and pains of farmers who actually harvested gold and run the country. On the contrary, India is on the edge of self-reliant on the basis of its continuous progress in industry and agriculture. Sircar denies this saying that “these facts are only living in a fool’s paradise”. *Bhooma* is about the deprived villagers, farmers and rural classes in Rangabelia. Characters in this play make a fruitful discussion over the issues of subordination of farmers:

One:(crops) looks like a bumper crop.

Two: With your blessings, if there isn’t much of a pest problem, I expect 18-20 quintals per acre.

One: Eighteen to 20. I should think not less than 30.

Two: I could have got 30 sir, if I could not only apply the required dose of fertilizers. That

I couldn’t sir, didn’t have the money.

One: Is that your own pump set?

Two: Good heavens, no, sir, where could I get it? I’ve only one acre of land. Sir, and that too mortgaged to the money lender. What can I get bank loan on?

One: Whose is the pump set then?

Two: What’s the price like?

One: This year it's risen to seven rupees per hour. Till last year we got it for five. For poor People like us, it's crazy to cultivate paddy in the dry season, you can call it beggars craving to ride horses. Say, I've hardly an acre, and it's going to cost me at least 1,200 rupees for water alone. On top of that there are fertilizers, pesticides. But then, with good luck if there's not much trouble with pests, with your good wishes, sir, it's not going to be too bad.

Gadai Mitter is a landlord who usually provides his Rustom pump on seven rupees per hour to the farmers in Ragabelia. He used to dominate poor farmers in the name of power. Farmers look like "subaltern social groups were also in a position to subvert the authority of those who had hegemonic power." Mitter uses his power to exploit farmers. He behaves like a monster with farmers. He is corrupted by power. He easily avails loan from the bank. Sircar sheds light on the superiority of the upper class through the following dialogues:

One: Ah. For, him it's easy enough! he has more than 25 acres of land. Had a Rustom pump set already – five horse power, and last year he took a loan from the bank and brought this Sambird One: Those field there-do they belong to Gadai Mitter?

Two: No, Sir, that belongs to three different people, Gadai Mitter cultivates those on sharecropping terms.

One: What? A rich man like Gadai Mitter –a sharecropper?

The farmer's grief is turned deaf ear.

The play underlines the untold pains and pangs of subaltern classes. The rich become the richer and richer. The poor is being pushed not only to poverty but also to exploitation. When the farmers discuss, they mention about the passive attitude of Indians about agriculture. The play

also depicts the serious issue of ecological problem in Sundarbans. Sircar addresses man as “Bhooma” as he has a barbaric attitude towards the resources of earth. “The jungle”, “the soil”, “the tiger”, “the snake”, “the crocodile” “the fish”, and “the rivers” were eaten by Bhoma. Sircar conveys the message that the resources of the sacred land India are being exploited to a deteriorated rate. It is seen in the following lines:

Three: The land is gone.

Four: The crops are gone.

Two: homes are gone.

Three: An acre of my land was eaten away by the Bidya River three years ago.

Four: But we have to pay revenue still on that piece of land.

Three: My home was eaten away by the Gomor river.

As the resources of Rangabelia village in Sundarban destroyed, the water of Bidya and Gomor river is mixed up with the salt water of the ocean. “There is so much salt in the Ocean”

Two: Salt in the Ocean

Three: Salt in Gomor

Four: Salt in Bidya.

Sircar emphasizes the point that earth is shared by both humans and non-humans. Almost all the resources of Rangabelia are destroyed. presently “Bhooma” is hungry to eat the agricultural land. “How can you eat Bhooma? if you eat rice, we don’t get our delicious

biryani?”. Even for the entire money humans have in their hand they will not get rice until the exploitation of soil is prevented.

Sircar's play reveals a quest to discover, identify, protect and conserve threatened interconnected ecosystems in Rangabelia, Sundarbans or across all divides. He believes that the entities of nature possess the same moral standing and natural rights as human beings. Through his play, he proposes a great issue of the domination of earth and subaltern class. He highlights the hypocrisy and tragedy that are inherent in the upper-class society. The writer gives a warning to the entire human being that protection of the agriculture land, working class people and the resources of earth is a need of an hour.

Vijay Tendulkar's *The Vultures*

Vijay Tendulkar is one of the best-known contemporary playwrights in modern Indian theatre. He is a journalist, novelist, short story writer and a radical dramatist in modern Marathi theatre. He is a prolific playwright with twenty-four one-act plays, eleven children's plays and twenty-eight full length plays, several of which have become classics of modern Indian theatre. The evil in the world has been portrayed by him in his dramas. He has always been controversial, because he has always been contemporary in his concerns – social, political and theatrical. All his plays deal with the oppression of the weak by the powerful. Among his works, *The Vultures* (*Gidhade*) occupies the highest place in the portrayal of the vulturine nature of the members of a middle-class family, and also the oppression and suppression of the weak people by the powerful. The play was produced in May 1970 and published in 1971. This play is a dramatization of deep-seated unmitigated depravity, perversity, greed and diabolic villainy reflected in the ravenous members of a family. These characters symbolize the rapacious vultures, and betraying their avarice, vices and immorality evince the repulsive sensuality and domestic violence in the society.

The Vultures dramatizes deep seated unmitigated depravity, perversity, greed and diabolic villainy in the ravenous members of the family. The family of human vultures consists of Pappa vulture (Pitale), his illegitimate son (Rajaninath), his elder son (Ramakant), his daughter (Manik), his second son (Umakant), his daughter in-law (Rama, wife of Ramakant). Almost all the characters in the play are corrupt and violent except Rajaninath and Rama. The characters symbolize sensuality and domestic violence.

Pappa Hari Pitale and his brother Sakharam build up a huge business firm called - The Hari Sakharam Company, a construction firm. It is through sheer hard work they achieve this feat. As days pass by Pappa takes the company from his brother by means of treachery and false law suits. As a result, Sakharam Pitale finds himself on the street. As the saying, “as you sow, so you reap,” Pappa’s sons and daughter plot against their father, and are waiting to drive him out one day.

Hari Pitale is a smoker who has a habit of working with his toothless mouth. He does not have any respect for his two sons. He expresses his disgust for his selfish children. Pappa says to his sons “If I die, it’ll be a release! They ‘re all waiting for it. But I’m your own father. After all! If I die, I’ll Become a ghost. I’ll sit on your chest! I won’t let you enjoy a rupee of it. I earned it all”. His diseased wife is an enemy to him as she left three children with him. But he becomes a burden to his children. Pappa says it has been his stupidity to produce bastards like them. Ramakant tells his brother Umakant, “a mangy dog would have made a better father”. Umakant is only too ready to agree with his brother and all these in the presence of their own father. However, the old man is hardened by his own past crimes and remains nonchalant.

The fifth scene dramatizes the most violent incident in the play. The sons pretend to fight each other with the father getting trapped between them. Pappa gets injured. In order to escape from further assault, he admits to them that he has deposited some money in the Punjab Bank. Ramakant and his brother hate each other. They both hate their own sister Manik. For him lying for business is a convenience. He believes that money can buy anything like lawyers, courts and justice. Even when Ramakant and Umakant talk to their own sister about her affair with the Raja of Hondur, they use obscene language, which is suggestive of their incestuous nature. Their suspicion that their father still has some money stacked away somewhere leads them to have a

cruel plot against their own father. Though they receive their share of the father's wealth, their plan to squeeze him to his best penny and plans a murderous assault on him to drive him out is a kind of heinous honour that could be given to a father. It is a rare incidence one could witness in human history.

Rajaninath has a sensitive personality. He watches the violent disintegration of the family, and bears witness to it. Manik appears to be a hysterical type. She smokes and drinks liquor. Her attitude towards money and other members of the family reveals her character. Manik is an embodiment of materialism. Her craving for money to purchase a thousand-rupee necklace at the cost of her life gives a kind of public demonstration of the bestiality and monstrosity of people in a family living in a nauseatingly consumerist world. Tendulkar reminds, through her character, how the meaningless pursuit for pleasure makes her of easy virtue. She prowls and scavenges relentlessly through a variety of lifestyles in search of that all-fulfilling treasure. She seems to have forgotten that this hyperactive pursuit and empty hearted feelings are not new to the human experience.

The fact that both Ramakant and Umakant want to get rid of their sister becomes clear. Playing game of cards by the members of family for serious transaction of money not only stuns the audience but also alerts them how human relations are gradually taking the shape of commercial dimensions. Discussing Manik's love affair with the Raja of Hondur, Umakant tells Ramakant that he might marry her, "If her belly swells out." They can blackmail the Raja of Hondur for money. This reveals that there is no healthy atmosphere at home. But they can go to any extent just for the sake of money which exposes the attitude of people now. Rama, wife of Ramakant intuitively knows that material prosperity may give satisfaction but cannot be a solution to despair. For her, the house is full of individualism, competitiveness and power games.

As individual degradation is increasing, the gradual disintegration of the family is also clearly seen. Ramakant becomes a pauper. Ramakant and Umakant quarrel for sharing the business and property. Umakant learns that there is a double mortgage on their house. Ramakant advises his brother to go ahead with his flourishing business and leave the house to him. But Umakant demands him to settle their account about their father's hidden property, their sister's money and mother's jewels. Then, he tells his brother that his wife is carrying in her womb the child of Rajaninath. This enrages Ramakant, and he scolds Umakant and twists his hand. So, Umakant goes out. Ramakant calls Rama down and talks to her tenderly only to elicit her tender feelings for Rajaninath.

Hari Pitale, Pappa, and Manik roam around the house, thirsty for revenge. Hari Pitale realizes that his legitimate children will kill him for property. He knows that Rajaninath, his illegitimate son, is human. So, he seeks his protection from his own children and promises Rajaninath to make his "will" in his favour by back dating. Rajaninath is repulsed by the property as it has made the people loveless vultures. He detests the very idea of inheriting the property. So, he cannot show any compassion to him and mercilessly asks him to get out.

As Ramakant and Umakant exhaust their share of money and want some more, together they decide to blackmail the Raja of Hondur who is in love with Manik and by whom she becomes pregnant. So, in order to prevent her from meeting her lover further and informing her lover about their blackmailing him, they hatch a plot to break Manik's leg. They ruthlessly execute the plan and hope to get twenty-five thousand rupees from the Raja of Hondur. However, a phone call informs them that the Raja of Hondur has died of heart attack. As a result, their plan of black mailing Manik's lover is stopped. So, they break Manik's room open and

Ramakant kicks Manik's belly hard. She aborts, and in sheer agony runs away. Thus, one vulture leaves Pitale's house. This is the most violent of scenes in the play.

Ramakant in utter despair caused by drunkenness behaves like a mad man. He sings and dances. He does not allow Umakant into his house and suspects his intention of the grabbing house through black magic. Apart from their materialism and momentary pleasures, it is clear that their mechanical religious belief has blunted their faculty reason. Religion, which is expected to create common good, lacks moral vision in Pitale's family. *The Vultures* depicts several evil traits in human nature. The play is as special of Tendulkar's plays as it fully presents so many contrasting evils working within a family where the family members have lost their sensitivity and become so rude and crude to human compassion.

Critical Appreciation:

Tendulkar's play, *The Vultures* is based on his perceptive observation of some cruel, crafty, unscrupulous and greedy men around him. He wrote this play with the conviction that the vulturine instinct in man is deeply rooted. He attempted to explore the meaning of man's life victimized by selfishness, hatred, jealousy and cupidity. The vulturine nature dominating the relations of the middle-class family members is the leitmotif of the play. The selfishness and greed of human beings are the major issues of the play. The characters in the play are always ready to cheat one another to get more money and grasp power from each other. The interrelationships among the family members are hopelessly degenerated. All their strength is spent in searching inhuman tricks to cheat others. Modern cultural profanity and aridity has resulted in man's unbridled lust for power, money and passion, ruthlessly preying on the impotent rival's spoils.

The play tells the story of the Pitale family. Pappa, Hari Pitale and his brother Sakharam strive hard and establish a construction company named “The Hari Sakharam Company” and do a prosperous business. Initially they had jointly started the firm but when the business flourished, Hari Pitale cunningly grabs all the joint property in such a clever way that Sakharam fails even in the court of law. He turns Sakharam out of house and is left penniless. Pappa grabs all the power of the company leaving his brother in the lurch by deceitful design, and Sakharam is reduced to poverty. Pappa’s sons Ramakant and Umakant, who have already received their shares of the father’s wealth, want to squeeze him to his last penny and planning a murderous assault on him, drive him out. Then they violently quarrel among themselves for money. Their sister Manik, who secretly corroborated in their plan against Pappa, has illicit relations with the Raja of Hondur who impregnates her. Her brothers plot to blackmail the Raja to extract money from him. But they get frustrated to find that the Raja has succumbed to heart attack. Now both of them abort the unborn baby of Manik by kicking the womb of Manik. Ramakant’s wife Rama, childless for long, gets conceived from Rajaninath, the illegitimate son of Pappa. Now intensely disconcerted Manik, in frenzy, aborts Rama also. The horrid chain of violence devastates the whole family while Rajaninath, though knowing well that the wicked persons cannot be saved, prays for mercy to them.

The characters of *The Vultures* think that money is the root cause for all powers. For the sake of money, the characters behave in a wicked manner and they become violent in many situations. When there is an issue of money, the father, his two sons and his daughter start fighting. Through these characters, the playwright wants to show the degradation of values in our society and also the satanic tendencies of human nature. Pappa’s beating of Sakharam, Ramakant’s beating of the gardener Jagannath, Umakant’s and Ramakant’s behaviour with

Manik and Pappa, all indicate the selfishness, greed, violence and wickedness of the characters for money, only which they think as a power. Happiness lies in contentment, and greed for money and power leads man towards destruction.

In *The Vultures* selfishness, money mindedness and greed for power play a vital role among the characters – Ramakant and Umakant. It shows the degradation of familial relationship within a family, and also the cheap mentality and silly behaviours of the members of a family in the modern society. Because of the greediness of Ramakant and Umakant, they engaged themselves in violent activities which resulted in the abortion of Manik. In the play, Ramakant, Umakant and Manik play cards, the game of rummy. While playing, they discuss about the love-affair of Manik, and when Manik departs, Ramakant and Umakant plan to blackmail the King of Hondur with whom Manik has love affair. They also plan Manik's pregnancy be encashed by blackmailing the King of Hondur for 20,000/- rupees. They decide to manage an accident so that Manik would not visit her lover. They plan to break one of her arms or legs. Ramakant says to Umakant, "Think, go on, think. Eh? You'll never get another chance like this. That's for sure. Aren't many Rajas left these days. But the twenty thousand is a must. Ten for you. Ten for me, what? Fifty-fifty. If you're willing, we'll fix it up now. We'll call her down" (237).

Ramakant and Umakant beat Manik in such an extent that one of her legs is fractured. But as the period of their bad luck is going on, King of Hondur dies of heart attack. The frustrated brothers beat Manik in such an extent that she undergoes an abortion. Two brothers maim their sister Manik in order to blackmail her lover and when that fails, perpetrate more violence on her, Manik's scream and her coming down the stairs, half-crawling, one leg in plaster, her white saree covered with blood are perhaps the most 'repulsive' scenes in Indian theatre. Consciously or unconsciously, they reinforce the power of patriarchy.

Hari Pitale has deceived his own brother Sakharam and has become the sole master of 'Pitale Plumbing Company'. Once upon a time, when they were young, this company was owned by these two brothers. Later on, Hari cheated his brother Sakharam and has become the sole owner of that firm. When Sakharam, the brother of Hari Pitale comes to demand his share from his brother Hari, he has been made to run away by Hari and his sons. The words of Hari to his brother are retold by Umakant to Ramakant, "What money shall I give? What money do I have? Won't get a bloody paisa, you pimp! Asking for my money! Where is there any money now? I haven't got any at all" (226). Finally, Sakharam is sent out of their house by the sons of Hari, without giving single paise to him. Here one can see the power politics between these two brothers – Hari and Sakharam. After sending him out, Hari and his sons celebrate their victory over Sakharam by drinking, singing song, "Crescent moon, oh! Moon, oh!" (227), and dancing. From this incident, it is understood that how power-politics plays a vital role in the relationship between two brothers.

Even in the case of the sons of Hari Pitale, the same thing happens. Ramakant sells Radiogram, sofa, and the jewels of his mother and he cheats his own brother in sharing the money. The economic dealings of Ramakant and Umakant are not fair. Here the power-politics between the brothers can be found. Moreover, when they come to know about the secret account of their father in a bank, they beat their father too to get his money. Ramakant, Umakant and Manik try to get their father's money – the seven thousand rupees which is in his Punjab Bank account, through secret plans. When their plans fail, they beat their father to get that money openly. Pappa shouts and runs out of the door. He says, "No! you're going to kill me. [He cries] Bahu! Where are you, Bahu! They're killing me, they're killing me! Bahu!" (231). It shows that not only Pappa, but his sons also go to any level to get money and power.

The members of Pitale family always try to cheat others too. They want to show their power not only over their family members but also over the outsiders too. They have a gardener named Jagannath. The sons of Pappa hesitate to pay their gardener who is working for their family. He has not paid for two months by his employers. When the gardener asks for his salary, he is scolded by the sons of Pappa, “Ungrateful bastard! Get out of the house. This minute! Comes here at an ungodly hour. Asking for money, the bastard! As if it is your father’s money! Get out on the road! Or I’ll shoot you! ... What are you waiting for Ramya? Kick the bastard in the balls! Give him another! Slam him!”

Manik, the daughter of Hari Pitale also abuses the gardener, because he frequently visits their house and asks for his salary. Whenever he comes home, her father and brothers quarrel with him and it creates uproar in their house, and Manik feels that this uproar would disturb her sleep. Manik says, “That old clown of a gardener Jagannath! He’s another case! Comes here every day. Asking for money he haggles away with Ramya. Every morning. Ruin my sleep, the swine! Does money grow on trees here? Or is there a mine of it somewhere? Bloody cheek!” More than that Ramakant beats the gardener in such an extent that blood comes out of his mouth. This shows the dominance of powerful over the powerless. The abusive words used by Umakant, Ramakant and Manikon the gardener reveals how the powerful people exploit and dominate the powerless people in the materialistic world. All members of this family are money-minded and self-centered. In order to get power and also to show their power, they may go to any extent.

Ramakant, being an addict to liquor, failed in his duty as a husband to make his wife, a mother. Blinded by stupid egoism and male chauvinism, he fails to understand the wisdom of his wife’s advice in many occasions. Rejecting her humble request, he boasts of his superior wisdom and capacity to manage his affairs without the advice of a woman. He does not turn his ears to

Rama on any occasion. Rama lives as a powerless doe and a tender-hearted idol in that house. Rajaninath tells us how Rama spent twenty years in that house in the following lines, “living impotence of twenty-two endless years” (202). Further, in his words:

But she only knew One longing, Only one...

Threw of her chains in her need.

The need to swell with fruit ...

Each womb-bearing woman's right by birth. (205)

Rama has to fulfill her desire only through her brother-in-law, Rajaninath. But Manik, her sister-in-law, aborted her and therefore Rama feels of pain and empty of desires. In the house of cunning vultures, Rama suffers much and she is dominated by her husband and tortured by her in-laws, but she remains calm and endures all her emotional sufferings. She is a powerless, innocent doe surrounded by evil ghosts and powerful vultures.

Tendulkar sees women primarily as exploited and marginalized subjects. In this play, Rama experiences life-in-death and every day she says that she dies million deaths on account of the torture of her husband. She is tired of her husband’s unethical and murderous dealings both in his professional and personal lives. She advises him to mend his ways by starting a fresh life by quitting that horrible house which she is afraid will devour her. She requests him to listen to her only once. After that she will remain with her ‘head bent’ and ‘mouth shut’ as she has been used to all these days. Ramakant’s male ego does not allow him to take her sensible advice. He chides her not to be over smart and try to teach him. According to him, no one in his family has ever been hen-pecked as to advice by his wife. Rama feels the cross-fire of male egoism and female vengefulness. She becomes a victim to both and loses her child in the womb owing to the

machinations of Manic, her sister-in-law. In addition to the man's atrocities against women, they also suffer from female viciousness, jealousy and rivalry.

Rajaninath is the illegitimate son of Pappa and the half brother-in-law of Rama. He is a man of poetic sensibility. He is not treated as a son by his own father, the Pappa. He is not allowed to stay with them in their house. He stays in the garage only. Pappa had never accepted the responsibility of Rajaninath all his life but he seeks out his help so that he can avenge his venomous sons and get back his property through a law suit. When Pappa is beaten by Umakant and Ramakant for acquiring his money, Rajaninath remains silent though he is also one of his sons. Rajaninath is rendered into a mute spectator, helpless and hopeless. Rama has been a true companion to him all along as both of them are failures in life as well as the neglected lots there in the family. Both of them are a doomed lot on the road to hell. For them their future is lost and they cannot hope to redeem it. Death alone will bring them the much-needed relief. They are the powerless creatures in the house, who are unable to do anything of their own. So, from the beginning to the end of the play, these two characters remain passive and calm.

In *The Vultures*, Tendulkar shows how each character is responsible for the breakdown of the joint family system. In the post-colonial perspective, the age-old concept of home is fast collapsing. The home is turning into several houses and houses into a number of scattered flats and flats carry the burden still fragmented, alienated souls of those materialistic machines whose minds are badly occupied with an unending fierce competitiveness and power games. It is witnessed that, a volcanic eruption of violence that lies normally dormant to all. It comes to the surface level and beyond that all the people are trapped in the cobweb of the postcolonial tendencies of fragmentation, frustration and aggression. The characters in *The Vultures* are all

vulnerable to this disease, and Tendulkar successfully defined the dreadful deformities that form our culture.

UNIT V- Fiction

Imayam's *Arumugam*

Imayam is a Tamil writer from Chennai, India. He has seven novels, six short story collection and a novella to his credit. He is closely connected with the Dravidian Movement and its politics, and is considered as one of the leading writers from South India. He is the recipient of the honorary Sahitya Akademi Award for his novel *Selladha Panam*. He is also the recipient of the Agni Aksra Award, the Tamil Nadu Progressive Writers Association Award, the N.L.C. Award, and the Thamizh Thendral Thiru. V.Ka. Award, among others, and has been honored by the governments of Kerala, Tamil Nādu and India.

The novel *Arumugam* (1999) is about the relationship between a mother and son, the difficult emotions that weave their stories into a single fabric of love. In the novel, after the death of her husband Raman, Dhanabhagyam has to make both ends meet. She is given a job at Auroville Farm where the supervisor Jerry Albert was always leering at her. Dhanabhagyam, due to her poverty, could do nothing else, but to yield to him. Further, she has to take care of her son's education for which she requires money. Hence, she is forced by her circumstances to develop an illegitimate relationship with Jerry Albert. When the young boy Arumugam has understood the illegitimate relationship of his mother, he hates her mother. Arumugam runs away from his mother and his life starts from there. Wherever he goes, he looks around the events and observe it. Apart from his mother he encounters so many female characters like Vasantha, Chinnaponnu, Abitha and Lakshmi who shapes Arumugam like his real mother. Arumugam has a good relationship with his grandfather, but he does not like to leave the place where he lived. The oldman, "Kizhavan" fears that if he leaves the place, it will be an uproot

from his culture too. "Kizhavan" commits suicide when he came to know about his daughter's misconduct.

Arumugam is forced to live in the midst of prostitutes, pulling rickshaws and doing odd errands for his livelihood. The manager of Auroville farm seduces Vasantha but the wrong-doer goes unpunished as it is the way of the world. The security man of the company observes the incident that happened to Vasantha. Using this incident, the security man threatens Vasantha for his sexual desire. Exploitation of women and violation of their rights is portrayed here painfully. Even the family doesn't seem to be a support or the comfort zone to Vasantha. Vasantha's brothers and sister in laws show no mercy on her and drives her away from her home. The people who are actually to be punished enjoys all comfort from the society. Arumugam understands the miseries of Vasantha and he thought about the painful exploitation of women. If Vasantha's parents were alive, they could have given a comfort life to her. He asked to himself, why such an innocent girl to be punished so cruelly. The novel voices for the values of compassion, mercy, justice. The writer says people pretend to be good but not acting as good.

Imayam also observes how a poor woman like Chinnaponnu has to yield to prostitution for her livelihood. After getting his lustful urge gratified one moneyed rogue goes to the extent of killing Chinnaponnu and her murder goes untried simply because she belongs to a poor family. All that the poor people could do is to bemoan their way of life, for them there is no way out. The helplessness of the poor is very tellingly punctuated by incidents of this kind. These life experiences give a new awareness to Arumugam that his mother is not immoral woman but a victim of male and money dominated society.

But his mother, tormented by her own immoral act, starts roaming from place to place in search of Arumugam. She finds her son, but her conscience does not allow her to be united to

Arumugam and she hangs herself. All these people Dhanabhagyam, Arumugam, Vasantha and Chinnaponnu – thus, suffer on account of the exploitation by the rich.

Critical Appreciation:

Imayam describes himself as a Dalit writer hailing from agricultural, rural working-class background. This self-description neatly sums up the social exclusion namely caste, gender and class that he experiences in his own life. In his novel *Arumugam*, he discusses the Dalit women's life. While the Dalit women let the male world subject them to unimaginable crude sexual violence and perversity, they rebel. This has opened up a whole lot of questions about the traditional understanding of marriage, sexuality, family, man-women relationships and so on.

Dalit life, especially that of women possesses an innate wisdom born out of their practical experiences of life. They are afraid even to call themselves with their own names. When their husbands left or died the society falls upon them like a bird of prey. Women are supposed to be confined to the four walls of the house and are not given any freedom in the society. They are marginalized first in terms of gender and then with caste. They are often treated as objects or show-pieces without any identity. The duty of a writer is to hold a mirror to the society and by lending voice to the voiceless she emerges as a fighter for human rights. The Dalit women who are the victims of the society have been exploited and oppressed not only by their men but also by the upper caste men and women. As a result, they have become one of the most exploited and marginalized groups in the society. Imayam holds a mirror to the society through his novel *Arumugam*. When the young boy Arumugam understands the illegitimate relationship of his mother, he hates her mother. Running away from his mother, Arumugam is forced to live in the midst of prostitutes, pulling rickshaws and doing odd errands for his livelihood. The helplessness of the poor is portrayed throughout the novel. These life experiences give a new awareness to

Arumugam that his mother is not immoral woman but a victim of male and money centered society.

Women suffer at the hands of men only because they are women. The manager's molestation goes beyond tolerable limits as the days passed. Vasantha is trapped. The watchman, an accomplice of the manager, informs a Krishnapuram youngster of what has occurred. The boy, in turn, threatens Vasantha that he would expose everything to her family, writing it out on the walls of the village, to boot. Vasantha yields to him too, helpless, giving up her body to him like a toy in the hands of a child. News of the transgressions reaches the village, nevertheless. Vasantha's brothers, sister-in-law and relations erupted in anger. "Cut her up and bury her, the brazen little bitch. How dare she, and at her age, too?" "Shave her head – strick her face with black and red dots, and throw her out of the village – the blasted whore's thrown the honour of our Nayudu clan to the winds" Women have historically been essentialized into silence. In the course of her duties, Pushpa Mary develops intimate relations with a doctor, making her resort to abortions four times. The doctor transfers himself and is now married to someone else. "Now she hates men as a whole," explained Vasantha. "Oh god, why must these things happen? But there are all kinds of people in the world. The things one has to do to make a living, and keep body and soul together!" Vasantha laments, as tears fills her eyes.

Imayam portrays how a poor woman like Chinnaponnu has to yield to prostitution for her livelihood. Chinnaponnu tries to resist herself from the malicious circle of man. But everything ends up in vain. Chinnaponnu stepped down from the rickshaw, and kicked Dharmamoorthy from behind. Before he could turn around and gather hit wits, she kicked him between his legs. Dharmamoorthy collapsed wordlessly, clutching his groin. Pushing him down flat on the ground, Chinnaponnu sat on his chest and pummeled his face relentlessly; only when her hands began

to throb with pain she stopped. Gasping for breath, she spat a “Chi, thooma,” in his face, and then looked up. But women always seem to be a victim in the hands of men. Chinnapponnu is not an exception. After fulfilling the lustful urge even, the man goes to the extent of killing her and he walked casually as if nothing worth happened.

Imayam with his artistic conception of lived experiences in the language of their own community proves that the voices of the Dalits, particularly the subalterns can be articulated in their own tongues. Their writings uncover the hidden and erased voices of women’s history, or reinterpret events from a new perspective. The novel gives a strong message to act in the present moment. Subaltern people should recognize their own rights. Exploitation in the hands of rich by poor and male by female is an unjust act to humanity and society. The novel Arumugam capture the stark realities of the caste system and the lives of Mahadalits. He gives a strong message to resist this cruelty through unity and education.

M.T. Vasudevan Nair's *Naalukettu (The House Around the Courtyard)*:

M.T. Vasudevan Nair, popularly called 'M.T' was born on 9th August 1933, in Kudallur in Ponnani Taluk of Malabar in Kerala. He was the youngest son of Narayanan Nair and Ammalu Amma. His parents were in Sri Lanka as his father worked as a Manager in an Indian trading company. His mother, who was born in an ancient Nair family, came back to India to take care of the children's education, while their father continued his stay in Sri Lanka. M.T passed his S.S.L.C. when he was fourteen years old and was compelled to wait for two years before he could join the college as the minimum age for admission into it was sixteen years. These two years of stay outside the academic portals helped M.T tremendously to bloom as a writer. M.T is undoubtedly one of the most widely read novelists of contemporary Malayalam literature. Most of his stories depict traditional Nair community's "Tharavadu System".

Kerala is considered as Gods own country blessed by nature with boons of abundance: plentiful rains, backwaters and numerous rivers. It has a copiously diverse vegetation, beautiful landscape and climate. It is also this region that takes so much interest in literature. Malayalam is one of the more versatile of Indian languages. Kerala can boast of a lot including their agricultural lands and culture. What they can also boast about is M.T. Vasudevan Nair. Born in 1933, he is considered as one of Kerala's most genius literary figures for his excellence in writing in different genres. He was born in a small village in Palakkad district from where he rose to fame for his well-crafted novels and short stories in Malayalam. Later on, he became a film maker as well. MT, as addressed by his fans, he is best known for his simplistic writing and his ability to subtly capture the anguish and pain that existed due to feudalism in Kerala. His

major works include *Naalukettu*, *Kaalam*, *Asuravithu*, *Manju*, *Randamoozham*, *Iruttinte Aatmavu*, *Varikkuzhi*, etc. His writing has won him many awards including the Sahitya Academy Awards by the centre and state, Vallathol Award and Lalithambika Antharjanam Award. In 1995, he was given the nation's highest literary award, The Jnanpith.

The novel in India is believed to have moved in from Europe. Although it had many literary works in languages like Sanskrit and Tamil already existing, the novel is believed to have become popular in India only in the early 20th Century. Malayalam novels can be traced back to around 1950 with writers like Chandu Menon and C.V. Raman Pillai. The span of 20 years between 1942 and 1962 is considered to be the Renaissance of the Malayalam novel with writers like P. Kesava Dev, Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai, M.T. Vasudevan Nair, etc, producing some of their best work. All these writers concentrated on bringing about a social revolution by which the people of Kerala would break away from the structural fetters that confined them. *Naalukettu*, MT's first novel, subtly but strongly indicates the social confines of the different classes' existent in Kerala. It is so widely read that it has twenty-three reprints in fourteen different languages. By its fiftieth anniversary in 2008, it had sold six hundred million prints. Even after all this time, it is still considered a classic.

Naalukettu is a story set in the early 20th century in the villages of Kerala next to where the Bharathapuzha (or nila) river flowed. It is the story of Appunni, a young boy who belongs to a Nair tharavad in MT's native village. Appunni's childhood is filled with social misery as he is brought up without the care and protection of a father or the prestige of the matrilineal home to which he belongs. He is well aware of the grand 'naalukettutharavad' to which he belongs and knows exactly what he is being denied. When he visits his house, he is thrown out and he goes on to buy the tharavad that he was thrown out of. Through this journey he fights his own wars

with anger, vengeance, solitude and puberty. It is the story of the struggles of a young boy who sees through a looking glass his rightful life which he is denied and goes on to work hard enough to cross over all the hurdles.

On the surface is the main plot of the story which is Appunni, his life, his perseverance and finally his triumph. There also exists many subplots like Appunni's Amma who narrates her story of how she ran away from the tharavad with the man she loves, the story of Vakil Kumarn Nair as he tries to keep up to his father's name, the friction between Valia Ammaaman and Kutta Ammaaman which builds up for many years, the story of Appunni and Ammini Edathi, Sankaran Nair and Appunni's Amma, Syedalikutty and Appunni's Achan, etc. It is a combination of the main plot and the many subplots that prove this novel to be well-written. What MT has also done, is giving every one of his characters a unique characteristic. While they all still fall under a single archetype, they each have something that differentiates them from the other characters. Appunni does not really fall under the archetype and neither do his parents but the rest of his family on his mother's side live under the same rules that have been set by society. Each one of these characters represents the different kind of people that one will meet if a trip to Kerala is made

The Nair community in Kerala plays a major role in the novel. They also play an integral role in the history and culture of Kerala. They are considered to be the warrior class, much like the samurai in Japan. Nairs are not just a caste but they are considered to be a race with many sub-castes. Based on their sub-caste, they can be found in all walks of life. The characters of *Naalukettu* belong to this prestigious community. And as mentioned, they are all from different walks of life. There are the high class Nairs who belong to Naalukettus, Ettukettu and Pathinarukettutharavads like Appunni's Amma's family and Valia Ammaaman's wife's family

who live at Poonthotam. These were the rich farmers and cultivators of land. The next in the hierarchy of Nair's are the working class which includes people like Vakil Kumaran Nair and Syedalikutty. The people from this class worked as lawyers, teachers, vendors, etc. The last in the Nair hierarchy came the people that worked under the above two classes. In the novel, Appunni's Achan, Kondunni Nair, Sankaran Nair, Parukutty (Appunni'samme), etc. While they knew all the other Nair's from the other fractions of their society, norms of society kept them from interacting with one another.

Another theme of the novel is the Marumakkathaayam (matrilineal) joint family. The Nairs are well known around the world for being the one of the few Marumakkathaayam societies still existing. It is taken as an example in every paper that is written. But what people other than the Nair's do not understand is that this idea of a Marumakkathaayam Nair society is just a farce. If one was to ever meet a Nair at home, it would be crystal clear who the head of the house was. This farce is clearly portrayed in *Naalukettu*. Parukutty's matrimonial decisions were taken by her father, not her mother. When she runs away with Kondunni Nair, it is her father who decides to make her funeral arrangements, against the wishes of her mother, and makes the entire family pretend like she had died. When Appunni comes back to the tharavad, it is Valia Ammaaman who throws him out. When he returns for the second time, it is again Valia Ammaaman who slaps Appunni and tries to throw him back on the street again. Valia Ammaaman is the head of the Naalukettu, not his wife. When the quarrel over power in the Naalukettu takes place, it is both the men of the house who fight while their wives sit back and pray that everything should soon subside. The women in the Naalukettu have to go to Valia Ammaaman to get any kind of finances that they may require for the household. Every week, it is the male head of the house's duty to measure out the rice and gothume that would be required

for the rest of the week and give it to their wives. It was also believed that a male head of the house had beaten a girl to death because he had found a strand of her hair in his food. Once *Naalukettu* is read, there really is no question about the clear how there is no matrilineal characteristics in the Nair community.

Naalukettu can also be called a novel of revenge. Initially it is Appunni's thirst for revenge with regard to Syedalikutty. Kondunni Nair, Appunni's father, was poisoned by Syedalikutty when he had Kondunni had gone for dinner one night. Appunni was very young and he grew up hearing stories about how Syedalikutty had killed his father. This made him hate Syedalikutty. He spent many nights plotting to kill him. The book even starts off with Appunni thinking about how one day he would be strong enough to take Syedalikutty's life with his bare hands. Later, Appunni turns all that hatred towards Valia Ammaaman who had caused him so much embarrassment when he first went to the tharavad. He had been shouted at, insulted and thrown out on the street by Valia Ammaaman. He swears to himself that someday he'd take his revenge on that old aalu. Also, Kutta Ammaaman's anger with Valia Ammaaman holds certain characteristics of revenge. Kuttahas been treated badly all his life by Valia Ammaaman. Although they share the same blood, the latter is treated like royalty while the former is made to earn every penny on the field. Kutta's and his daughter are treated like servants in their own home. His anger, which builds up over many years, induces him to attempt to steal Valia Ammaaman's power from him.

The relationship between mother and her son also plays a vital role in *Naalukettu*. For most of her life, Parukutty is forced to look after Appunni on her own. She has no one to turn to or ask for assistance. Appunni too has only his mother and until much later in the novel, he doesn't have any friends. As a child, Appunni got used to the idea of just him and his mother

against the world. Parukutty worked hard during the day to make enough money to make ends meet and most times, she ended up borrowing from her neighbors. Appunni was well aware of his mother's situation and he was a good child in return, not causing any trouble and studying well. When Appunni feels that someone else is encroaching on his space with his mother, he is very distressed. He had no intention of making their bubble a trio. To him, Sankaran Nair was a source of embarrassment to his mother and him. He refuses to talk to Sankaran Nair or have anything to do with him. When he thinks that his mother no longer needs him, he is so upset that he runs away from home believing that his mother would be happier. It is not till seven years later that he understands that his mother had no one to turn to or lean on. She went through so much pain to provide him with an education, and he had abandoned her without thinking of how she would feel about. At that time all he wanted was to hurt her and as he understands the suffering of his mother, he understands the extent of his actions. He goes back to his mother, this time with the Naalukettu in his name and takes her back to the one place she thought she would never go ever again.

Naalukettu can also be considered a Bildungsroman novel as it documents the growth of Appunni from when he was a little boy till when he is much older. It first portrays Appunni as a lost young boy who knows what his life was supposed to be like with all the luxuries in the world but because of fate his mother works day and night to put food on the table and he is denied all the luxuries that he has the right to. When he hears of an opportunity to witness a sarpamthullal was to be held at the tharavad, his little heart is filled with joy. Even the furthest of relatives were invited; he would definitely be welcome there too. He did not think of the consequences that him going back the tharavad would have. He tags along with Muthaachi. At the Naalukettu, he is ignored by almost everyone except some people like Malu and Ammaama.

He is very hurt when he is threatened and thrown out of the Naalukettu. It is from then on, that Appunni begins to grow. He begins to think like a teenager. Everything that other people say affects him. He wants to move to a more respected and expensive school; he doesn't want to talk to Malu or Ammaama when he walked past the Naalukettu and he didn't want Sankaran Nair around his mother. When he runs away from his home and takes refuge at the tharavad, he is much more mature with the way he handles the situation there. He stays out of everyone's way and just enjoys being where he belongs. Later, he goes on to pass his school and gets a well-paying job with the help of Syedalikutty with whom Appunni is now good friends. He comes back to his village with a new perspective on the incident with his mother and the incidents at the Naalukettu. He is also very intelligent as he helps in every way, he can those who were there for him when he was young and refuses to help anyone that was mean to him. He even buys the Naalukettu back. It shows how much Appunni has grown in the span of a couple years and how he has grown to be a better man.

The novel also helps the readers understand the power that money had. Everyone knows that it is important but, in the novel, the more money one had, the more he or she was respected. It is first shown with Valia Ammaaman. He is extremely well respected in the Naalukettu and by everyone else that knows of the Naalukettu. This is because he had money which meant that he had power. Another example is Appunni himself. When he comes to the tharavad the first two times, he is despised by almost everyone barring Ammaama and Malu. When he gets a scholarship and the news of the scholarship reaches the Naalukettu, everyone realizes that they had a very intelligent boy in their midst and he would one day be rich. From then on, Appunni is respected a little more at the tharavad. He was allowed to sit with the rest of the children during meals and Meenakshi Edathi, who showed dislike towards Appunni initially, began to speak to

him without scorning. It was as if she was all of a sudden interested in Appunni's life. When Appunni returns from Syedalikutty's village after working there for five years, the entire village hears about how Parukkuty's son had finally returned and with a lot of money too. People that he had never seen him before approached him and asked for handouts claiming that they were far off relations. Kutta Nair, who was in a very bad state asked Appunni to marry Malu and Valia Ammaaman, who had never once called Appunni by his name, approached Appunni asking him for a loan of five hundred rupees to save their "family tharavad". It's astounding how all of a sudden, the same person who had hated Appunni and had never once been civil to him claimed to be a part of the same tharavad.

Naalukettu hints at the existence of karma. Everyone in the novel gets exactly what is coming to them. For all his hard work Appunni got a job and earned a handsome amount of money. His mother for all her troubles in raising her child and giving him a decent education got to re-enter her childhood home: The Naalukettu. Sankaran Nair, for being there for Parukutty when she needs him got to live in the Naalukettu with Parukutty. Syedalikutty, for killing Kondunni Nair, dies paralyzed and unable to provide for his family, but because of his attempts at making things right through Appunni, his family now has Appunni to look after their needs. For Ammaama and Meenakshi Nair, they struggle for a while but at the end Appunni is there for them as well. Kutta Nair, for fighting with his older brother over material goods and power ends up without the Naalukettu or anything with which to fend for his daughter. And Valia Ammaaman, for the way he has ill-treated Appunni, loses the Naalukettu, and his fortune and finds himself in the situation where he had to approach Appunni for money. Readers are left with the feeling that if they did good, eventually, good will come to them.

In *Naalukettu*, one could also say, is a highly sociological novel. It traces the events from when Kerala was a highly conservative society to when we see the first hint of modernism. It's almost as if the changes taking place in Appunni's life run parallel to the changes taking place in society. *Naalukettu* portrays the gradual decline and disintegration of the matrilineal joint family in system. By the 1930's, Marumakkathaayam was banned by law in Kochi and Malabar. There were many partitions in the family fortune as the heads of the family lost their authority and the younger generations initiated legal proceedings. Education became more important in Kerala with every generation being taught English. Inter-caste and inter-class marriages became slightly more common, although it was and is still looked down on by many. The idea of God existing in everything and the belief in praying subsided.

MT through *Naalukettu* has brought to the world a truly remarkable story of self-discovery and social understanding. His note at the beginning of the novel explaining the love he has for his village is a more intimate one. While many people argue that the "organic romance" characteristic and his ability to express beautifully has been lost in translation. The true meaning of the novel has not changed and that makes reading it much more enjoyable.