

# Mindsapes

**VOLUME IV**  
**IV Semester BA Optional English**  
**(Indian Writing in English Translation)**  
**And**  
**Facets of Language**



**Editor**  
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**PRASARANGA**  
**BENGALURU CITY UNIVERSITY**  
**Bengaluru**

**Mindscales – IV:** Optional English Textbook for IV Semester BA coming under Faculty of Arts, Bengaluru City University, prepared by the Members of the Textbook Committee, Bengaluru City University and Published by Bengaluru City University Press.

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## FOREWARD

It is my pleasure to present *Mindscales IV*, the Optional English textbook for IV Semester BA, under Faculty of Arts, Bengaluru City University, Bengaluru. This is a textbook comprising selections, which give historic and social perspective of literature and a language component, giving an insight to usage of language. This book is the result of the initiative taken by the Members of the Board of studies of Bengaluru City University and the members of the Textbook Committee.

I congratulate all the members for their efforts in bringing out this text which is the result of an earnest effort on their part. I thank the Editor Dr Chitra Panikkar and the Director of the Bengaluru City University Press and each member of the committee involved in bringing out this text on time.

Wish and hope that the students would make fullest use of this text and that it kindles their interest in English Literature and Language.

**Prof. Lingaraja Gandhi**  
Vice-Chancellor  
Bengaluru City University  
Bengaluru-560 001.

## PREFACE

The Optional English Textbook for IV Semester BA, Mindscales – IV, introduces undergraduate students to a marvelous selection of Indian Writing in English Translation. The first four modules honor conventional genre-based divisions like poetry, fiction, drama, and prose of Indian Writing in English Translation, while the fifth module has its focus on language.

The essence of India lies in the plurality of its culture. India is richly multilingual, and each language represents a different culture and a set of differing social practices. These variants are often recorded in the literature produced by these languages. The selections in this textbook are translated pieces, and each one testifies to the cultural diversity that marks the unified idea of India. The presentation and discussion of each literary piece facilitates a movement from appreciative analysis to incisive critiquing. The language section of the book is specially structured to accommodate functions of language that aid literary study. This section also introduces students to discourse analysis.

I would like to thank the Chairperson and her team of teachers who have worked relentlessly to put together this textbook. I thank the Vice Chancellor and the Registrar of BCU for their consistent support. I also thank the Prasaranga, Bengaluru City University, Bengaluru, who helped us to bring out the book in time.

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## *About the Text*

‘**Mindscapes IV**’ is the Optional English Textbook for the second semester students of the newly formed Bengaluru City University. This book comprises literary narratives representing Indian Literatures of various states, languages, and cultures in English Translation. The study of these literary selections gives students a bird’s eye view of our literatures and culture. Students learn about the culture and social practices of other states through these selections. This book comprises poetry, fiction, drama, Short stories, and Facets of Language. The selections follow a brief introduction of Indian Writing in English Translation. Each Literary selection has a brief biography of the poet/author and the facts responsible for the creation of the literary piece.

### **OBJECTIVES**

- To introduce the literatures of the country to the students, Students of one region will learn about the literatures of other regions.
- to understand the social fabric of Indian society and the cultural unity of its people and enable students propagate discussions on the constraints and challenges encountered in articulating Indian sensibilities and to analyze gender issues in the Indian scenario.
- Discourse analysis a research method for studying written or spoken language in relation to its social context enables students to understand how language is used in real life situations.

This Textbook is the result of an earnest effort of the Editor Dr. Chitra Panikkar, the members of the Board of studies, members of the Textbook Committee.

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## **Indian Literature in English Translation: An Introduction**

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*(Extended Reading)*

Indian Literature in English Translation (ILET) is rapidly becoming an indispensable component of literary and cultural studies in India. Given the multilingual composition of Indian society and the status of English as one of its two official languages, state patronage of ILET is inevitable and, predictably, the two state-funded agencies set up for the promotion of Indian literature, the Sahitya Akademi and the National Book Trust, have earnestly advocated the cause of ILET. A greater impetus to its growing importance comes however from certain profound sociological changes affecting India. One of these changes is that the spread of education during the last fifty years has been phenomenal in scale. At present there are about a hundred and ninety universities and more than seven thousand colleges providing low-cost or cost-free education to all classes of Indian society. As a result, aspirants from all levels and classes of the population have started publishing literary works in Indian languages, giving rise to an unprecedented variety of literary styles, subjects, and themes. At the same time, there has emerged a substantial class of Indians who speak an Indian language but cannot read it well. English has been the socially privileging language in India for over a century; and the importance of English in trade and technology makes it the most attractive choice as the medium of school education. Invariably, therefore, the children sent to English medium schools need to be instructed in Indian myths, epics, and other narratives in English translation. Translation is now the bridge between the literature of the past and the present generation. It has also become the bridge between new writings in Indian languages and the new readership that is gradually losing touch with these languages.

It may be interesting then to note in passing that, at least once before in the long literary history of the Indian subcontinent, translation has played as vital a role as it is now playing. About a thousand years ago, when the modern

Indo-Aryan languages started developing into independent vehicles of literary expression, translation acquired high importance and most modern Indian languages initiated their respective literary traditions with translations of works from Sanskrit, either the epics, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, or philosophical texts like the *Gita*. From the thirteenth to the sixteenth century, there were numerous translations from one regional language to another as well as many important translations from Indian languages into Persian and Arabic, the two languages of political dominance at the time. Today literary translation in India shows a comparable vitality and the similarity between the two epochs should be of interest to sociologists and literary theorists.

Other sociological changes, such as modern means of communication, and a shift away from an agrarian society and a joint family structure, have caused a unique growth in inter-state migration with the result that traditional language loyalties are undermined, and translation as a compromise substitute for the absent original of a mother tongue becomes acceptable to the second or third generation of the linguistically dislocated. At the same time, conventions of translation which admit a large number of Sanskrit and Hindi/Tamil features at morphological and syntactic levels have emerged, making the task of translation “just for Indian audiences” less demanding. To judge from the amount of book and periodical publishing devoted to ILET, the supply of literary translations at present can be said to correspond to the demand.

One of the conspicuous features of Indian-English literature has been its anxiety over “betrayal” of the mother tongue, expressed through loud self-defensive statements and mutual accusations from writers and critics. Now that India can place a modest but justified claim on English as one of its many languages used for literary creativity, the anxiety does not relate so much to the choice of language as to the tradition within which a writer situates himself or herself. Often, and not without reasons, Indians writing in English are seen as being cut off from the long history of literature in India.

ILET however cannot be accused of being superficial, for this body of literature includes works from all periods, genres, and styles, and has the advantage of being able to circulate internationally by virtue of its being in English, as well as the “merit” of being fully representative of the country and culture of its origin.

Furthermore, an important change is taking place in English studies outside India. The romantic notion of homogeneity among various Anglophone post-colonial literatures that had given rise to the label “Commonwealth literature” is now fast making way for a more realistic understanding of the different national identities of these literatures. This transition in critical fashion implies that in future Indian-English literature will be seen more as an integral part of the mosaic of Indian literatures rather than as a part of the lame-duck group of literatures in English. The English language was considered at one time to be India’s window on the world. It is now the world’s window on India, particularly since the valuable tradition of learning Indian languages founded by European Indologists during the early colonial period has entirely declined. Hence, ILET is acquiring greater importance outside India too.

Despite the benevolence of the Sahitya Akademi and the National Book Trust, ILET has not acquired the institutional support it fully deserves, and not enough bibliographical, critical, or historical material related to it is available as yet. A history of Indian translations into English is likely to prove as complex as the history of colonization itself. In this direction a beginning has been made by Tejaswini Niranjana<sup>1</sup>. Criticism of works in translation is a branch of scholarship rather poorly developed in the West and is at best left to the critic of comparative literatures. Among the first few Indian critics to show an interest in this area are Meenakshi Mukherjee<sup>2</sup> and Krishna Rayan<sup>3</sup>. Both critics take up a range of works translated from various Indian languages and test them against a common theoretical framework. The most notable bibliography of ILET so far has been compiled by Jatindra Mohan Mohanty. Published by the Central Institute of Indian Languages,

Mysore, in 1984, it lists about seventeen hundred titles translated from all Indian languages. Ample supplementary material can be found in several works by Sujit Mukherjee, the ten volume *History of Indian Literature* edited by Jan Gonda<sup>4</sup> and the single volume *History of Indian Literature* by Sisirkumar Das.<sup>5</sup> All these pioneering works, though inadequate in many respects, point to the range and complexity of ILET.

If Nathaniel Brassey Halhed's translation of the anthology of Hindu laws, mainly drawn from the *Manusmriti*, is considered to be the first work of ILET for historical convenience, the field can lay claim to a dynamic history of a little over two centuries. Within this span of time, at a crude but conservative estimate, more than fifteen thousand Indian works of literature or literary scholarship have been translated into English by Indologists as well as by Indians. In terms of their dominant themes and orientations, the works can be said to fall into four roughly divided and overlapping phases: (1) the colonial phase (1776-1910), (2) the revivalistic phase (1876-1950), (3) the nationalist phase (1902-1929), and (4) the formalist phase (1912 to the present). It is in the last phase that we get works of literature rendered into English with translation as the primary motive. It is the translations made during this phase that are the focus of Sujit Mukherjee's somewhat theoretical book, *Translation as Discovery*.<sup>6</sup>

The colonial phase of ILET extends from Halhed's *a Code of Gentoo Laws, or Ordinations of the Pundits, from a Per-Sian translation made from the Original, written in the Sanskrit Language* (1776) to the fifty volumes of translations edited by Friedrich Max Muller, *The Sacred Books of the East, translated by various oriental scholars* (1879-1910). During this phase, translations of books on all subjects were attempted, provided they were written in Sanskrit or Persian. The colonial Indologists did not touch works written in modern Indian languages. The main interest in translating Indian works during this long period was philological and anthropological in nature, the agenda for which was set with a great clarity of vision by Sir William Jones. It was Jones's translation of Kalidasa's *Abhignanshakuntalam* which

made Kalidasa famous in Europe. However, Jones was not interested in Indian literature after the eleventh century. He looked upon the literature produced after the eleventh century as indicative of the cultural decadence in India. As a consequence, colonial Indology rarely crossed the borders of Sanskrit and Persian. It was marked by romanticism of attitude, and in fact, contributed substantially to the growth of Romanticism in Britain.<sup>7</sup> Sanskrit works of indeterminable antiquity were perceived by the colonial Indologists in terms of the Sublime, circumventing the question of literary aesthetics altogether. It was as a sharp reaction to this indiscriminate appreciation of Sanskrit works that Charles Lanman, the general editor of the Harvard Oriental Series, wrote in 1901:

It is a part of the fundamental plans of this Series that none of the texts published in it shall be without a translation. The Series does not aim to consult the interests of Sanskrit students exclusively. For better, for worse, this part of the plan is at all events in accord with the dictates of absolute frankness. The wisdom of the Wise Men of the East is to be estimated by Occidental readers with entire fairness- nothing less, nothing more. And for this reason, we may neither withhold its excellencies nor cloak its defects.

The practice of abstracting works of literature from their social contexts and history caused a lack of balance in European response to Indian literature during the nineteenth century. Western readers of Indian literature were inclined to be either Goethes or Macaulays, they experienced either ecstasy or disgust and no middle course lay open. But their limitations apart, there is no doubt that the adventurous explorations in Indian literature attempted by colonial Indology helped to revive numerous Sanskrit texts that had ceased to engage popular interest in India.

The revivalistic phase of ILET was a natural fall-out of colonial Indology. A century after Halhed's *Laws*, Sir Ramakrishna Gopal Bhandarkar published his critical edition of Bhavabhuti's *Malatimadhav* (1876). Between Halhed and Chandarkar stands a whole tradition of Historical Linguistics, sprung from Halhed's grammar of Bengali (1786) and reflected in Bhandarkar's editorial procedures. The major difference between the colonial and the revivalistic translations was that, in the latter case, it was often an Indian

scholar with ready access to Indian traditions of texts and meanings who did precisely the same kind of work as the foreigner had done in the past. The most remarkable of these scholars was Ananda Coomaraswamy (1877-1947), but there were also many dedicated specialists as well as inspired visionaries whose translations were either philologically accurate to the last detail, as in numerous texts on poetics, or interpretatively liberal, as in the renderings by occultists, godmen, and social radicals. Two useful bibliographies of the works on poetics translated during this phase have been compiled by K. Krishnamoorthy in *Comparative Indian Literature*,<sup>8</sup> and Edwin Gerow in *Indian Poetics*.<sup>9</sup> As for the liberal translations, it would be interesting to study several versions of one text. The plays of Kalidasa, Bhavabhuti and Bhasa, for example, were translated several times. Similarly, the Gita went through a large number of translations and, in 1896 alone, three different versions of it were published in London. They were Edwin Arnold's very popular *The Song Celestial; or Bhagwad-Gita (from the Mahabharata) being a discourse between Arjuna, Prince of India, and the Supreme under the form of Krishna*; the Theosophist Annie Besant's *The Bhagwad Gita*; and Mohini Chatterji's *The Bhagwad Gita; or, The Lord's Lay, with commentary and notes, as well as references to the Christian scriptures*. With so much of Indian metaphysics in circulation in the Western world, it is not surprising that English and American poets writing in the early twentieth century, for instance W.B. Yeats and T.S. Eliot, should borrow frequently from Indian texts. It was Yeats moreover who said that the ultimate aim of his life was to write a poem like the Gita.

The more important achievement of ILET during the revivalistic phase, however, was the recovery of treatises on poetry, drama, and language. The works of ancient Indian theorists had been entirely neglected by the poets and scholars of the intervening centuries. It was during the revivalistic phase that many of these were edited, printed, and translated into English. If modern Indians can today talk about Panini, Bhartrihari, Bharata, Abhinavagupta, Vishwanatha and others, it is thanks to the translations

carried out by scholars such as Bhandarkar, M. Hiriyanna and Ananda Coomaraswamy.

Initially, these translations were aimed at the Indologists who could read Sanskrit, or Indian students of Sanskrit who could read English. The sociology of readership was reflected in the technology of production which created the orthographic and typographic conventions in publishing Sanskrit-to-English translations and standardized phonetic transliteration of Indian languages. The typography of the revivalists which combined English and Indian words is perhaps the first important step in the process of Indianization of English.

If the colonial translations were aimed at the overseas reader and the revivalistic at the expert, the translations during the third phase were aimed at a general Indian readership. This phase can be said to begin with the essays which Sri Aurobindo wrote between 1897 and 1904 on translation, with particular reference to translating Vyasa, Valmiki and Kalidasa,<sup>10</sup> and to end with the serialized publication of Mahatma Gandhi's autobiography translated by Mahadev Desai, *An Autobiography or the story of my experiments with truth* (first published as *The Story of My Experiments with Truth*, 1927-29). Because the translators had Indian audiences in mind, these translations are not cluttered with notes, explanations, and other editorial paraphernalia. Moreover, with the nationalist phase of ILET the principle of the translator's impersonality seems to have entered the practice of translation in India. The best-known translation of this phase is obviously Tagore's own English rendering of his verses under the title *Gitanjali* (1912). Like translations of the *Gita* earlier, *Gitanjali* was issued in several editions, and translations into other languages were attempted quickly after the English translation was first published. Andre Gide, for instance, produced a French version of *Gitanjali* in the same year as the English version was published. It was this translation of a slender book of Bangla poems, a translation not regarded as satisfactory by its publisher, Macmillan, and its promoters, William Rothenstein and W.B. Yeats, which helped to bring the



award of the Nobel prize for literature in 1913 to India, the only Nobel prize for literature awarded to an Indian author so far. Sri Aurobindo, Tagore, and Gandhi were at the very forefront of Indian nationalism, and their works, translations, and attitudes to translation display an unmistakable awareness of selfhood and native traditions. As such, during this phase, ILET stepped out of the boundaries of Sanskrit and Persian, and turned a part of its attention to the great saint poets of medieval India. Gandhi used the rhymes of Narsi Mehta and Meera (Gujarati and Hindi) as a symbolic means of translating India into modernity. Tagore translated the *dohas* of Kabir, turning these terse aphoristic lyrics into intimate, romantic poems of religious evocation. One gets the impression that Tagore took away the spinning-wheel to the accompaniment of which Kabir composed his lyrics and replaced that with a beautiful organ. The majesty of Tagore's Kabir cannot be overlooked. What is important, however, is that Tagore chose a Hindi poet to translate. As for Sri Aurobindo, he was at home in various languages, including Latin, Sanskrit, French, Tamil, Gujarati and Bangla, and his translations are now available in a single volume as part of his *Collected Works*. All these translations mentioned above did something more than merely turn towards medieval languages. They founded a register of English for use in the context of an Indian language-English translation. After the nationalist phase of ILET, it became possible for Indian translators to render into English without much difficulty Indian works dealing with romance, spiritual longing, pathos, and the romantic aspects of Indian landscape.

Tagore's unexpected success as a translator aroused in him the desire to present his other works - plays, poems, stories, novels - through English translations to the world at large. Therefore, after *Gitanjali*, he started publishing his own translations through Macmillan; and these are now the subject of many research projects. There have been, on the other hand, several attempts to out-do Tagore in translating Tagore. Whatever the relative merits of Tagore's own translations, he undoubtedly made a lasting impact on other Indian writers. It is possible to consider, as such, 1912 as the

beginning of the formalist phase of ILET in India, for since then, following Tagore, Indian translators have turned to translating contemporary Indian works.

The emergence and growth of Indian-English literature has contributed to the growth of ILET in two important respects during this century. First, and the more important, creative writers have invented modes of representing Indian turns of speech, shades of feeling and facets of social manners, thus creating a ready language to be used by the translators. After reading G.V Desani, Raja Rao, and Salman Rushdie, the reader of translations from Indian languages is less likely to find the translation register affected, unEnglish, and alternatively un-Indian. The second contribution of IndianEnglish literature to ILET springs from the fact that many Indians writing in English have often been able translators too. Among them are: Sri Aurobindo, R.C. Dutt, Rabindranath Tagore, Nissim Ezekiel, Raja Rao, R.K. Narayan, P. Lal, Gauri Deshpande, A.K. Ramanujan, Jayanta Mahapatra, Arvind Krishna Mehrotra, Gieve Patel, Saleem Peeradina, Dilip Chitre, Arun Kolatkar, Kamala Das and Khushvant Singh.

The majority of Indian works translated into English during the last seventy-five years has been works of fiction, beginning with the ten-volume translation by N.M. Penzer of Somadeva's *Kathasaritasagar*<sup>11</sup> and moving towards *Katha India*, an annual commencing in 1991 of best Indian stories translated into English by a voluntary organization. Many of the important writers writing in Indian languages have been translated into English so that at least a short representative piece by each is available and Indian readers have access to the writings of Tagore, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, Sarat Chandra, T.S. Pillai, U.R. Anantha Murthy, Premchand, Suresh Joshi, Raoji Patel, Nirmal Verma and so on. The formal range of these translations is widening, as is evident from recent translations of detective fiction, fantasy, short fiction, and philosophical prose.<sup>12</sup>

In contrast to fiction, drama is poorly represented in English translation. Fewer ancient plays have been translated in this century than in the

nineteenth. Among the more notable efforts should be mentioned Manomahan Ghosh's translation of Rajashekhar's *Karpurmanjiri*, a prakrit play of the *shataka* type, written in the forerunner of the Marathi language in the tenth century. While the earlier translation by Konow and Lanman (1901) had been far from satisfactory, Ghosh's translation shows a greater cultural and linguistic understanding of the theme and has appropriately run into several editions. The translator has to his credit also the most authoritative translation of Bharata's *Natyashastra*, the second-century compendium on performing arts that founded Indian theatrical traditions. *Karpurmanjiri* itself is important as being the only play extant in the Maharashtri prakrit. Other outstanding translations of dramatic works are by J.A.B. van Buitenen, who has also translated from the *Mahabharata*. The two plays he has translated, *Mricchakatika* of Shudraka and *Mudrarakshasa* of Vishakhadatta, belong to the classical Sanskrit period and are among the very best examples of Indian literature. In Buitenen's versions, respectively *The Little Clay Cart* and *The Minister's Seal*, the political complexity and turbulence of ancient Indian society, the ferocity of the conflicts between Buddhism and Hinduism, and the trials of the intellect and love come alive.<sup>13</sup> The publication of *Three Modern Indian Plays* in 1989 by Oxford University Press, suggests that some improvement in the publishing of this branch of ILET is round the corner. This anthology reproduces Badal Sircar's *EvamIndrajit* translated by Girish Karnad, Kamad's *Hayavadana* translated by the playwright himself, and Vijay Tendulkar's *Silence, the Court is in Session* translated by Priya Adarkar. These translations are polished without being unfaithful to the original. It is to be hoped that, in due course, there will be translations of works by Habib Tanvir and Chandrashekar Kambar, from Hindi and Kannada respectively, both of whom make innovative use of folk traditions; by Satish Alekar and Mahesh Elkunchwar from Marathi; and Bhupen Khakar and Sitanshu Yashchandra from Gujarati. Safdar Hashmi, who died very young in 1989, having been brutally assaulted in the middle of a performance by his political opponents, popularized the *sheri nataka*, a

form of street theatre. His works are now being made available by the Hashmi Trust in Delhi. Generally speaking, the audience for English theatre in India is almost non-existent, though the readership for printed English is very large. Translation of plays may have to wait for the day when English becomes a truly spoken language in India, or else for an “India” wave in theatre in London and New York. At the moment the few Indian plays available in English are published by Oxford University Press in its Three Crown Series or by Orient Longman.

Translations of poems and poets are plentiful. As in every century in the past, the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana* have been given several renderings, including some in limpid prose by C. Rajagopalachari and R.K. Narayan. P. Lal has been translating Sanskrit classics for the last two decades. Similarly, the ancient Tamil lyrics have been given a polished modern form by A.K.Ramanujan in several of the anthologies of translations he has published. Along with Tamil lyrics, Ramanujan has tried his hand at some medieval Kannada lyrics by a group of radical saints known as the Lingayata and who belonged to a pan-Indian movement for social, philosophic, and literary reforms. Other medieval poets who have been translated are Meera, Kabir, Tulsidas, Surdas, Nanak, Tukaram, Chandidas, Dhyanadev, and the non-Hindu, Amir Khushrau. Ghalib of the nineteenth century has been translated at least three times over; and readers of Indian English poetry may have noticed a moving poem inspired by a translation of Ghalib’s letters in Vikram Seth’s *All You Who Sleep Tonight*. As for contemporary Indian poets, several collections, and anthologies of Indian writing in English translation have been published. The more accessible among them are those edited by Adil Jussawalla (Penguin, 1974), Amritjit Singh & David Ray (Swallow Press, 1983), Nissim Ezekiel and Meenakshi Mukherjee (Penguin, 1990). Two brilliant and recent collections are, first, *Truth Tales: Contemporary Writing by Indian Women*.<sup>14</sup> Edited by Kali for Women, a political programme and a publishing house, it contains six long stories in translation and one written originally in English and the authors included are:

Mahasveta Devi (Bangla), Ila Mehta (Gujarati), Suniti Aphale (Marathi), Mrinal Pande (Hindi), Laxmi Kanan (Tamil), Ismat Chughtai (Urdu) and Vishwapriya Iyengar (English). Second, there is Susie Tharu and K. Lalita's two volume *Women Writing in India*,<sup>15</sup> which covers practically all languages of India and an impressive span of two thousand and six hundred years. These two volumes, it is expected, will influence theoretical approaches to women's studies. More immediately, they show that Indian translators have at last found an aesthetic route of diachronic translations; in Tharu and Lalita, no longer do translations make the readers aware of the distance between themselves and the original works.

In recent decades, Indian periodicals have invariably provided space for translations. *Vagartha*, edited by Meenakshi Mukherjee, gave prominence to translations. *Setu*, edited by Suresh Joshi, was entirely devoted to translation of Indian literatures. At present, *Kavyabharati*, edited by R.P. Nair, and *Bombay Literary Review*, edited by Vilas Sarang, carry translations regularly; other journals, like *The Commonwealth Quarterly*, *Indian Literary Review* and *New Quest*, are also hospitable to translations. *Indian Literature*, published by the Sahitya Akademi, is committed to translating literature from Indian languages. The Sahitya Akademi also publishes translation titles and has recently introduced a Translation Prize for every language. Other spirited efforts are made by publishers such as Bharat Bhavan (Bhopal), Katha-India (Delhi), and Garutman (Lucknow). At a commercially more ambitious scale, Penguin India has given a boost to ILET.

During the nineteenth century the number of works translated from English (or through English) literature into Indian languages used to exceed several times over the number of Indian works translated into English. That situation has now changed, and the opposite is true today. Of course, what ILET represents of Indian literatures is just the tip of the iceberg; even so, the future of ILET appears to be very promising.

An overseas reader is likely to find ILET a somewhat confusing field when newly exposed to it because it comprises numerous literary periods, genres,

and language traditions, with very specific local histories behind them. For instance, the two thugs in Kamad's *Tughlaq* are drawn after the traditional pair of characters called *akara* and *makara*, while the plots of his *Hayavadana* and *Nagmandala* are derived from traditional stories from non-Kannada sources. But, when the hero in Tendulkar's *Sakharam Binder* shouts at the imaginary people outside the stage, he is following a style of characterization developed by the *tamasha* form of folk drama. When the narrator in *Rag Darbari* by Shrilal Shukla sleeps on the roof of the house, he is following a social practice well known in the central India.<sup>16</sup> A novelist from Kerala will not document such a detail because the roofs of houses in Kerala are slanting. It is desirable for the new readers of ILET to keep initially to the translations of literature from a single language or a group of associated languages. It will be easier to make sense of the strategies of style and structure if one were to follow a specific literary tradition in India. Indian languages, like languages elsewhere, have a remarkable sense of continuity. One finds a proverb like "you don't need a mirror to see your own bracelets" in *Karpurmanjiri*, tenth-century Marathi, as well as *The Wild Bapuof Garambi*, a twentieth-century work. On the other hand, there can be amazing variations in style among the different languages belonging to the same chronological period. In order to help the new readers of ILET I will present here a brief outline of the major Indian languages.

Indian literature is written in languages belonging to two families of languages, the Indo-Aryan and the Dravidian. The mother of the Dravidian family is the Tamil language with a continuous literary tradition from tenth century B.C.. From Tamil emerged Kannada around the fourth century A.D., but its literary tradition stems from the eighth century. Malayalam from the eleventh century, and Telugu from the fourteenth century, are the two later literary traditions in the Dravidian family. The Indo-Aryan family of modern Indian literatures comes out of a complicated synthesis of Sanskrit with various offshoots (*apabhrarcsh*) of Sanskrit itself as well as the older local dialects. In the north-east, Sanskrit gave rise to Bangla and Assamiya in the

eleventh century, and Criya in the thirteenth or the fourteenth century. The literatures of these three languages can be treated together as one group (though at present very violent conflicts are going on in the north-east about linguistic and racial differences). In the north-west, Sanskrit gave rise to Punjabi in the fifteenth century, to Kashmiri in the eleventh, to Sindhi in the fifteenth. In the central parts of India, the dialects of Sanskrit developed into a more or less common language called Hindi from the thirteenth century onwards. In the West, it gave rise to Rajasthani, which is close to Hindi, in the fifteenth century; and prior to that Sanskrit split into Marathi and Gujarati in the eleventh century. A student of ILET will be well advised to keep to one manageable group of languages in order to appreciate the strength both of the original as well as the translation. From among the Dravidian languages, the literatures in Tamil, Malayalam and Kannada have been well translated, and from among the Indo-Aryan languages, the literatures in Hindi, Bangla, and Marathi. I will conclude this survey of ILET by introducing some of the works from Marathi available in English translations.

The most outstanding translation of any Marathi work or author so far has been Dilip Chitre's rendering of Tukaram's poems, *Says Tuka*.<sup>17</sup> Tukaram is perhaps the greatest Indian poet, and certainly the greatest Marathi poet. He lived and wrote in the seventeenth century and his poetry is of a highly experimental value. His profound and radical vision of life has helped to make Marathi society what it is. Chitre spent about thirty years producing this translation of Tukaram's verses. Earlier on he had translated many contemporary Marathi poets and his *Anthology of Marathi Poetry*,<sup>18</sup> as well as presenting the entire spectrum of poetry written in the sixties, is still in terms of the quality of translation the best of its kind. Here are two examples of Chitre's work. First his translation of Arun Kolatkar's poem about a horse drawn by a loafer in chalk and coal:

Horse

absolutely nominal horse.

## Mindscapes IV

its source and spread obscure  
as cancer. its flesh and blood in mutiny  
against the soil.  
the curved wildfire of its anarchic ride.  
is rapid as the rumour of a raid.  
its rhyming hooves  
ring true  
and bold as bread.

And second, his translation of Bhalachandra Nemade on women's suffering:

### A Hair-Do

In the light of an oil-lamp, how  
You sat braiding your hair,  
Ten reddish feet of fingers...bare  
And avenues of hair unbound...  
O girl in anguish! How long  
Will you run?  
The feet of your fingers slip  
Over the hair.

Another important translator is Ian Raeside, whose work on Mahanubhav prose in Marathi, the prose of a sect that flourished in medieval times, has contributed much to Marathi scholarship. While Raeside is known for his translations of short fiction from Marathi (for example, *The Rough and the Smooth*) it is his translation of *Garambicha Bapu* by Sripad Narayan Pendse (1952), published as *The Wild Bapu of Garambi* (Sahitya Akademi, 1969), which is the notable achievement. This novel is based in the konkan region of coastal Maharashtra. And like all regional fiction, it speaks of the tragic aspects of the life of the characters, their struggle against society and sometimes against themselves. The Bapu of Garambi in Marathi is a character like Flaubert's Madame Bovary, a difficult character and yet central to the novelistic tradition in the language. Another important novel



translated from Marathi is Kiran Nagarkar's *Seven Sixes are Forty-three*.<sup>19</sup> Nagarkar's universe embraces various areas of Indian life as it is lived in India and also outside India and presents a whole stretch of the authentic "being" of a modern Marathi man.

Of the non-fiction works translated from Marathi, the two most outstanding are Irawati Karve's *Yuganta: The End of an Epoch*<sup>20</sup> and D.B. Mokashi's *Palkhi: An Indian Pilgrimage*.<sup>21</sup> *Yuganta* is more a revised English version than a literal translation. It presents a provocative sociological thesis worked out from the perspective of anthropology with reference to the *Mahabharata*. In the process, it offers the most penetrating analysis of the sociology, ideology, and poetry of the great Indian classic. One of its specific concerns is the status of women in ancient India which it discusses in a scientific way. These merits apart, its lucid prose and clarity of presentation make it an outstanding reading experience. *Palkhi* is a personal account of a pilgrimage that the author undertook. In Maharashtra, thousands of people from all classes, castes, and social status go on a long walk to Pandharpur, the temple town celebrated in Marathi literature through the centuries. That pilgrimage is called *vari*, and the prime place in it is given to the image of the thirteenth century Marathi poet, Dnyaneshwar, who founded the tradition of Marathi poetry. The procession carrying his image is called *Palkhi*. It is through this annual pilgrimage that Marathi poetry prior to the age of printing is kept alive. The writer of *Palkhi* decided to walk with the pilgrims and to get into their mindset and mode of sensibility. However, after he had left his town Pune, a devastating flood caused by the accidental bursting of the Panshet dam played havoc with the town. The Panshet-floods in Pune are remembered by the people even today as clearly as the violence during Partition. Mokashi's desire to understand the spiritual drive of the pilgrims in the face of the existential uncertainties created by the disaster has a rare intensity. As a narrator he is able to explore human ambivalences with a natural ease.

Of the plays translated from Marathi into English, the best known is Vijay

Tendulkar's *Sakharam Binder*.<sup>22</sup> In terms of translation-aesthetics, Priya Adarkar's rendering of Tendulkar's *Silence, the Court is in Session* is more successful; but *Sakharam Binder* is memorable for sparking off a fierce battle between the Marathi theatre and the Indian censorship board in 1973. Both plays, as other plays by Tendulkar, attack prudery among the middle classes while presenting scorching studies in violence.

Modern Marathi drama is distinguished by its tradition of great musicals. Unfortunately, no Marathi musical has been translated into English, nor is such a translation possible because there is no translation-equivalence between Indian music and Western music. On the other hand, while it may be possible to render folk drama forms like *tamasha* and *prahasan* (slapstick comedy), no attempt has been made so far.

Another area of literature that has not been translated from Marathi into English is the powerful genre of "fiction-autobiography" developed by the *dalit* writers who have brought an immense vitality to the literary language. Besides, by introducing the experience of social seclusion and deprivation into the arena of literary themes in Marathi, they have sharpened the literary sensibility of their readership. Occasional and fragmentary renderings of *dalit* writing are published in English but the representation has not amounted to any appropriate and major translation. On the other hand, at least some translations of women's writing in Marathi have appeared in English. The most outstanding of these, both as literature and as translation, is Lakshmbai Tilak's *I Follow After: An Autobiography* translated by Josephine Inkster.<sup>23</sup> Sections from this translation have been reproduced in the anthology of women's writing, edited by Susie Tharu and K. Lalita.

The critical scene in Marathi is active, that is to say active by Indian standards. Some of the important works in this genre are available in translation. The important title in this respect is B.S. Mardhekar's collection of essays *Arts and Man* published posthumously in 1954. These essays are not translated from Marathi; but they provide the context for an active critical debate that dominated Marathi criticism for over thirty years. A long essay

by R.B. Patankar regarding this debate, and other issues related to literary aesthetics in Marathi, appeared in *The Journal of Arts and Ideas* in 1985. That journal has carried from time-to-time translations of some key critical texts in Marathi, one example being Shanta Gokhale's translation of V.K. Rajwade's essay on the novel (1902) which appeared in the 1985 issue. Also, in 1985, G.N. Devy's translation of Bhalchandra Nemade's celebrated critique of the novel in Marathi was published in *Setu*. For those who are interested in samples of old Marathi prose, or in the evolution of the Marathi language, Anne Feldhaus's impressive version of a Mahanubhav biography. *The Deeds of God in Riddhipur* is an indispensable title.<sup>24</sup> Works on poetics - Marathi prosody, style, diction, etc. - have so far not been translated. However a heartening development is that several Marathi critics have started taking interest in theorizing about translation. Among those who have published systematic statements on translation theory are Vilas Sarang,<sup>25</sup> and Dilip Chitre who in his self-questioning essay, "Life on a Bridge", argues that, for a bilingual poet like himself, translation becomes an inevitable step towards defining selfhood: "If no translation was theoretically possible, it was necessary to invent one."<sup>26</sup> His argument presents the very essence of ILET.

**(Teaching Fraternity please note that this essay is an introduction to the theme and this is not for testing.)**

#### NOTES

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3. Krishna Rayan, *The Burning Bush: Suggestion in Indian Literature*, Delhi: B.R. Publishers, 1988.
4. Jan Gonda, ed., *History of Indian Literature*, Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1973-87.

5. Sisirkumar Das, *History of Indian Literature*, Delhi: SahityaAkademi, 1991.
6. Sujit Mukherjee, *Translation as Discovery*, Delhi: Allied Publishers, 1981.
7. See John Drew, *India and the Romantic Imagination*, Delhi: OxfordUP, 1986.
8. See K.M. George, ed., *Comparative Indian Literature*, Delhi: Macmillan India, 1984-86.
8. Edwin Gerow, *Indian Poetics*, Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1977.
9. See Sri Aurobindo, *Harmony of Virtue*, *Collected Works V*, Pondicherry: Birth Centenary Library, 1972.
10. Under the title *The Ocean of Stories*, it was privately printed in the 1920s for subscribers only by C.J. Sawyer Ltd., London.
11. See respectively Satyajit Ray, *The Adventures of Feluda*, trans. Chitrita Banerje, Penguin, 1988; Purnachandra Tejaswi, *Carvalho & Men of Mystery*, trans. Padma Ramachandra Sharma, Penguin 1990; Vaikom Muhammad Basheer, "Me Grandad 'Ad an Elephant! ", trans. R.E. Asher & Achamma Coilparampil Chandrasekaran, Penguin 1992; Irawati Karve, *Yuganta: The End of an Epoch*, trans. Irawati Karve, 1969; rpt. Delhi: Orient Longman, 1991.
12. Some other translations that may interest students of ILET are: Kalidasa's *Vikramorvasiya*, translated by Sri Aurobindo as *The Hero and the Nymph* and in verse, see *Collected Works*, Pondicherry: Birth Centenary Library, 1972; *Pratima Nataka* of Bhasa, translated by R.P. Kangle and F.C. Trivedi, Ahmedabad: Vasanta Press, 1927; the *Malatimadhava* of Bhavabhuti, translated by M.R. Kale, Bombay: Gopal Narayan Co., 1928; Harsha's *Nagananda*, translated by R.D. Karmarker, Bombay: Vishwanatha Co., 1923; Mahendravarman's *Matta Vilasa Prahasana*, translated by L.D. Barnett, *Bulletin of SOAS*, 5, 1930. A handy anthology, *Six Sanskrit Plays in English Translation*, edited by Henry W. Wells, New York: Asia

Publishing House, 1964, contains Shakuntala, Vikrama and Urvashi, The Toy Cart, Nagananda, The Dream of Vasavadatta, and The Later Story of Rama.

For those who are interested in humour and comedy, there is C.C. Mehta's translations of three Sanskrit comedies. Published under the title Three Sanskrit Lighter Delights, Baroda: M.S. University, 1969, it contains Bhagavad-ajjukiyam or The Monk and the Courtesan, Matta-vilasa-prahasana or The Farce of the Drunken Monk, and Ubhayabhisarika or The Infatuated Damsel. The most important anthology of Sanskrit plays in English translation to have been published in the last fifty years is P. Lal's Great Sanskrit Plays in Modern Translation, New York: New Directions, 1964, which contains six all time classics. Of Lal's translations, that of Harsha's Ratnavali is the most readable as a modern rendering. A bibliography of Sanskrit plays in English translation was compiled by V. Raghavan, Indian Literature, 3:1, 1959-60. It is waiting to be revised and updated. There is no comparable bibliography of translations of contemporary Indian plays into English.

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15. See Rupert Snell, "Rural Travesties: Shrilal Shukla's Rag Darbari", in The Journal of Commonwealth Literature, 25:1, 1990.
16. Dilip Chitre, ed., Says Tuka, Delhi: Penguin, 1991.
17. Dilip Chitre, ed., Anthology of Marathi Poetry 1945-1965, Bombay: Niramala Sadanad, 1967. Unfortunately, the work is out of print.
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21. Vijay Tendulkar, *Sakharam Binder*, trans. Shanta Shahane and Kumud Mehta, Delhi: Hind Pocket Books, 1973.
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23. Anne Feldhaus, trans., *The Deeds of God in Riddhipur*, New York, Oxford UP, 1984.
24. Vilas Sarang, *Stylistics of Marathi-English Translation*, Bombay: Bombay University, 1986.
25. Dilip Chitre, "Life on the Bridge", in *The Bombay Literary Review*, 1, 1989, p. 12.

**Poetry**

## WHERE THE NIGHT IS....

*Sant Kabir Das*

*Translated into English by Rabindranath Tagore*

Kabir Das was a 15th century Indian mystic poet and saint, whose writings influenced Hinduism's Bhakti Movement and his verses are also found in Sikkism's scripture Guru Granth Sahib. Kabir Das was born in a Muslim family in Varanasi, but was greatly influenced by his teacher, the Hindu Bhakti leader Ramananda.

A great religious reformer, the founder of a sect to which, nearly a million northern Hindus still belong, he is better known as a mystical poet. He hated religious exclusivism, and sought above all things to initiate men into the realm of liberty, of the children of God. His wonderful songs survive, which are the spontaneous expressions of his vision and his love; and it is by these songs that he makes his immortal appeal to the heart. In his poems a wide range of mystical emotions is brought into play; from the loftiest abstractions, the other-worldly passion for the Infinite, to the most intimate and personal realization of God, expressed in homely metaphors and religious symbols drawn from Hindu and Islamic beliefs. It is impossible to say that he was Brâhman or Sûfî, Vedântist or Vaishnavite. He is, as he himself says, "at once the child of Allah and of Râm." that Supreme Spirit whom he knew and adored, and to whose joyous friendship he sought to induct the souls of other men.

This version of Kabîr's songs is chiefly the work of Rabîndranâth Tagore, a great interpreter of Kabîr's vision and thought. It is based upon the printed Hindî text with Bengali translation of Mr. Kshiti Mohan Sen, who has gathered from many sources, sometimes from books and manuscripts, sometimes from the lips of wandering ascetics and minstrels--a large collection of poems and hymns to which Kabîr's name is attached, and



carefully sifted the authentic songs from the many spurious works now attributed to him.

Kabir suggests in his songs that Truth is with the person who is on the path of righteousness, considers all creatures on earth as his own self and who is passively detached from the affairs of the world. He says ‘To know the Truth, drop the ‘I’ or Ego.

About the Poem: Tagore is well known for his translation abilities and he occasionally takes liberties while translating Indian Literatures into English. Tagore says that most of the translations done by him were for his recreation.

In a letter written to William Rothenstein, 26 November 1932, Tagore writes,

“At least it is never the function of a poet to personally help in the transportation of his poems to an alien form and atmosphere ... To the end of my days I should have felt happy and contented to think that the translations I did were merely for private recreation and never for public display if you did not bring them before your readers”

In the Poem below Tagore has translated and summarized four various poems from **the section Rehkta ‘रेखता’ of Kabir Saheb Ki Shabdavali Part -I**. The original hindi works are given at the end.

In the first part of the poem below, Kabir talks about knowledge and ignorance which are exclusive of one another. He brings out the essence of Hindu philosophical belief that ‘arishadvarga’ – kama (lust), krodha (anger), lobha (greed), moha (passion), mada (pride), matsarya (jealousy), the negative characteristics of mind, prevent man from attaining Moksha. He goes on to say that it is by taking a spiritual retreat that a man can win these enemies. Kabir distinguishes between battles in the Warfield and battles one wages in life. He says that a brave warriors battle is limited to the battlefield while the struggle of a truth seeker goes on till the end of his life.

**XXXVII. s̄ur park̄as', tanh rain kah̄an p̄aiye**

Where is the night, when the sun is shining? If it is night,  
then the sun withdraws its light. Where knowledge is, can  
ignorance endure?

If there be ignorance, then knowledge must die.

If there be lust, how can love be there? Where there is love,  
there is no lust.

Lay hold on your sword, and join in the fight. Fight, O my  
brother, as long as life lasts.

Strike off your enemy's head, and there make an end of him  
quickly: then come, and bow your head at your King's Durbar.  
He who is brave, never forsakes the battle: he who flies from it  
is no true fighter.

In the field of this body a great war goes forward, against  
passion, anger, pride, and greed:

It is in the kingdom of truth, contentment and purity, that this  
battle is raging; and the sword that rings forth most loudly is  
the sword of His Name.

Kab̄ir says: "When a brave knight takes the field, a host of  
cowards is put to flight.

It is a hard fight and a weary one, this fight of the  
truth-seeker: for the vow of the truth-seeker is more hard than  
that of the warrior, or of the widowed wife who would follow her  
husband.

For the warrior fights for a few hours, and the widow's struggle  
with death is soon ended:

But the truth-seeker's battle goes on day and night, as long as  
life lasts, it never ceases.

## Glossary:

1. **King's Durbar:** God Almighty, can be interpreted as Conscience also.
2. **His Name:** God's name
3. **The battle is raging:** the battle between the good and evil traits of man
4. **Cease:** stop or end

## Suggested Questions:

1. What are the obstacles in the path of attaining God (Moksha)?
2. How does the poet prove that the truth-seeker's battle is the toughest one?
3. Discuss the metaphors embedded in the poem.
4. Comment on the contrasts built into the poem.

॥ २५ ॥

सूर परकास तहँ रैन कहँ पाइये,  
रैन परकास नहिँ सूर भासै ।  
ज्ञान परकास अज्ञान कहँ पाइये,  
होइ अज्ञान तहँ ज्ञान नासै ॥ १ ॥  
काम बलवान तहँ नाम कहँ पाइये,  
नाम जहँ हीय तहँ काम नाहीं ।  
कहँ कववीर यह सत्त वीचार है,  
समूहक विचार करि देख माहीं ॥ २ ॥

॥ शब्द २० ॥

सूर संग्राम को देखि भागै नहीं,  
देखि भागै सोई सूर नाहीं ।  
काम औ क्रोध मद लोभ से जूझना,  
मंडा घमसान तहँ खेत माहीं ॥ १ ॥  
सील औ साँच संतोष साही भये,  
नाम समसैर तहँ खूब बाजै ॥ २ ॥  
कहँ कववीर कोइ जूझिहै सूरमा,  
कायरौ भीड़ तहँ तुरत भाजै ॥ ३ ॥

॥ २७ ॥

पकरि समसैर संग्राम में पैसिये,  
देह परजंत कर जुहु भाई ।  
काट सिर वैरियोँ दाब जहँ का तहाँ,  
आय दरबार में सीस नाई ॥ १ ॥  
करत मतवाल जहँ संत जन सूरमा,  
घुरत निस्सान तहँ गगन छाई ।  
कहँ कववीर अब नाम से सुरखरू,  
मौज दरवार की भक्ति पाई ॥ २ ॥

॥ शब्द २१ ॥

साध का खेल तो बिकट बँडा सती,  
सती औ सुर की चाल आगे ।  
सूर घमसान है पलक दो बार का,  
सती घमसान पल एक लागे ॥ १ ॥  
साध संग्राम है रैन दिन जूझना,  
देह परजंत का काम भाई ।  
कहँ कववीर टुक बाग ढीली करे,  
उलटि मन गगन से जर्माँ जाई ॥ २ ॥

<https://fdocuments.in/document/kabir-saheb-ki-shabdavali-part-1.html>

## Vachana Sahitya

The Bhakti movement that flourished across various literary cultures, gave rise to a distinct genre of expression in Kannada- Vachana. Vachanas are the fulcrum of the Veershaiva religious tenet. Vachanas are free verse poems, written in Kannada. Vachanas rose within the Kannada literary tradition during the 12th century ‘sharana movement’. Vachanas did not develop with the exclusive intention of turning into a literary form, the language used by the sharanas, the content of their vachanas and the people they addressed through these vachanas, broke the existing literary canon in Kannada and consequently, brought about a defining turn in Kannada language and literature.

While the vachanas reflect various aspects of Bhakti, the vachana poets lay great emphasis on the unity of speech and action. This unity, they stressed, is central to the worship of Shiva. Thus, vachanas—these passionate dialogues in pursuit of union with the ishtadevta (sharana’s chosen form of Shiva for worship)—not only break with the existing literary tradition, but also reject social divisions, hierarchies, formal structures of learning and worship, and pursuit of worldly pleasures. Here, the unity between what one says and how one acts is central to aikya (union) with the Lord. Social integrity and reformation were the motto of the Vachana movement. It is under the Lingayat saint-poet Basavanna that the sharana movement grew expansively, turning the city of Kalyana into an important center of interaction and dialogue for the sharanas. At Kalyana, Basavanna set up the anubhava mantapa (hall of experience) with the intention of attracting the sharanas to hold important discussions around social, spiritual and political issues. Basavanna, Allama Prabhu, Akkamahadevi, Jedara Dasimayya, Molige Mahadevi, Chennabasavanna are some well-known vachana

poets. Vachanakaras came from all sections of society, a majority of them were from the marginalised castes, class and gender in 12th century Karnataka. They came from the labouring classes, such as Chowdiah, the ferryman; Madivala Machayya, the washerman; the barber Hadapada Appanna; Ketayya, the basket maker and so on.

A significant number of women were a part of this 12th century shaiva movement, creating a fertile ground for the emergence of many women vachana poets. The anubhava mantapa was a space where women came forward in discussion and debate and in the process gave birth to vachanas that present an account of their own spiritual struggle.

<https://www.sahapedia.org/the-vachanas-of-akkamahadevi-0>

## **Basavanna**



*Basavanna was born in Bagewadi, in Bagalkot district, of Karnataka. He was a philosopher and a social reformer, who fought against social evils of his time such as caste system and the ritual practices of Hinduism. His teachings and philosophy transcend all boundaries and address the universal and eternal. Basavanna was an egalitarian, who advocated a new way of life, in which divine experience was at the center of life and where caste, gender and social distinctions carried no special importance. The cornerstone of his movement*

*was the firm monotheistic belief in God as the absolute and universal supreme - Lord Shiva, and the equality and dignity of all individual beings irrespective of their social and gender status. Basavanna started his career as an accountant at Mangalaveda in the court of Kalachuri king Bijjala, and later rose to the position of Prime Minister in the court of king Bijjala. During this period, he established the Anubhava Mantapa in Kalyana.. He believed in the principle Káyakavé Kailása, Work is Worship.*

**Vachana:** Defining Vachana ‘The Form and Oral Poetics’ A. K. Ramanujan in his book *Speaking of Shiva* said

“The Sanskrit religious texts are described as ‘sruti’ and ‘smrti’. Smrti is what is remembered, what is memorable; sruti, what is heard, what is received. Virashaiva saints called their compositions vachana, or 'what is said'. Vachana, as an active mode, stands in opposition to both sruti and Smrti: not what is heard, but what is said; not remembered or received, but uttered here and now. To the saints, religion is not a spectator sport, a reception, a consumption; it is an experience of Now, a way of being. This distinction is expressed in the language of the vachanas, the forms the vachanas take.”

**About the Vachana *What is Devotion?* :** In the first vachana given here Basavanna says if one is devoted to the almighty then this devotion just gives without holding back a thing. A devotee is not possessive of material things as he is of his devoted. He is ready to share or part with anything as he values the lord more and devotion is supreme to him. Daasayya, Siriyala and Sindhu Ballala readily denounced anything they had and were ready to give away anything including their wife, child or life for the sake of lord Shankara. This is the limit of devotion where they only express their ‘devotion’ without expecting anything in return. They are contended with the lord’s love and devotion is their bliss. They don’t expect ‘Mukti’ or

Salvation which one attains only after death, but they attain it right here in their lifetime as narrated in the ‘Vedas’. They like the stars have lived for devotion and we can see these devotees in the place of stars.

Devotion is ultimate and it has brought the Lord Shiva, the almighty to the doorsteps of the Asura(rakshas) Bana who expressed his ultimate devotion to the lord.

**About the Vachana *They Plunge Wherever They See Water***

: Indians worship the rivers and trees. Many believe that rivers are sacred and plunge into them believing that their bodies are purged of deadly diseases and even sins that they commit through their lives. Indians also associate certain trees with certain Gods and they worship them. The moment they see such trees they circumambulate them and express their devotion. Basavanna finds this behavior of people irrational. People worship rivers which dry during famine and trees which wither and die someday. He is perplexed by the behavior of people who are after things which are ephemeral while they disregard the omniscient, omnipotent God Shiva.

**What is Devotion?**

What is the nature of devotion? It is like the deed of Daasayya.

What is the nature of devotion? It is like the deed of Siriyaala.

What is the nature of devotion? It is like the deed of our Ballala.

What is the nature of devotion?

Oh the Divine of Kudalasangamadeva, it is like you waiting at the door-step of Baana !

## Glossary:

**1. Dasayya: Devara Dasimayya:** Devar Dasimayya (ದೇವರದಾಸಿಮಯ್ಯ), also known as Jedara Daasimayya (ಜೇಡರದಾಸಿಮಯ್ಯ), was an Indian mid-11th century poet and vachanakaara in Kannada. His village had a Ramanatha temple among its many temples, dedicated to Shiva as worshiped by Rama, the epic hero and incarnation of Vishnu. That is why Dasimayya's signature name (ankitanama) is Ramanatha, meaning Rama's Lord, i.e. Shiva.

Dasimayya was performing intense ascetic practices in a jungle, when he claimed Shiva appeared to him. He allegedly told him to work in the practical world. As a result, Dasimayya renounced his practices and took up the trade of a weaver. He is also known as Jedar Dasimayya, "Dasimayya of the weavers". Dasimayya turned into a staunch follower of Shiva and wrote many hymns called vachanas dedicated to Lord Shiva. In this vachana, Basavanna refers to his Bhatthi and says devotion to lord Shiva made give up his practises and he wrote many vachanas dedicated to lord Shiva.  
<https://en.wikiped>

**2. Siriyala:** Siriyala was the devotee of lord Shiva. The couple were childless for a long time. Siriyala's prayers resulted in he being blessed with a son. Siriyala always fed the 'Jangamas' Lord Shiva's devotees who preach wandering all over. Lord Shiva decides to test his devotion and asks for something he does not have. Lord Shiva comes to him in disguise and requests him to serve the meat of innocent human below the age of six. Siriyala sacrifices his son to satisfy the Jangamas and feeds the meat to them. Thus was his devotion.

<http://4go10tales.blogspot.com/2012/06/siriyala.html>

## 3. Ballala:

In a village Pali of Sindhu Province, there lived a boy called Ballal son of a merchant Kalyan and wife Indumati. The boy Ballal was a staunch devotee of Ganesh. When the children found a huge rock



outside the town Ballal called it Ganesh and was worshipping the rock. When children did not come back home parents complained to Ballal's father and he came in search of him. On seeing what the children were up to, he threw the stone into the river. Later Ganesh came in the form of a Brahmin and at Ballal's behest lord Ganesh cures the village of its miseries. There is a temple there called Ballaleshwar temple which is one of the Ashtavinayakas

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Pali-Shri\\_Ballaleshwar.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Pali-Shri_Ballaleshwar.jpg)

**4. Bana:** Bana was an asura king who was a devotee of lord Shiva. His ego was so high that to curb it lord Krishna had to fight with him and won the battle. Since he was Shiva's devotee Shiva requested Krishna to forgive Bana, who now is without his ego and Lord Krishna forgave him.

<https://shaivam.org/devotees/banasura>

### Suggested Questions:

1. Elucidate the views expressed by Basavanna about 'Devotion' (Bhakti) in his Vachana, 'What is Devotion' .
2. Write short notes on the devotion (Bhakti) of
  - a. Dasayya
  - b. Siriyala
  - c. Ballala
  - d. Bana

### The original Kannada text of the vachana by Basavanna

ಭಕ್ತಿ ಎಂತಹದಯ್ಯ ? ದಾಸಯ್ಯ ಮಾಡಿದಂತಹದಯ್ಯ.

ಭಕ್ತಿ ಎಂತಹದಯ್ಯ ? ಸಿರಿಯಾಳ ಮಾಡಿದಂತಹದಯ್ಯ.

ಭಕ್ತಿ ಎಂತಹದಯ್ಯ ? ನಮ್ಮ ಬಲ್ಲಾಳ ಮಾಡಿದಂತಹದಯ್ಯ.

ಭಕ್ತಿ ಎಂತಹದಯ್ಯ ?

ಕೂಡಲಸನ್ನಮದೆವ, ನೀಬಾಣನಬಾಗಿಲಕಾದಂತಹದಯ್ಯ !.

## They Plunge Wherever They See Water

“They plunge  
wherever they see water.  
They circumambulate  
every tree they see.  
How can they know you  
O Lord  
who adore  
waters that run dry  
trees that wither?”

### Glossary:

1. **Plunge:** a sudden movement or fall forward, down, or into something
2. **Circumambulate:** to circle on foot especially ritualistically
3. **Wither:** to become dry; to lose vitality, force, or freshness
4. **Shackle:** to confine or restrain with or as if with chains

### Suggested Questions:

1. Why is Basavanna sad that people plunge into waters or circumambulate trees?
2. Where should one seek God according to Basavanna?

### The original Kannada text of the vachana by Basavanna

ನೀರ ಕಂಡಲ್ಲಿ ಮುಳುಗುವರಯ್ಯಾ  
ಮರನ ಕಂಡಲ್ಲಿ ಸುತ್ತವರಯ್ಯಾ  
ಬತ್ತುವ ಜಲವ  
ಒಣಗುವ ಮರನ  
ಮಜ್ಜಿದವರು  
ನಿಮ್ಮನೆತ್ತ ಬಲ್ಲರು ಕೂಡಲಸಂಗಮದೇವಾ.

**For hunger, there is the town's rice**  
*Akka Mahadevi (C.1130-1160)*



**About the Poet:** Akka Mahadevi was a Shivasharanee in the Veerashaiva Bhakti movement of the 12th century. She was born in 1130 in Udutadi (near Banavasi) in Shimoga district of Karnataka. Akka Mahadevi has 430 Vachanas to her credit. Veerashaiva saints like Basavanna, Sidharama and Allama Prabhu gave her the title 'Akka' (elder sister) which is an indication of her contribution to the spiritual discussion held at the "Anubhava Mantapa". She is known to have considered the god Shiva, Chenna Mallikarjuna as her husband.

Akkamahadevi is considered by modern scholars to be a prominent figure in the field of female emancipation. A household name in Karnataka, Akka Mahadevi said that she was a woman only in name and that her mind, body and soul belonged to Lord Shiva. During the time of strife and political uncertainty in the 12th century, Akkamahadevi chose spiritual enlightenment and stood by her choice. In search for her eternal soul mate, Lord Shiva, she made the animals, flowers and birds her friends and companions, rejecting family life and worldly attachment.

In his book '**Speaking of Shiva**' A.K Ramanujan says "She was recognized by her fellow-saints as the most poetic of them all, with a single symbolic action unifying all her poetry. She enlists the traditional imagery of pan-Indian secular love-poetry for personal expression. In her, the phases of human love are metaphors for the phases of mystic ascent. In this search, unlike the other saints, she involves all of nature, a sister to bird, beast and tree. Appropriately, she chose for adoration an aesthetic aspect of Siva, Siva as Chennamallikarjuna, or the Lovely Lord White as Jasmine."

**About the Poem:** Akka mahadevi who was a devotee of ‘Chennamallikarjuna’ *Lovely Lord White as Jasmine*. She considered herself betrothed to her lord and refused to marry anyone. She had rejected the King Koushika’s proposal and renounced all worldly pleasures and went out seeking her lord. She was in Kalyana the centre of Veerashaiva saints with Basavanna, Allama Prabhu and Others. She just went wandering until she reached Srishaila the place where the abode of her lord Chennamallikarjuna. A. K. Ramanujan elucidates that “In the way of bhakti, it is customary to reject privilege and comfort, and court exile and beggary - in an effort to denude oneself and to throw oneself entirely on the lord's mercy.” During her wanderings she tells us that her hunger was appeased by the shelter of the town where poor were served food, she quenched her thirst at any of the numerous tanks and wells around her and she slept in the old temples. Akkamahadevi tells us that the need of this impermanent body is very less and is fulfilled by all these sources. Her soul doesn’t need anything much, it just seeks the company of her favorite Lord Chennamallikarjuna. While the needs of this body are a few, she could have had all worldly comforts, but in her search for truth and devotion, she disregards and denounces all discomforts and is ready to beg and live on charity, only to gain the companionship of her lord, *Chennamallikarjuna, or the Lovely Lord White as Jasmine*.

**For hunger, there is the town’s rice**

For hunger,  
there is the town’s rice in the begging bowl.

For thirst,  
there are tanks, streams, wells,

For sleep,  
there are the ruins of temples.

For soul’s company  
I have you, O lord  
white as jasmine.

**Glossary:**

1. **Ruins:** the portion or bits of something left over or behind after it has been destroyed
2. **Privilege:** a special advantage or authority possessed by a particular person or group

**Suggested Questions:**

1. Who is Akkamahadevi's soul companion? Elucidate.
2. In her search for her Lord Chennamallikarjuna, what are the difficulties she faced. Explain
3. Write a critical appreciation of the poem.

## Gandhi and Poetry



### *K. Satchidanandan*

**About the Poet:** *K. Satchidanandan (1946) is a leading Indian poet writing in Malayalam, his mother tongue. He was born in Pullut, a village in the Thrissur region of Kerala, and has been living in Delhi since 1992, visiting Kerala often. He completed a Masters in English at the University of Kerala and his doctorate in post-structuralist literary theory at the University of Calicut. He then worked as a university teacher until he joined Sahitya Akademi (The National Academy of Letters, India) as the editor of the literary journal Indian Literature. From 1996 until 2006, he was Secretary of the Akademi. He then returned to teaching, retiring as Director and Professor of the School of Translation Studies and Training at the Indira Gandhi National Open University in New Delhi in 2011.*

*Beginning in the late 1960s, Satchidanandan's poetic career has crossed half a century. One of the founders of Malayalam 'after-modernist' poetry, as it is termed locally, he is noted for his universal outlook and appreciation of poetry from all over the globe, constantly opening doors for himself and others. "In Satchidanandan, one notices a great modernity, a chosen but simple terminology of immediate understanding, something like a non-rhetorical dialogue with himself and with the reader, a wealth of symbology, a fascinating smoothness of the verses, a subtle irony," wrote critic Carlo Savini in an introduction to the Italian translation of Satchidanandan's poetry. Satchidanandan's work has also been translated into Arabic, Assamese, Bengali, English, French, German, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Latvian, Marathi, Oriya, Punjabi, Swedish, Tamil, Telugu and Urdu. In turn, through translation, he has broadened the readership of many world poets and enriched the resources of Malayalam poetry.*

*A torch-bearer of the socio-cultural revolution that redefined Malayalam literature in the 1970s and '80s, Satchidanandan has always advocated the rights of the oppressed, minorities, marginalised castes and classes and women. He is a pioneer in women's*

*studies in Malayalam and is famous for his coinage of the term 'pennezhuthu' in reference to women's writing. "Poetry as I conceive it," he has said, "is no mere combinatorial game; it rises up from the ocean of the unsayable, tries to say what it cannot say, to name the nameless and to give a voice to the voiceless." Even when working within the establishment, he has always been a strong 'critical insider'. He continues his activism for a just and egalitarian society.*

*Satchidanandan has 60 books in Malayalam, including 21 poetry collections and an equal number of translations of poetry, as well as plays, essays and travelogues and four critical works in English. He is the winner of 35 awards, prizes and honours, which include four Kerala Sahitya Akademi awards (for poetry, drama, travel writing and criticism), three National Awards, the Friendship Medal from the government of Poland, a Knighthood of the Order of Merit from the government of Italy, and a Dante Medal from Italy.*

*In his review of a German translation of Satchidanandan's work, Ich Glaube Nicht an Grenzen, Wolfgang Kubin has best summed up Satchidanandan as a poet: "K. Satchidanandan is definitely not a poet who keeps aloof from the world. He is a poet on a journey. Poetry for him is a cry against all walls [ . . . ] It is his cosmopolitanism that makes Satchidanandan interesting beyond India."*

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**About the Poem:** Gandhi and Poetry, is one of Satchidanandan's amazing poems, appears in a collection of poems entitled *While I Write: New and Selected Poems* - one of his recent anthologies. The Poet creates *prosopopoeia* (a figure of speech in which an abstract thing is personified.) has personified a 'Poem' and writes about an imaginary conversation between Gandhi and the said Poem. Gandhi does not pay attention to the poem until it draws his attention. Gandhi asks the 'poem' if knows the hardships of a common man who toils in the fields or strives in his work like any other artisan.

The 'Poem' is ashamed of itself since it has come to meet a personality who has not done any of these. Since the poem wished to meet Gandhi, the man who worked for the common man, it wished that it could have been at least a bhajan, for Gandhi to notice him. The 'Poem' Had no reply to Gandhi's questions. He says he was helpless as he was born in the mouth of a hunter. First Indian great epic *Ramayana* was written by Valmiki a hunter, and later *Mahabharata* by Maharshi Vyasa son of a fisher woman. But all Indian poetry was in Sanskrit the language of royalty and other people belonging to upper strata of the society. Common man had no access to poetry. He could

neither read nor understand the language of the elite. The 'Poem' tells Gandhi that he does not know the hardships and now he is lean and starving. This refers to the fact that Sanskrit is not the language of the common man, and people speaking or writing in the language has reduced.

Gandhi wants the poem to be in a language which is accessible to all sections of the society. He wants the diction to be simple so that common man can easily comprehend it. The poet K Satchidanandan reflects the words and thoughts of Wordsworth, expressed in his preface to lyrical ballads, defending the diction used.

'Poem' is shown going back to the soil, to be discovered by a common man while he is working.

### **GANDHI AND POETRY**

One day a lean poem  
reached Gandhi's ashram  
to have a glimpse of the man.  
Gandhi spinning away  
his thread towards Ram  
took no notice of the poem  
waiting at his door,  
ashamed at not being a bhajan.  
The poem now cleared his throat  
And Gandhi glanced at him sideways  
through those glasses that had seen hell.  
"Have you ever spun thread?" he asked,  
"Ever pulled a scavenger's cart?  
Ever stood in the smoke of  
An early morning kitchen?  
Have you ever starved?"

The poem said: "I was born in the woods,  
in a hunter's mouth.  
A fisherman brought me up  
in a cottage.  
Yet I knew no work, I only sing.



First, I sang in the courts:  
then I was plump and handsome  
but am on the streets now,  
half-starved.”

“That’s better,” Gandhi said  
with a sly smile. “But you must give up this habit  
of speaking in Sanskrit at times.  
Go to the fields. Listen to  
The peasants’ speech.”  
The poem turned into a grain  
and lay waiting in the fields  
for the tiller to come  
and upturn the virgin soil  
moist with new rain.

### Glossary:

1. **Scavenger:** Manual **scavenging** refers to the unsafe and manual removal of raw (fresh and untreated) **human** excreta from buckets or other containers
2. **hunter’s mouth:** Refers to **Maharshi Valmiki** who wrote *Ramayana* was once a hunter.

<https://detcher.com/story-of-valmiki-how-sage-narada-helped-a-dacoit-to-be-a-maharshi>

3. **fisherman brought me:** Refers to **Maharshi Vyasa** who wrote the great epic *Mahabharata*. Vyasa Maharshi is the son of Sathyavathi, a fisherman’s daughter

<https://www.vyasaonline.com/encyclopedia/satyavati/>

4. **I only sing.**

**First, I sang in the courts:**

**then I was plump and handsome**

: Refers to the fact that usually Brahmin poets would write poems Eulogizing

the kings, and thus receiving rich rewards. This has made the singer and the song plump and handsome.

*Reference:* *Prosopopoeia* <https://ifioque.com/figures-of-speech/trope/prosopopoeia>

**Suggested Questions:**

1. How does Gandhi and poetry bring out the history of the development of poetry in India?
2. Bring out the significance of Gandhi's questions in the poem Gandhi and poetry?
3. Does the poem succeed in bringing out Gandhi's major preoccupation?

## The Song of the Bird



**By G.S. Shivarudrappa**

*Dr. G.S. Shivarudrappa (Kannada: ಜಿ.ಎಸ್. ಶಿವರುದ್ರಪ್ಪ) is a Kannada poet, writer and researcher who was awarded the title of Rashtrakavi by the Government of Karnataka on November 1, 2006.*

**Early Life:** *G.S. Shivarudrappa was born in Shikaripura, in Shivamogga district of Karnataka. His father was a schoolteacher. Mr. Shivarudrappa who is a known "Navodaya" poet has made a lasting contribution to the Kannada literature. He was born on 7<sup>th</sup> February 1926, Mr. Shivarudrappa has worked as a Kannada professor at the Maharaja College of Mysore and later at the Postgraduate Kannada Department of Bangalore University. He received the Central Sahitya Akademi Award in 1984 for his contribution to Kannada Literature. He has also bagged several awards including the Karnataka State Sahitya Academy and Soviet Land Nehru Award. He presided over the Akhil Bharatiya Kannada Sahitya Sammelana held in Davanagere in 1992.*

**Education:** *Prof. Shivarudrappa completed his B.A. in 1949 and M.A. in 1953 from University of Mysore and has secured three gold-medals. He was a student and follower of Rashtra Kavi Kuvempu and was intently motivated by Kuvempu's literary works. In 1965, G.S. Shivarudrappa was awarded a doctorate for his thesis Soundarya Sameekshe (Kannada: ಸೌಂದರ್ಯಸಮೀಕ್ಷೆ), which he achieved under the guidance of Kuvempu.*

**Professional Life:** *Dr. G.S.S started his career in 1949 as a lecturer in Kannada language at the Mysore University. He was later invited to serve as Reader at the Osmania University Hyderabad until 1966.*

*In 1966, Dr G.S.S joined the Bangalore University as a professor. He was later elected*

*the Director of the university. It was during his tenure as the director, The University Department of Kannada was converted to Kannada Study Centre.*

**Rashtrakavi:** *Dr. G.S.S was bestowed with the title of Rashtrakavi by the Government of Karnataka during the (Golden Jubilee celebrations of Karnataka) 'Suvarna Karnataka' on 1<sup>st</sup> November, the Kannada Rajyotsava day, in 2006. He was the third Kannada poet to be honoured with this prestigious title of Rashtrakavi, after his mentor and guide Kuvempu, and Govinda Pai.*

**Awards and Honours received by Dr G. S. Shivarudrappa**

*Soviet Land Nehru Award - 1973*

*Kendra Sahithya Academy Award - 1984 (for the work, Kaavyartha Chintana)*

*Pampa Award - 1998*

*President of 61st All India Kannada Sahithya Sammelana, happened in Davanagere*

*Karnataka Sahithya Academy Honorary Award - 1982*

*Nadoja Award from Kannada University*

*Honorary Doctorate from Bangalore University and Kuvempu University*

*Honoured as a Rashtrakavi (Poet of the Nation) - 2006*

*Sahitya Kala Kaustubha-2010*

**About the Poem:** The poet in the first stanza is talking about a bird who sings to express its true feelings. The singer/bird is singing from the heart, he is pouring out his music with his feelings without expecting anything in return. (As the bird It probably is calling its mate, but then that's what singing birds do, they sing to express their true feelings.) In the second stanza the singer/bird is sure that the listeners will listen to him, whenever he sings intently pouring out his feelings, but says that he does not sing for any monetary benefits but sings just for the sake of art or music. He says that a singer needs audience more than any other gains. So, if the audience listen to him patiently, that in itself is a reward to the singer/bird. In the third stanza the singer says that he doesn't sing for no one in particular, nor does he sing for listeners, but he sings because he wants to, and that's his profession/duty. There are people among the audience who listen to the singer, and a few others who might not, he is not worried about those who don't listen to him but is more bothered about music. He just focuses on his song and music. The poet is trying to tell us that when art is expressed or created for the sake of monetary benefits or any other form of gains then it does not spring out of one's heart. For a singer to sing straight out of his heart, with all his true feelings he should sing for the sake of art. His music or art should be spontaneous and not tailored.

## The Song of a Bird

You listened intently  
When I sang that day -  
My heart overflowing,  
Feelings I couldn't betray -

I know you shall sit down  
And listen to me patiently  
Were I to sing again today -  
That's reward enough for me!  
A bird seeks no prize  
For singing in a tree -

I sing for no one  
I seek no audience; you see  
Singing is what I do,  
A sheer necessity.

I know there are those who will listen  
And so I sing my song  
If someone were to cover their ears  
I take no offence and go on.

-----*Translated by C.P. Ravikumar*

### Suggested Questions:

1. Why does the poet consider singing as 'sheer necessity' in the poem?
2. The poem reflects the mixed feelings of the past and a hope for the future. Explain.
3. Analyse the poem, *The Song of the Bird* by G.S. Shivarudrappa.
4. 'I sing for no one. I seek no audience' interpret these lines in the context of the poem *The Song of the Bird* by G.S. Shivarudrappa.

## Rain-at-night (Rathrimazha)



**Sugatha Kumari**

*Translated from Malayalam by H. Hridayakumari.*

*One of the foremost writers in Malayalam, Sugathakumari is noted for her philosophical and perceptive poems. She is also a renowned environmental and social activist. Her poetry is noted for its emotional empathy, humanist sensitivity and moral alertness. Her poems reflect a quest for a woman's identity and integration, a deep reverence for nature and a profound understanding of the liberating power of love. She received the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1968 for her work Pathirapookal (Flowers of Midnight). Rathrimazha (Night Rain) won the Kendra Sahitya Akademi Award in 1978. She also won the Odakkuzhal Award in 1982 and the Vayalar Award in 1984. This was followed by the Asan Smaraka Award for her collection of poems Kurinjipookal (Kurinji Flowers). Other major honours bestowed on her include the Asan Prize (1991), Vallathol Award (2003), Ezhuthachan Award (2009) etc.*

### **About the Poem:**

This poem is one of those poems of the poet which is under the genre Eco Poesy. She is known for her eco poems and in this poem, we also see a hint of psychological approach, depicting to the mental state of a loneliness sensed by woman who is comforted by the night rain. The night rain is depicted as the companion to the loneliness of a woman at several stages of her life.

The poet has likened rain to a woman. The poet sees various stages of a woman and the many moods she goes through in the night rain. While she

compares the rain to the mind of a capricious young woman in the first stanza, who is happy and ecstatic for no reason at all. In the second stanza she calls the night rain the daughter of the night who drifts through the hospital window, soothing the poet with her cold fingers but livening her. In the third stanza rain is the voice of the anxious mother of a sick child, comforting and nursing. Like a mother the rain with her soothing voice wakes the poet up, who is writhing and suffering in her nightmare. The rain comforts the suffering sick child seeking her mother. Later she comments that an infected part of a body can be amputated but if the heart itself is infected then there is no solution. This stanza has only four lines unlike other stanzas, but it hints at the heart or soul of a problem. Poet is hinting at the diseased society. If an entire society is corrupt or diseased then nothing can save the society. The night rain acts as an impetus and witness to all that she loved in life, enlivens. It makes her happy. While in the last stanza she speaks about her loneliness and the night rain is the only companion when she is troubled, sick and lonely. This stanza hints at those chauvinistic rules that prevent a woman from expressing herself, she is frozen into a stone. She is indifferent to her surroundings and is unable to even weep.

### **Rain-at-night (Rathrimazha)**

Rain-at-night,  
like some young mad woman  
for nothing  
weeping, laughing, whimpering,  
muttering, without a stop  
and sitting huddled up  
tossing her long hair.

Rain-at-night,  
pensive daughter of the dusky night  
gliding slowly like a long wail  
into this hospital  
extending her cold fingers  
through the window  
and touching me.

Mindsapes IV

Rain-at-night,  
when groans and shudders  
and sharp voices  
and the sudden anguished cry of a mother  
shake me, and I put my hand to my ears  
and sob, tossing on my sick bed  
you, like a dear one  
coming through the gloom with comforting words.

Somebody said,  
a diseased part can be cut and removed  
but what can be done to the poor heart  
deeply diseased?

Rain-at-night,  
witness to my love,  
who lulled me to sleep  
giving me joy more than the moonlight did;  
The bright moonlight  
which in my auspicious nights  
made me laugh  
made me thrill with joy.

Rain-at-night,  
now witness to my grief  
when I toss and turn  
on my sweltering bed of sickness  
in the sleepless hours of the night  
and forgetting even to weep  
alone, slowly freeze into a stone.



**Glossary:**

1. **Whimpering:**making a series of low, feeble sounds expressive of fear, pain, or unhappiness.
2. **Gliding:** move with a smooth, quiet continuous motion.
3. **Anguish:**severe physical or mental pain, difficulty or unhappiness.
4. **Swelter:**uncomfortably hot.

**Suggested Questions:**

1. Sugathakumari's poetry 'makes an odyssey into the very essence of womanhood.' Write a review of the poem in the light of the above statement.
2. Write a paragraph on the deep bonding between nature and women as expressed in 'Night Rain'.
3. Prepare a short note on Sugathakumari's use of imagery in the poem.

## Chupulu (Stares)



– *Annipindi Jayaprabha*

***About the Author:** Jayaprabha took her PhD in Telugu theatre from Osmania University, Hyderabad. She published seven volumes of poetry and two books on literary criticism and also edited and published a small journal called Lohita for a year (1989), devoted to women's issues. Her poems have appeared in many Indian and international anthologies. Jayaprabha has done a crusader's job in bringing forth a strong and sustainable woman's perspective through her poetry and essays.*

**About the Poem:** 'Chupulu' or stares is the poem where a woman talks about the looks of a man which is equal to assault. When a woman crosses her threshold and steps out into the wide world, men are unable to accept her progress. She is still an object for their pleasure. With neither shame nor hesitation men stare at women to the extent of making her feel uncomfortable. Here the first person used by the poet is for women in general. This initial discomfort disturbs the 'woman', she even contemplates backing out and going back indoors, but the 'woman' realizes that the world is hers too, and she too has a right to step out doors. The 'woman's' confidence boosts and she gradually, considers of staring back at them and passes on the message that women are not just an object of pleasure but they are humans with equal rights to survive and live in this world. She is

confident that the 'woman' will definitely be strong enough to defend all kinds of advances made by men.

### **Chupulu**

Looks / From two eyes  
Dart like needles / Roam freely on flesh.

The looks never / Look into the face  
The words never come from the heart  
They crawl on the body like white ants  
Disgust every time I see them.

Those eyes / Belong to a million classes  
But their looks are all the same.

Only one signal / In those looks  
Hunger like a salivating dog's  
An ugly bear-fist / Chases you even in dreams  
No difference between day and night  
In this thick forest / No place at all  
To escape these looks

On the road / In buses, classrooms  
Behind your every step  
Wounding  
Some part of the body / Looks tipped with poison  
Keep pricking you

Frightened / I  
want to disappear

## Mindscapes IV

Into the distant sky, into emptiness

But

Escape is no solution

So, I began to teach my eyes / The sharpness of thorns

To fight those poison looks

Now to chase away those eyes

I fight with my eyes / Timid eyes which

Cannot look straight / For two seconds

Run to the underworld

A day will come

When women in this country have

Thorns

Not only in their eyes

But all over their bodies.

### **Suggested Questions:**

1. Jayaprabha's Poem 'Chupulu'(looks) focuses on the male dominance in the society and how women perceived that dominance through awareness. Elucidate
2. Do you think the poem deals with the social issue 'Gender inequality'? Substantiate.

**Novel- Rudali**  
**Mahasweta Devi**

## RUDALI



### ***Mahasweta Devi (1926-2016)***

*Mahasweta Devi, a luminary par excellence, was an Indian writer in Bengali and a socio-political activist. She was one of India's most prolific writers from the late twentieth century whose literary oeuvre included novels, plays, essays and short stories. Devi is known to have dedicated herself to the lives of India's under privileged as she recounts the discrimination against them in her writings. She was a committed activist who took up and fought for several causes dear to her heart and advocated rights for many marginalised groups.*

*Mahasweta Devi was born on 14th January, 1926 in Dacca, Bangladesh then a part of British India. Her father, Manish Ghatak, was not only a poet but a novelist too. Her mother Dharitri Devi, was a writer and a social worker.*

*Her literary journey began with her first novel titled "Jhansir Rani" based on the Rani of Jhansi in 1956. She toured the Jhansi region extensively and researched intensively before she embarked on her writing career. Her other notable works include Hajar Churashir Maa (Mother of 1084) in the year 1974, Aranyer Adhikar (1979), Agnigarbha (1978), Neerete Megh (1979), Stanyadayani (1980), Chotti Munda Ebong Tar Tir (1980) etc. She wrote 100 novels and over 20 collections of short stories. She wrote primarily in Bengali but most of her works have been translated to several other languages. Postcolonial scholar Gayathri Chakravarty Spivak has translated several of her works to English and critiqued them too.*

*Several of her works have been adapted to films and have won national and international acclaim. Some of them are Sunghursh (1968), a Hindi film based on a short story, Rudaali (1993) is a Hindi film based on a novel, Maati Maay (2006), is a Marathi film based on a short story, Bayen (1993) is a Hindi film based on a short story and Hazaar Chaurasi Ki Maa (1998) is a Hindi film based on a novel.*

*Mahasweta Devi has won numerous national and international awards, the list runs long. She won the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1979, the prestigious Padma Shri for Social Work in 1986, the highest literary award from the Government of India, the Jnanpitha award in 1996, the Ramon Magsaysay Award in Journalism, Literature, and the Creative Communication Arts for "compassionate crusade through art and activism to claim for tribal peoples a just and honourable place in India's national life" in the year 1997, Officier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres in the year 2003, Padma Vibhushan – the second highest civilian award from the Government of India in the year 2006, SAARC Literary Award in 2007, Yashwantrao Chavan National Award in 2010 and Banga Bibhushan, the highest civilian award from the Government of West Bengal in 2011.*

## **About the Novel**

Rudali was written in the year 1992 and adapted into a play by Usha Ganguli in 1993, a leading theatre director of Calcutta and opened to packed houses, becoming one of the most acclaimed productions of its time. It is one of the most heart wrenching short fiction set in the pre-Independence era. It is a tale of exploitation, suffering and survival. The story revolves around the character of Sanichari, a lower caste Ganju woman living in a village called Tahad in Chhotanagpur. She lives with her husband and his family in abject poverty. Her mother-in-law accuses her for everything that goes wrong. She is supposed to be the unfortunate one as she was born on an inauspicious day, Saturday. She endures all the accusations and curses and finds solace in the fact that none in the world lived a happy life.

Sanichari has a tragic beginning with the death of her mother-in-law. She is all alone as her husband and brother-in-law are in jail accused by the upper caste mahajans with several others from the Dushan and Ganju community. She has to cremate her mother-in-law before night fall as per the custom of the village. She has to literally move from pillar to post to make arrangements for the cremation. She doesn't even have a penny to spend for the last rites. She is so busy making arrangements that she doesn't even get a chance to mourn her loss. This event is followed by the sad demise of her

brother-in-law and his wife. A glimmer of hope comes in the form of the inheritance. She and her husband inherit a small piece of land and dream of having a small vegetable garden.

Ramavatar Singh, the Mahajan of the village constantly threatens the villagers of throwing them out. Amidst threats she continues to live with her husband and son, Budhua. Fate plays a cruel game when her husband proposes to visit the Shiva temple in the Baisakhi Mela and offer prayers. Milk is offered in large quantity to the lord and is getting collected in large tanks. The people in the fair pay money to the priest to drink this milk. Stale and infested with flies the milk is contaminated. This causes the outbreak of cholera. Sanichari's husband drinks this milk and succumbs. Sanichari is taken aback but before she could even react to this tragedy, she is taken away by the government officials for vaccination. Her husband's body is consigned to flames along with the others who had fallen prey to this deadly disease. As per the custom she makes her son do the pinda daana (ritualistic offering to the dead). She spends all that she has and returns to her village, Tahad. Mohanlal, the priest of Tahad insists that she perform all the post death rituals again as per the local tradition. She has no choice but to agree. She goes to Ramavatar, the Mahajan and borrows a sum of rupees twenty. Thus, begins her journey as a bonded labourer for the next five years. She toils day and night to repay the debt.

In fact, she had been so busy settling things that she couldn't even shed a tear when her mother-in-law, her brother-in-law and her husband pass away. She wants to mourn their loss now. She wants to shed tears but she cannot. Dulan consoles her and asks her not to delve into the past. He advises her not to work so hard on Ramavatar's farm.

In the meanwhile, Ramavatar's uncle is very sick and is on the verge of death. Sanichari is asked to get her calf. The calf is brought and placed in the hands of the dying man with the belief that it would ease crossing the



mythical river of life to after life. Sanichari takes this opportunity to plead for the waiver of the loan that she had taken from Ramavatar. She had already paid fifty rupees and worked as a bonded labourer too. Ram avatar was any way going to inherit several bighas of land after the demise of his uncle and so in a fit of a moment agreed to the request and decides to waive off Sanichari's loan. The other Mahajans of the village were not in favour of this as they felt that it would lead the untouchables and the field hands astray. They felt that debts should never be waived off as this was the only way to keep the poor people under their control.

Sanichari works day and night and brings up her son Budhua. He grows up and follows his father's footsteps. He works relentlessly growing vegetables, working on the farm and selling the produce in the market. In spite of working hard he is not able to earn enough. His wife wants a good life. She is apathetic towards him. She wants to go and work in Mahajan Lakshman Singh's house. Budhua knows him too well and detests his wife, Parvatiya from working in the Mahajan's house. He is well aware of the fact that women who worked at his place were sent to randipatti, the house of prostitutes. Differences crop up between the two of them. Budhua falls sick, and his condition worsens day by day. Sanichari rushes to the market to get medicines. Budhua's wife takes this opportunity to run away from home leaving behind her sick husband and her child. Budhua dies and once again Sanichari is left all alone with no one to care for her. She is heartbroken but the responsibility of bringing up her grandson keeps her going. She still can't shed tears. Tragedies after tragedies strike her but she goes on and on battling it.

Sanichari takes the help of her community to bring up her grandson. The community stands by her and assists her in every possible way. When he turns fourteen years old, she takes him to Mahajan Lakshman Singh's house for work. He is employed there for a paltry sum of two rupees a month. He goes on working there for a few months but soon gets bored of the work and

runs away. She is completely devastated and goes from one village to another looking for him. Her search for her grandson ends with her meeting her childhood friend Bikhni. They bump into each other and start fighting, later realizing to their dismay that they were long lost friends.

Bikhni's life is equally tragic. She singlehandedly manages her household after the demise of her husband. She meticulously plans her sparse finances and manages to bring up her three daughters and son. She fulfils all her duties towards her children and gets them married too. But her son drifts away and turns ungrateful. He moves to his in-laws' house severing his ties and leaving Bikhni to fend for herself. She has loans to clear which she intends by selling her cows but her son takes them away.

This chance meeting with Sanichari renews her childhood bond and gives her a ray of hope. She returns to Tahad with Sanichari hoping to start a new life with her. Bikhni takes care of Sanichari and life goes on for a few months without any hassles. Soon their resources are over and they have now to do something for their livelihood. This is when Dulan steps in and offers a few suggestions. He suggests that they can eke out a decent living by becoming Rudalis or professional mourners for Bhairav Singh's death. Thus, begins the new life of Sanichari and Bikhni as professional mourners and as time passes by, they become the most sought after rudalis of the region. They have a fixed rate for the kind of mourning that the client expects. If it is just wailing, rolling on the ground and beating one's head they charge five rupees and two sikkas. If it is wailing and beating one's breast and accompanying the corpse to the cremation ground and rolling around on the ground there too then they would charge six rupees.

They were now a formidable pair and their business of wailing and crying in the funerals picks up. We read about several mahajans who call Sanichari and Bikhni, the professional mourners to wail for the death of their relatives. Several of them spend lavishly on the post death rituals but hardly care for them when alive. One such example is Nathuni Singh who was the only child

and was to inherit a lot of wealth from his mother. His mother was on the verge of dying and even before her demise he starts looking out for *rudalis* and he wishes to hire Sanichari and Bikhni. Even when his mother is alive, he's stocking up on sandalwood and sal wood for the funeral pyre. Bales of cloth are arranged to be distributed at the *kriya* ceremony. He is buying utensils and other stuff for the ceremonies but leaves his mother in dire conditions. Every possible way is found to fasten the process of death. Arrangements for the funeral are made even before she has left the mortal world.

Bikhni and Sanichari now become an integral part of funerals. It is then that Dulan suggests that they should take this business forward by forming a union of *rudalis* and *randis* like the coal miners. Sanichari is not really convinced but Bikhni contemplates. Dulan wants to convince Bikhni and so narrates the plight of Gulbadan, a whore now.

Gambhir Singh of Nawagarh had a mistress by name Motiya. Gulbadan was the daughter of Gambhir Singh and Motiya. She had a decent enough childhood and was taken care of by Gambhir Singh. But after the death of Motiya, the mistress, Gambhir Singh's nephew pesters Gulbadan to become his mistress. When Gulbadan complains against him to her father, she is thrown out of his house. She was after all a whore's daughter and was supposed to do what her mother did.

When Gambhir Singh is on his deathbed, his nephew behaves the same way Nathuni Singh behaved with his mother. Arrangements are made for a grand funeral even when he is still alive. He is isolated and moved to the yard of the house. Sanichari and Bikhni are hired as *rudalis*. But before Gambhir Singh's death, Bikhni yearns to go to Ranchi to attend the marriage ceremony of a relative. Bikhni confesses before Sanichari that this was just a pretext to see her estranged son.

Gambhir Singh's condition deteriorates; Sanichari is called to discuss the modalities of the funeral. Four days pass by Sanichari keeps waiting for Bikhni but she does not return. On the sixth day, Sanichari has a visitor. She sees a stranger with a shaven head and bare feet and gets the news of Bikhni's death. Sanichari is shattered to hear the news. She shudders even at the thought of living a life without her. She has had many tragedies in her life but this shakes her completely. She turns to Dulan for some consolation. Dulan consoles her and insists that she take up the role of Bikhni and go to Tohri. She has to rise up to the occasion. It is a question of her survival and rudalis like her. She is a little disturbed because she was going to meet her defiant daughter-in-law, who had run away from home and ended up being a whore in Tohri. Sanichari resolves to get rid of her anxieties and moves forward. She cannot let her past come in the way of her present. She has to bring in all the prostitutes together and free them from the shackles of flesh trade and that meant her daughter-in-law and Gulbadan too.

She sets aside all her apprehensions of being defamed due to her association with the whores. She is there to bring them all under one roof and fight back against the mahajans by becoming professional mourners or rudalis. She urges them to take money from these cruel mahajans and pay them back for the pain and suffering they had been inflicted. She motivates them on how to pass off as false mourners at funerals of the rich landlords. She teaches them techniques to fake tears; wail loudly and mourn for someone they did not even know of and worst of all they all end up wailing and mourning for the one who had pushed them to prostitution.

A hundred of them gather at the funeral of Gambhir Singh dressed in black. They surround the corpse of Gambhir Singh and start wailing loudly. The gomastha is worried because this means that they would have to shell out a lot of money to pay the the rudalis. The gomastha and the nephew can do nothing about it. They become mere spectators. *Rudali* ends with the emergence of the muted voices pitched against the rich and powerful.

There is a sense of freedom, a kind of empowerment, an act of revenge and

an expression of angst against the oppression of the upper caste men.

**I Suggested questions:**

1. How does Rudali delineate the struggle and exploitation of women in the patriarchal set up?
2. Discuss the journey of Sanichari from a voiceless Dalit to an empowered agent of revolt.
3. Write a note on the religious oppression in Rudali.
4. Bring out the suffering of the lower caste Ganjus and Dushads of the village at the hands of the upper caste men.
5. What were the reasons that led Sanichari to take up the role of a professional mourner?

**II Write short notes on:**

1. Bikhni
2. Temple episode
3. Dulan as a mentor
4. Death of feudal lords
5. Tears for survival
6. Village of Tahad
7. Subalternity

**Drama- The Fire and the Rain**  
**Girish Karnad**

## The Fire and The Rain



### **Girish Karnad**

**About the Author:** *Girish Karnad, (1938-2019) a well-known playwright, author, actor, and film director, was born on May 19, 1938 in Matheran, Bombay Presidency (now in Maharashtra). His initial schooling was in Marathi. At a young age he was exposed to travelling theatre groups or 'Natak Mandalis' as his parents were deeply interested in their plays. As a youngster, Karnad was an ardent admirer of Yakshagana and theatre.*

*After graduating from Karnataka University in 1958, Karnad studied philosophy, politics, and economics as a Rhodes scholar at the University of Oxford (1960–63). He wrote his first play, *Yayati* in 1961, while still at Oxford. *Yayati* is centred on the story of a mythological king, the play established Karnad's use of the themes of history and mythology in his plays. Karnad's next play, *Tughlaq* (1964), is about the 14th-century sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq and remains among the best known of his works.*

*He worked in Oxford University Press, Chennai for seven years (1963–70), before taking up full time take to writing. While in Chennai he got involved with local amateur theatre group, The Madras Players. During 1987–88, he was at the University of Chicago as a visiting Professor and Fulbright Playwright-in-Residence. During his tenure at Chicago Nagamandala had its world premiere at the Guthrie Theater in Minneapolis based on Karnad's English translation of the Kannada original. Most of his plays, were written in Kannada, and was translated into English by Karnad himself. Karnad used myth to portray contemporary themes, and existentialist crisis of modern man. Most of his*

## Mindscapes IV

*characters are locked in psychological and philosophical conflicts.*

*He made his entry into the world of cinema with the movie Samskara (1970). Samskara is an adaptation of U.R. Ananthamurthy's novel. Karnad was involved in both commercial and art cinema. He had his presence on and off the screen. He acted, wrote screenplays, and also directed movies. He was also a part of the timeless TV series 'Malgudi Days'*

### Honours

Jnanpith Award (1999)

Padma Bhushan (1992)

Padma Shri (1974)

Rajyotsava Award (1970)

Sangeet Natak Akademi Award (1972)

Kannada Sahitya Parishat Award (1992)

Sahitya Academy Award (1994)

Kalidas Samman (1998)

Honorary degree by University of Southern California, Los Angeles (2011)

### Cinema

National Film Awards

1971: Best Direction: Vamsha Vriksha (with B. V. Karanth)

1971: Best Feature Film in Kannada: Vamsha Vriksha

1973: Second Best Feature Film: Kaadu

1977: Best Feature Film in Kannada: Tabbaliyu Neenade Magane

1978: Best Screenplay: Bhumika (with Shyam Benegal and Satyadev Dubey)

1978: Best Feature Film in Kannada: Ondanonda Kaladalli

1989: Best Non-Feature Film: Kanaka Purandara

1990: Best Non-feature Film on Social Issues: The Lamp in the Niche

1992: Best Film on Environment Conservation: Cheluvi

1999: Best Feature Film in Kannada: Kaanuru Heggadathi

### Karnataka State Film Awards

1971-72: First Best Film – Vamsha Vriksha

1971-72: Best Dialogue Writer – Vamsha Vriksha

1973-74: Second Best Film – Kaadu



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1989-90: Best Supporting Actor – Sangeetha Sagara Ganayogi Panchakshara Gavai

1999-00: Second Best Film – Kanooru Heggadithi

### Some of the posts held

Director of the Nehru Centre and as Minister of Culture, in the Indian High Commission, London (2000–2003).

Director of the Film and Television Institute of India (1974–1975)

Chairman of the Sangeet Natak Akademi, the National Academy of the Performing Arts (1988–93).

Some of Karnad's well known films -Tabbaliyu Neenade Magane, Ondanondu Kaaladalli, Utsav, Kanooru Heggadithi, Iqbal, Life Goes On, Minsaara Kanavu, Santha Shishunala Sharifa, Kadina Benki, Samskara, Aparoopu, Cheluvi, Tiger Zinda Hai, Shivaay, Ek Tha Tiger, Manthan, Nishant etc.

## **The Fire and The Rain**

The play *The Fire and The Rain*. was originally written in Kannada titled *Agni Mattu Male* in 1995 and translated into English in 1998 by the playwright himself. It has been successfully staged in Kannada, Hindi, and English. *The Fire and the Rain* draws upon the myth of Yavakrita taken from chapters 135-138 of the Vana Parva (the forest canto) from the Mahabharata. It is narrated by the ascetic Lomasha to the Pandavas as they wander across the land during their exile. *The Fire and the Rain* is Karnad's most complex play and he took about thirty-seven years to complete the play. Karnad utilizes the play inside the play strategy in *The Fire and the Rain*

### **Myth of Yavakri**

The myth of Yavakari is about two friends, Raibhya and Bharadwaja. Raibhya's sons Paravasu and Aravasu are recognized Vedic scholars. Bharadwaja's son Yavakri nurse's bitterness against the world, and especially Raibhya's family, because he believes that his father did not get

the recognition that Raibhya got. He goes to the forest to undertake penance and acquire the knowledge of the Vedas, directly from the gods. After ten years of penance, Lord Indra grants Yavakari the knowledge he desires but true wisdom remains elusive to him and he also become arrogant. He molests Raibhya's daughter-in-law, to challenge Raibhya and Paravasus. Raibhya curses him with death. Yavakari's father, Bharadwaja in revenge prophesizes that Raibhya will die in the hand of his elder son which comes true. Raibhya invokes the 'kritya' spirit and creates a lookalike of his daughter-in-law and a rakshasa. While the former steals Yavakari's container of the sanctified water which could save him from any attack, the latter chases him to death. Yavakari tries to enter his father's hermitage, but the blind Shudra gatekeeper, does not permit him. The rakshasa kills Yavakari. Bharadwaja realizes the gravity of his mistake in cursing his friend, and out of remorse he immolates himself, without realizing that the curse is infallible. Raibhya's sons are conducting a fire sacrifice for the king. One night when Paravasus is visiting home, he mistakes the deer skin which his father is wearing for a wild animal and kills him. Paravasus goes back to conduct the sacrifice and asks Aravasus to return to the hermitage and perform the last rites of their father. Aravasus obeys his brother but is shocked when on his return Paravasus puts the blame of his own sin of patricide on him. Aravasus is thrown out. He retires to the jungle to pray for the restoration of the lives of Yavakari, Bharadwaja, and Raibhya, and also to make Paravasus forget his evil. The gods grant Yavakari's wishes and ask him to pursue true knowledge in the right way. Karnad does not use the myth as it exists, he modifies and reworks it to suit his creative demands.

*The Fire and the Rain* is the retelling of the myth from a modern perspective. Through the use of the myth the play challenges the monolithic aesthetics of Brahminism and to demolish the one-dimensional structure of egocentric patriarchy and obsessive casteism. The play depicts the conflict between the Brahmin community and the tribal community.

*The Fire and the Rain* depicts negative instincts of human beings: anger, violence, bloodshed, jealousy, hostility, pride, false knowledge, hatred, greed, treachery and revenge. The play addresses contemporary issues of casteism, unequal attitude to women, the hollowness of patriarchy, the vanity of the priestly class and their power-mongering, jealousy and malice, mistrust and betrayal, adultery and power-politics, revenge and sacrifice. The play becomes the site of struggle between the Brahmin and the lower class, between the God and the demon, and above all between good and evil.

*The Fire and the Rain* is divided into three acts along with Prologue and Epilogue. By making some alterations in the original story, Karnad unfolds the inner mind of each character. The central action of the play focuses on the motif of revenge, futility of false knowledge and the feebleness of human nature. In order to make his play more effective and relevant to the contemporary society, Karnad deviates from the original in a few episodes.

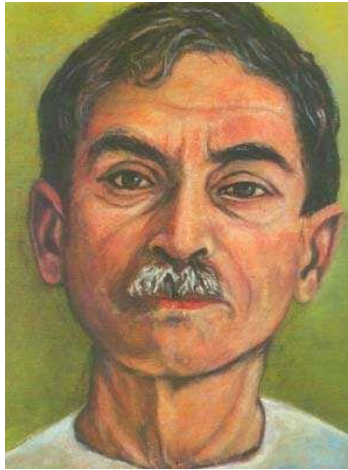
The title of the play brings together two physical elements which are normally considered as antithetical- Fire and Rain. The former is rigid and ritualistic (symbolized by “fire”) whereas the latter is community-oriented and life-giving (symbolized by “rain”). In the words of Girish Karnad, the playwright “Agni is the Sanskrit word for fire and being a Sanskrit word, it carries, even when used in Kannada, connotations of holiness, of ritual status, of ceremony, which the Kannada word for fire (benki) does not possess. Agni is what burns in sacrificial altars, acts as a witness at weddings and is lit at cremations. It is also the name of the god of fire.” The fire connotes both the negative and positive human impulses such as anger, jealousy, revenge, betrayal, and lust. The rain, on the contrary, denotes the rain of human love and sacrifice, compassion, forgiveness, revival and regeneration.

## Suggested Questions

1. Write about the themes and issues in the play *The Fire and the Rain*.
2. Discuss the significance of the title *The Fire and the Rain*.
3. Analyse Karnad's depiction of the hunter girl Nittilai.
4. The importance of the Brahma Rakshasa in *The Fire and the Rain*.
5. The play within the play in *The Fire and the Rain*.
6. Write a note on the prologue
  
7. Write short notes on:
  - a) Arvasu
  - b) Nittilai
  - c) Vishakha,
  - d) Class.

**Prose- Fiction**

## The Voice of God (Panch Parameshwar)



***Munshi Premchand (1880-1936)***

**About the Author :** *Dhanpat Rai Srivastava (31 July 1880 - 8 October 1936), better known by his pen name Munshi Premchand, was an Indian writer famous for his modern Hindustani literature. He is one of the most celebrated writers of the Indian subcontinent, and is regarded as one of the foremost Hindi writers of the early twentieth century. He began writing under the pen name "Nawab Rai", but subsequently switched to "Premchand", Munshi being an honorary prefix.*

*Munshi Premchand was born on 31 July 1880 in Lamhi, a village located near Varanasi (Benares) and was named Dhanpat Rai ("master of wealth"). His grandfather, Guru Sahai Rai was a patwari (village land record-keeper), and his father Ajaib Lal was a post office clerk. His mother was Anandi Devi of Karauni village. When he was 7 years old, Dhanpat Rai began his education at a madrasa in Lalpur, located near Lamahi. He learnt Urdu and Persian from a maulvi in the madrasa.*

*His first short novel was Asrar e Ma'abid ("Secrets of God's Abode"), Devasthan Rahasya in Hindi), which explores corruption among the temple priests. In 1906, Premchand married a child widow, Shivarani Devi, who was the daughter of a landlord from a village near Fatehpur. This step was considered to be revolutionary at that time, and Premchand faced a lot of social opposition.*

*By 1919, Premchand had published four novels, of about a hundred pages each. In 1919, Premchand's first major novel Seva Sadan was published in Hindi.*

*In 1923, he established a printing press and publishing house in Benares, christened*

*"Saraswati Press". The year 1924 saw the publication of Godaan upanyas (The Gift of a Cow, 1936), Premchand's last completed work, is generally accepted as his best novel, and is considered as one of the finest Hindi novels. In 1936, Premchand also published Kafaan ("Shroud"), in which a poor man collects money for the funeral rites of his dead wife, but spends it on food and drink.*

*Premchand is considered the first Hindi author whose writings prominently featured realism. His novels describe the problems of the poor and the urban middle-class. He used literature for the purpose of arousing public awareness about national and social issues.*

*In the 1920s, he was influenced by Mahatma Gandhi's non-co-operation movement and the accompanying struggle for social reform. During this period, his works dealt with the social issues such as poverty, zamindari exploitation (Premashram, 1922), dowry system (Nirmala, 1925), educational reform and political oppression (Karmabhumi, 1931)*

**About the story:** In the short story 'The Voice of God', the theme of conflict, friendship, tradition and responsibility are dealt with. Despite the friendship between Jumman and Algu, they fall out over Algu's decision while he is acting as the head of the Panchayat. Sadly, one decision decides the fate of Jumman and Algu's friendship. The relationship between both men turns so hostile, that Algu believes that Jumman has poisoned one of his bullocks. This leads to Algu getting into another conflict with Sahu. However, when Algu goes to the Panchayat he is surprised that Jumman looks favourably upon him despite their differences. This shows that friendships can overcome conflict despite however heated or bitter the conflict may be. Jumman becomes aware of the heavy responsibility that comes with being the Panchayat. So influential are the Panchayat's that their judgements are considered to be the voice of God.

Premchand further explores the theme of responsibility when Sahu overworks the bullock sold to him by Algu and is fully responsible for its death. Though he does not wish to take responsibility for what has happened and his primary concern is to accuse Algu of selling him a sick animal rather than honouring his debt. This is apparent to Jumman when he acts as Sarpanch of the Panchayat. Though Jumman has the opportunity to take

revenge on Algu, he doesn't. This is significant as Jumman realises how important the role of the Panchayat is once he is placed in that position.

### **The Voice of God (Panch Parameshwar)**

Jumman Shiakh and Algu Chowdhry were very close friends. They were partners in cultivation. Some of their dealings were also done jointly. They trusted each other without reservation. When Jumman had gone on hajj he had left his house under Algu's care. And whenever Algu went out he left his house to Jumman to look after. They neither inter-dined, nor were they of the same religion. But there was between them a certain concurrence of views. And that indeed is the basis of true friendship.

Their friendship began when they were boys, and Jumman's worshipful father, Jumeraati, was their tutor. Algu had served his guru with great dedication, scrubbing many plates, washing many cups. He never let the guru's hookah remain idle even for a moment, because he got half an hour's respite from books every time, he went on to light the chillum. Algu's father was old-fashioned in his views. He believed that serving the guru was more important than toiling to acquire knowledge. He would say that one acquired knowledge, not by reading books but through the guru's blessings and kindness. Therefore, if Jumeraati Shaikh's blessings or close contact with him did not yield results, Algu should then rest content with the thought that he had tried his best but he did not succeed because he was not destined to acquire knowledge.

However, Jumeraati Shaikh himself did not subscribe to this view. He had greater faith in his rod. And because of that rod Jumman was greatly admired in the villages around here. Not even the court clerk could raise any objection to the documents prepared by Jumman. The postman, the constable and the tehsil peon – all relied on his generosity. As a result, while Algu was respected for his money, Jumman Shaikh was esteemed for his invaluable knowledge.

Jumman Shaikh had an old aunt who had some property. She had no other



near relation than Jumman. He had coaxed her into transferring this property in his name by making tall promises. Until the transfer deed had been registered, the aunt was pampered and indulged. She was treated to many tasty dishes. It was raining halwas and pulao; but this hospitality came to a stamping halt as soon as the transfer deed was stamped. Jumman's wife, Kariman, began to dish out, along with rotis, hot and bitter curries of words. Jumman Shaikh too became cold. Now the poor aunt had to swallow bitter words every day: Who knows how long would this old woman live! She thinks she has bought us by just transferring a few bighas of barren land. Rotis don't go down her throat if her dal is not fried in ghee! We would have bought a whole village with the amount of money she has already swallowed!

Khaala listened to all this for a few days, and when she could stand it no longer, she complained to Jumman. Jumman didn't think it right to interfere in what was the domain of the mistress of the house. And this unpleasant state of affairs dragged on for some more time. At last, the aunt said to Jumman, 'Son, I can't carry on like this. You pay me a sum regularly. I shall set up my own kitchen.'

Jumman retorted rudely, 'Do you think we grow money here?'

Khaala asked politely, 'Do I or do I not need a bare minimum?'

Jumman replied sternly, 'We had never thought you had conquered death.'

Khaala was offended. She threatened to call the panchayat. Jumman laughed heartily like the hunter who laughs to himself as he watches the deer walking into his trap. He said, 'Why not? Call the panchayat by all means. Let things be decided once for all. I don't like these everyday quarrels.'

Jumman had no doubt at all who would win at the panchayat. There was no one in the villages around who did not owe him a debt of gratitude; no one who would dare to antagonize him. Angels won't descend from heavens to hold the panchayat.

After this, for many days, leaning on her stick, the old woman moved from village to village. Her back was bent like a bow. Each step was painful. But

the issue had to be settled.

There was hardly a soul to whom she did not narrate her tale of woe. A few dismissed her story with just lip sympathy. Some decried the world in general. ‘One may have one’s foot in the grave, yet there is no end to greed! What does a person need? Eat your bread and remember Rama. Why bother about land and tilling now?’ There were some who got an opportunity to poke fun at her. Bent back, toothless mouth, matted hair – so much to laugh at! Just, kind and compassionate people who would listen to this unfortunate woman’s sad story and console her were few indeed. Finally, she came to Algu Chowdhry’s door. She threw down her stick and sat down to rest. Then she said, ‘Son, you should also come to the panchayat meeting.’

Algu said, ‘Why call me? There will be many people from the villages around.’

The old woman said, ‘I have cried my heart out to all. But now it’s up to them to come.’

Algu said, ‘I shall come, but I won’t open my mouth.’

‘Why, son?’

‘What to say? My will. Jumman is my old friend. I can’t go against him.’

‘Son, won’t you stand up for Iman for fear of losing your friendship?’

Algu had no answer to this question, but these words were echoing in his mind: Won’t you stand up for iman for fear of losing your friendship?’

One evening the panchayat gathered under a tree. Shaikh Jumman had spread his sheet even before. He had made provision for paan, ilaichi, hookah and tobacco. Although he himself was sitting with Algu Chowdhry at some distance. He greeted with a discrete salaam everyone who came to attend the panchayat meeting. Soon after sunset, when the flocks of chattering birds had settled in the tree, the meeting began. Every inch of the ground was occupied, but most of those who had come were onlookers. Of those the old woman had invited only they who had a score to settle with Jumman had come. A fire was smouldering in one corner. There the barber was filling up chillum after chillum non-stop. It was impossible to decide whether the

smoke rising from the burning cow dung cakes was thicker or that from the puffs exhaled by the hookah smokers. Boys were running all around, shouting, crying. It was a noisy scene. The village dogs too had descended upon the scene in large numbers, hoping there would be a big feast here.

The five members of the panchayat sat down, and the old woman began her submission.

‘Pancho! It’s three years now, since I transferred all my property in the name of my nephew Jumman. You know all this. Jumman had promised to feed and clothe me till my death. But I neither get enough to eat nor to wear. I have put up with it for a year. I can stand it no longer. I’m a helpless widow. I can’t go to court. Where else should I come with my miserable tale except to you? I shall accept whatever you decide. If I’m at fault slap me. If Jumman is wrong, admonish him. Why does he want to earn the curses of a helpless woman? The word of the Panch is the word of Allah. I shall obey your order without questioning it.’

Ramdhan Mishra, many of whose clients had been won over by Jumman, said, ‘Jumman mian, choose your panchayat. Decide just now. Afterwards you will have to accept its judgement.’

Jumman saw that most of those present here were hostile to him for one reason or another. He said, ‘The word of the panchayat is the word of Allah. Let khaala choose whomsoever she wants. I have no objection.’

The old woman shouted. ‘O man of Allah, why don’t you name the members? I should also know something.’

Jumman retorted angrily, ‘Don’t force me to open my mouth. You have complained. Choose whomsoever you like.’

The aunt understood Jumman’s taunt. She said, ‘Son, fear Allah. What’re you insinuating. Members of panchayat don’t take sides. And if you can’t trust anyone, let it go. Hope you trust Algu Chowdhry. Come on, I choose him as the sarpanch.’

Jumman was delighted, but hiding his feelings he said, ‘Let it be Algu. For

me Ramdhan Misr and Algu are the same.’

Algu didn’t want to get involved in this. He said, ‘Khaala, you know that Jumman is my close friend.’

Khala said, ‘Son, no one barter his imaan for friendship. Khuda resides in the heart of a panch. Whatever the panch says is the word of Khuda.’

Algu Chowdhry was designated the sarpanch. Ramdhan Mishra and some others, hostile to Jumman, cursed the old woman in their hearts.

Algu Chowdry said, ‘Shaikh Jumman, you and I are old friends. We have helped each other on many occasions. But at this moment we are not friends. You and khaala are equal in my eyes. You can put forward your case before the Panchayat.’

Jumman was sure that he would win the case. Algu was saying all this for a public show. Therefore, he spoke in a very composed manner. ‘O members of the Panchayat, three years ago khaala jaan had transferred her property in my name. I had agreed to provide her with food and clothing till her death. Allah is witness, I have never ill-treated her. I regard her as my mother, and it is my duty to serve her. My wife and she don’t always see eye to eye. What can I do in this? Khaala jaan is demanding a monthly allowance from me separately. All of you know the value of the property. It is not so profitable that I can provide a monthly allowance to her out of it. Moreover, there is no mention of a monthly expense in the agreement. That’s all I have to say. It is now for the members of the panchayat to give their judgement.’

Algu Chowdhry needed to go to the court regularly for some or the other of his business. This had made him a completely legal minded person. He began to cross examine Jumman. Every word he said was like a hammer stroke on Jumman’s chest. Ramdhan Mishra was enjoying it all. Jumman was taken aback at Algu’s conduct. Only just now he was talking to him like a friend, and now he seemed so changed and bent upon rooting him up. Was he trying to settle some old score? Will his long friendship be of no help?

While Jumman Shaikh was lost in this mental tussle, Algu announced the judgement.

‘Shaikh Jumman, the Panchayat has considered this matter. To us it looks fair and just that khaala jaan be given a monthly allowance. We are of the view that the property is valuable enough to provide khaala jaan a monthly allowance. This is our decision. And if this is not acceptable to you, then the agreement for transfer of property would stand annulled.’

Jumman was stunned to hear this decision. Your own friend behaving like an enemy, stabbing you on the neck! What else would you call it except the vagaries of time? The very person on whom you had all the faith betrayed you when you needed him most. Such are the times when friendship is tested. So that is what friendship is in the Kalyug. It is such crooked and deceitful people who have brought so many calamities upon the country. The epidemics like cholera and plague were the punishment for such misdeeds. On the other hand, Ramdhan Mishra and other members of the Panchayat were heartily praising Algu Chowdhry’s sense of justice. They said, ‘This is what a Panchayat is. He has separated the grain from the chaff. Friendship has its own place but to follow the dharma is the most important thing. The earth has stayed where it is because of such truthful people or it would have sunk underwater by now.’

This judgement shook the very foundation of Algu and Jumman’s friendship. The old intimacy was gone. Such an old tree of friendship could not stand just one blast of truth. Surely it had stood on sandy ground.

Now their relationship turned very formal and limited to mere courtesies. They met but just as a sword meets a shield.

Algu’s treachery troubled Jumman day and night. He was always looking for an opportunity to take revenge.

The fruit of a good deed done takes a long time to mature, but not so of a bad deed. The opportunity to take revenge came to Jumman very soon. A year ago, Algu Chowdhry had purchased a fine pair of oxen from Batesar. The oxen were of the Pachchain breed, handsome and having long horns. For months people from the neighbouring villages came to cast their admiring glances at the pair. It was just a chance that one of the oxen died just a month

after Jumman's panchayat. Jumman said to his friends, 'This is punishment for his treachery. One may rest content but God keeps watch on our good and bad deeds.' Algu on the other hand began to suspect that Jumman had poisoned the ox. His wife too threw the blame on Jumman. She said Jumman had done some mischief. And one day a war of words broke out between Algu's wife and Kariman. Words flowed in great streams from both sides. All the similes and metaphors, sarcasms and hyperboles were exhausted. Jumman somehow pacified them. He rebuked his wife into silence and made her quit the battlefield. On the other side Algu used the stick to silence his wife.

Now a single ox was of no use. Algu tried to find a matching one but without success. At last, he decided to sell him off. There was a trader named Samjhu Sahuji who drove a single-ox cart. He carried gur and ghee from the village to the market and returned with oil and salt, which he sold in the village. He thought of buying this ox. If he had this ox, he would be able to make three trips easily. These days it was difficult to make even one. He looked at the ox, yoked him to his cart for a trial, got the hair on his body examined to know whether he was a propitious animal to buy, bargained the price and finally bought him. He promised to pay the price within one month. Algu Chowdhry agreed, unmindful of any loss.

As soon as Samjhu Sahuji had the ox he began to drive him hard. He made three to four trips every day, without caring to feed and water the animal properly. All he cared was to drive him. When he took him to the market, he fed him with some dry fodder. And before he could breathe easy, he was yoked again. At Algu Chowdhry's home the ox had a very easy existence. He was yoked to a chariot-like cart once in a while and then he would go racing for miles without care. At Algu's house his daily diet consisted of clean water, ground arhar dal, fodder mixed with oil cake; and not only this, on occasions he had the pleasure of tasting ghee too. From morning till evening an attendant looked after him, brushed his hair, cleaned and patted his body. That life of peace and enjoyment, and this twenty-four-hour grind!

He became emaciated just in one month. The moment he saw the yoke his mouth dried up. Moving even a step became difficult. Bones became visible. But he was self-respecting. He didn't like to be punished.

One day while on his fourth trip, Samjhu Sahuji put a double load on him. Exhausted after the day's work the ox was unable to lift his feet. But Sahuji kept on whipping him. He ran with all his strength, and after a short distance slowed down to catch his breath. But Sahuji, in a hurry to reach home, kept on lashing at him with his whip. He once again tried to pick up pace but his strength failed. He collapsed and did not rise again. Sahuji whipped him mercilessly, pulled his legs, pushed a stick into his nostrils, but how would a dead animal rise on his feet? When Sahuji suspected the worst, he cast an intent look at the ox, then unyoked him, wondering how to drive the cart home. He shouted but the country pathways, like the eyes of children, close at sunset. He could not find any help. There was no village close by. In anger he delivered a few more lashes to the dead animal, and cursed him, 'You wretch, if you had to die you should have done it after reaching home. You are dead midway. Now who will pull the cart?' Sahuji was burning with anger. He had sold many sacks of gur and many tins of ghee. So he was carrying two hundred fifty rupees tucked at his waist. In addition, there were a few sacks of salt and tins of oil on the cart. He just couldn't go away leaving them here. Helpless, he lay down on the cart. He decided to spend the night keeping awake. He smoked a chillum, sang a song, smoked again and in this way, he tried to keep awake till midnight. He thought he had kept awake throughout, but when he opened his eyes at the break of day and touched his waist, he found the pouch containing the money missing. A few tins of oil were also missing. In anguish the poor man beat his head and fell flat on the ground. He reached home wailing and weeping. When Sahuji's wife heard the story, first she cried and then started cursing Algu Chowdhry for having sold them an unpropitious ox that had caused the loss of their life-long earning.

Many months passed. Whenever Algu went to their house to ask for the price

of the ox both husband and wife would fall upon him like dogs and start abusing him. 'Look. We have lost our life's earnings. And you are asking for the price of the ox. You had given us a near dead ox and now you want its price. You have deceived us. You hoodwinked us to buy a ruinous animal. Do you think we are fools? We are a family of banias. We can't be cheated. First go and wash your face in a ditch and then ask for the price of the ox. If you don't accept this, take our ox and use it for two months. What else do you want?'

Chowdhry had plenty of ill-wishers. On this occasion they came together to support Sahuji. So, every time Algu had to return home shamefaced after catching an earful of abuse. But it was not easy for Algu to give up his claim of one hundred fifty rupees. He lost his cool one day. Sahuji went home to look for a lathi. Now his wife entered the field to confront Algu. War of words led to a hand-to-hand tussle. Sahuji's wife ran home and shut the doors. The villagers gathered there on hearing the hullabaloo. They tried to pacify both the parties. But this didn't work. They suggested that a panchayat be called to settle the issue. Sahuji agreed. Algu agreed too.

Preparations for the Panchayat began. Both the parties began to look for their supporters. On the third day the Panchayat assembled under the same tree. The same evening time. The crows were holding their own Panchayat in the fields. They were debating whether or not they had any rights over the pea pods; and until this question was settled, they were to continue protesting against the watchman. A flock of parrots sitting in the tree was discussing whether human beings had any right to call them crooked when they themselves had no qualms about deceiving their own friends.

The panchayat began its meeting. Ramdhan Mishra said, 'Why waste time? Let us elect the five members. Come Chowdhry, whom do you elect?'

Algu said in a humble voice, 'Let Samjhu Sahu choose.'

Samjhu stood up and said sharply, 'I choose Jumman Shaikh.'

The moment Algu heard Jumman's name his heart began to beat fast, as if some had slapped him. Ramdhan was Algu's friend. He could sense the



problem. He said, 'Come, Chowdhry, do you have any objection?'

Chowdhry said in a thin voice, 'No, why should I object?'

The awareness of a responsibility often alters our narrow outlook. When we lose our way, this awareness becomes our guide.

A newspaper editor, ensconced in his comfortable seat, attacks a council of ministers recklessly and brazenly with his aggressive writing. But there are times when he himself joins the ministry, and then his writing becomes so penetrating, so thoughtful and so just. This is the result of the responsibility that falls upon him.

A young man's wild behaviour always keeps his parents worried. They fear that he would bring a bad name to the family. But the moment the burden of a family falls upon him, the undisciplined and wayward young man becomes a persevering and sober person, all because of the responsibility thrust upon him.

Jumman Shaikh also became conscious of such a responsibility, the moment he was given the high office of the sarpanch. He thought: 'At this moment I am sitting on the highest throne of justice and righteousness. Whatever I utter now would be like the word of God, and any bias in my mind must not contaminate that voice. I must not deviate even a bit from truth.'

The panchayat began to interrogate both the parties. Both the parties pleaded their cases. There was a difference of opinion among the members of the panchayat. All were agreed that Samjhu Sahu must pay the price of the ox. But two members were of the view that he should be given some relief for the loss of the ox. Against this, two members wanted Samjhu to be punished further, in addition to the appropriate payment, so that no one in future would dare to behave with such barbarity towards an animal. In the end Jumman announced the judgement.

'Algu Chowdhry and Samjhu Sahu, the Panchayat has carefully deliberated on your dispute. It is proper that Samjhu should pay the price of the ox. The ox was not suffering from any disease when he bought it. If the price had been paid then, Samjhu would not have been able to raise this question. The

ox died because he was forced to work too hard and was not properly fed.’ Ramdhan said, ‘Samjhu is responsible for killing the ox and he should be punished for this.’

Jumman said, ‘That is another issue. We have nothing to do with it.’

Jhagdu Sahu said, ‘Samjhu Sahu should be given some relief.’

Jumman said, ‘This is up to Algu Chowdhry. If he agrees, it will be an act of goodness.’

Algu Chowdhry was overjoyed. He stood up and shouted, ‘Victory to Panch Parmeshwar!’

This was echoed from all sides, ‘Victory to Panch Parmeshwar!’

Everyone admired Jumman’s judgement. ‘This is justice. This is not the work of man. God himself resides in the Panch Parmeshwar. It is His doing. Who can prove the wrong as right before the panchayat!’

At the end Jumman came to Algu and, embracing him, said, ‘Ever since you had given the judgement against me, I had become your sworn enemy. But today I have realized that while sitting on that seat of justice you are no one’s friend or foe. You cannot think of anything except justice. Today I am convinced that God himself speaks through the voice of the panchayat.’

Algu began to cry. His tears washed off the bitterness that had rankled in their hearts. The withered plant of friendship had become green again.

## Glossary:

1. **Hajj:** The pilgrimage to Mecca that many Muslims make.
2. **Hookah:** a tobacco pipe with a flexible tube
3. **Hajj:** Chillum: a small pipe uses for smoking
4. **Tehsil:** (a taluk) an administrative division.
5. **Bigha:** a unit to measure land in North India ( approx: 0.25 acres)
6. **iman:** adherence to faith
7. **paan:** betel leaf with areca nut.
8. **ilaichi:** cardamom seeds.

9. **Panch:** short form of 'Panchayat' - a local governing body of a village formed of five wise people to arbitrate and settle disputes.
10. **Khaala:** Aunt
11. **Sarpanch:** The head of the Panchayat
12. **Kalyug:** the age of darkness, vice, misery and moral decay as described in the Mahabharatha and other texts.
13. **Dharma:** doing one's duty.

### **Suggested Questions:**

1. "God himself resides in the Panch Parmeshwar". Justify this statement.
2. Write a note on the theme of friendship, truth and justice in the story "The Voice of God".
3. What light does the story "The Voice of God" throw on the Panchayat System in India?
4. Justify the title 'The Voice of God' or 'Panch Parmeshwar' written by Munsii Premchand.
5. Describe the feelings of Algu Chowdhry and Jumman Shaikh when they were asked to adorn the responsibility of 'Sarpanch'.

## Roots



*Ismat Chughtai*

*About the author: Ismat Chughtai was an Indian Urdu novelist, short story writer, and filmmaker. Born in a small town in Badayun, Uttar Pradesh on 21 August 1915, she is one of the best short story writers, and the first among the very few feminist writers in Urdu literature. She was the ninth of ten children—six brothers and four sisters. The family moved frequently as Chughtai's father was a civil servant; she spent her childhood in cities including Jodhpur, Agra, and Aligarh—mostly in the company of her brothers as her sisters had all got married while she was still very young. Chughtai described the role of her brothers as an important factor which influenced her personality in her formative years.*

*Chughtai received her primary education at the Women's College at the Aligarh Muslim University and graduated from Isabella Thoburn College with a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1940. Despite strong resistance from her family, she completed her Bachelor of Education degree from the Aligarh Muslim University the following year. It was during this period that Chughtai became associated with the Progressive Writers' Association, having attended her first meeting in 1936 where she met Rashid Jahan, one of the leading female writers involved with the movement, who was later*

*credited for inspiring Chughtai to write "realistic, challenging female characters" Chughtai wrote a drama entitled Fasādī (The Troublemaker) for the Urdu magazine Saqi in 1939, which was her first published work. Following that, she started writing for other publications and newspapers. Some of her early works included Bachpan (Childhood), an autobiographical piece, Kafir (Infidel), her first short-story, and Dheet (Stubborn), her only soliloquy, among others. Kalyān (Buds) and Cōtēn (Wounds), two of Chughtai's earliest collections of short stories, were published in 1941 and 1942 respectively. Chughtai's first novella Ziddi, which she had written in her early twenties was first published in 1941.*

*Chughtai's short stories reflected the cultural legacy of the region in which she lived. She touched upon new topics which were considered taboo when Urdu literature was in its infancy and its scope of topics was very limited. Ismat wrote eloquently on the issues of women belonging to the lower and lower middle class.*

**About the Story** Set during the days of the partition of India, in Mawar in western India, Chughtai's story 'Roots' raises issues about nationality, belonging and communal feeling.

With two families occupying centre-stage, one Hindu, the other Muslim, Chughtai moves backward in time telling the reader anecdotes and incidents about the close relationship which bound three generations of the two families together. The struggle for freedom does not separate them, as in spite of supporting/belonging to different parties they remain friends and continue to care about each other and support each other through all that befalls them. However, with independence, the consequent movement on both sides of the border and all the atrocities committed, both real and reported, their age-old affection is overlaid with suspicion and mistrust. Small incidents are magnified and fear governs their actions so that eventually the Muslim family decides to move to Pakistan. The mother who stays behind, bereft and lonely, is consoled by the Chachi from the Hindu household, but is nonetheless full of nightmarish fears until her family returns, Brought back from the station by the old Doctor Saheb.

Particularly interesting is the way in which Ismat Chughtai keeps a

balanced viewpoint through the story, never giving in to partisan politics or a communal agenda. She also makes some pointed remarks on the ease with which it is possible for some people to uproot themselves and move away from all that has been familiar to them. Through the medium of this story the author raises questions as to what it is that causes any individual to feel connected to a person and a people; whether a common religion is the most important requirement or whether there are other ideas and attitudes which bind individuals and families together.

## **Roots**

The faces were pale. No food was cooked in the house. It was the sixth day of the forced holiday from school for children who were making life miserable for the adults in the house - the same childish tiffs, wrangles, noise and somersaults as though the fifteenth of August had not come at all. The wretched urchins did not realize that the English had left and, while leaving, had inflicted such a deadly wound that it would fester for years to come. India was operated upon by such clumsy hands and blunt knives that thousands of arteries were left open. Rivers of blood flowed, and no one had the strength left to stitch the wounds.

Had it been a normal day, the little devils would have been sent outdoors. But for the last couple of days the atmosphere had become so foul that the Muslims of the city were virtually living under siege. The houses were padlocked, and the police patrolled outside. So the children were free to let loose their terror inside the house. Of course, the Civil Lines was quiet as usual. In any case, filth spreads where there is a surfeit of children, poverty and ignorance - preying grounds for religious fanaticism, the seeds of which had already been sown. On top of it, the swelling number of refugees from Punjab created panic among the minority Muslim community. The garbage dump was being raked, and the filth had come on to the road.

There were open skirmishes at two places. However, in the state of Marwar, Hindus and Muslims had much in common and could not be distinguished from one another by their names, features or attire. Those Muslims who came from outside Marwar could be identified easily: they had already crossed the border to Pakistan when they got wind of what was to happen on the fifteenth of August. As far as the old inhabitants of the state were concerned, they had neither the sense nor the status for anyone to talk to them about the complicated India-Pakistan problem. Those who had any sense, understood the situation and had prepared for their security. Among the rest were those who were tempted to go to Pakistan by the rumours that four seers of wheat cost only one rupee there and a cubit-long naan only four annas. They were returning as they realized that to buy four seers of wheat, they needed one rupee and though a cubit-long naan cost a quarter, it still had to be paid for. And those rupees and coins were neither sold nor did they grow in fields. To acquire them was as difficult as was the struggle for existence.

So a serious problem arose when it was openly decided to throw out members of the minority community. The Thakurs told the officer in clear terms: 'Look, the people are so intermingled that, for combing Muslims out, you need staff, which involves wasteful expense. However, if you want to buy a plot of land for the refugees, that can be arranged. Only animals live in the forest, and they can be driven away any moment.

Only a few select families remained - they were mostly in the employ of the Maharaja, and there was no question of their leaving. There were also those who were packing their bags and preparing to leave. Ours was one such family. Till Barre Bhai returned from Ajmer, there was no urgency. But as soon as he returned, he tried to create panic, yet no one paid heed. As a matter of fact, no one would have taken him seriously if Chabban Mian—may Allah grant him prosperity - had not played a trick. Having tried in vain to persuade his family to emigrate to Pakistan, Barre Bhai had almost given up when Chabban Mian decided to co-inscribe

'Pakistan Zindabad' on the school wall. Roopchandji's children were up in arms and wrote Akhand Hindustan'. This led to a fight, to intimidation and death threats. As the matter got out of hand, the police were called in, and the few Muslim children on the spot were put into a lorry and sent home.

Now behold! When these children reached home their mothers, who were always too ready to curse them invoking cholera and plague on their head, ran out of their houses solicitously and held them to their bosom. In normal circumstances, if Chabba had come home after a fight with Roopchandji's children, Dulhan Bhabi would have served him a few resounding slaps and sent him to Roopchandji for administering a castor oil and quinine mixture. Roopchandji was not only our family doctor but was Abba's long-standing friend as well. His sons were my brothers' friends and his daughters-in-law were friends of my sisters-in-law. This close friendship extended to the children. The two families were so close to each other over three generations that no one had the slightest suspicion that the country's partition would rupture their relationship.

There were, of course, members of the Muslim League, the Congress and the Hindu Mahasabha in both families, who held fierce debates on religious and political matters. But it was more like a football or a cricket match. If Abba was a Congresswala, Doctor Saheb and Barre Bhai were supporters of the League. Gyan Chand was a Mahasabhai while Manjhle Bhai was a communist and Gulab Chand a socialist. Women and children supported the party patronized by their husband or father. When an argument ensued, it was usually the Congress supporters who tipped the scales. Abuses were hurled at the socialists and the communists, but they would both end up siding with the Congress. That would leave the League and the Mahasabha to act in unison. They were each other's enemy but invariably got together to attack the Congress.

However, over the last couple of years, there was a groundswell of support for both the League and the Mahasabha. The Congress was in disarray. The entire new crop of the family, with the exception of one or



two impartial Congressmen, spruced themselves up like the National Guards under the command of Barre Bhai. On the other side a small group of Sevak Sangh was raised under Gyan Chand's leadership. But this did not strain mutual affection and friendship.

'My Lallu will marry none but Munni,' the Mahasabha Cyan I hand would tell Munni's father, the Leaguer. 'We'll bring gold anklets for her.'

Yaar, I hope they won't simply be gold-plated,' Barre Bhai would have a dig at Gyan Chand's trade.

If the National Guards wrote 'Pakistan Zindabad' on the walls, the party of Sevak Sangh would wipe it out and write 'Akhand Hindustan'. This was the time when the formation of Pakistan was still a matter of jokes and jibes.

Abba and Roopchandji would listen to all this and smile. They would make plans for a United Asia.

Untouched by politics, Amma and Chachi would talk of spices like coriander and turmeric and their daughters' dowries. The daughter-in-law were busy aping each other's fashions. Besides salt, pepper, etc., medicines also came from Doctor Saheb's place. If one sneezed, one ran there. If anyone fell sick, Amma would make rotis thick with pulses, and dahi vadas. An invitation would be sent to Doctor Saheb who would arrive holding the hands of his grandsons.

His wife would say, 'Don't eat there, do you hear?'

And how would I collect my fees, then? Listen, send Lala and Chunni as well.'

'Hai Ram, you've no shame,' Chachi would mutter.

It was great fun when Amma fell sick. 'No, I'll not allow this joker to treat me,' she would say. But who would go to call in a doctor from the city when there was one at home? Doctor Saheb would come as soon as he heard of Amma's illness.

He'd tease, 'If you gobble up all pulao-zarda, how can you avoid falling ill?' Amma would retort from behind the purdah, 'Everyone's not

like you.'

Well, why make excuses? If you want to see me, just send word, and I'll be here. You need not fake illness!' he'd say with a mischievous smile. Amma would jerk her hand back in mock anger and mutter curses. Abba would smile indulgently.

If Doctor Saheb came to see a patient, everyone else would line up for a check-up. If one had stomach problems, another a pimple; others had either an inflammation of the ear or a swollen nose.

'What a nuisance, Deputy Saheb! I'll give poison to one or two. Do you take me for a vet that you pounce on me like a pack of animals?' Doctor Saheb would go on muttering while examining them.

Whenever he came to know that a new baby was expected, he would explode: 'Hunh! The doctors for free. Procreate as many times as you want, and make my life miserable!'

But as soon as the labour pain started, he would pace restlessly between our veranda and his. He caused panic with his screams and shouts rendering it difficult for the neighbours to come. The would-be father would be slapped vigorously and castigated for his foolhardiness.

But as soon as the newborn's cry reached his ears, he would leap from the veranda to the door and then into the room, followed by Abba in a state of nervousness. The women would resent and curse them and then go behind the purdah. He would examine the pulse of the mother and pat her back, 'Good show, my lioness.' Then he would cut the umbilical cord and bathe the baby. Abba would nervously act as a clumsy nurse to him. Then Amma would start screaming, 'God's curse! These men have no business to be here.' Under the circumstances, both would slink away like two chastized children.

When Abba was paralysed, Roopchandji had retired and his medical practice was restricted to his own house and ours. Abba was being treated by some other doctors, but Roopchandji would keep constant vigil along with Amma and the nurses... After Abba's passing away, he felt a

new sense of responsibility besides the affection he had towards the members of our family. He would go to the children's school to get the fees waived, prevent Gyan Chand from charging on the girls' dowry. In the house, nothing was done without consulting him. So much so that when it was suggested that two rooms be added to the western wing of the house, the plan was scrapped at Doctor Saheb's instance.

'Why don't you build two rooms upstairs, instead,' he suggested, and it was acted upon. Fajjan was not ready to opt for science in FA; Doctor Saheb thrashed him with his shoes, and the issue was resolved. When Farida fought with her husband and returned home, her husband sought Doctor Saheb's help. As Sheela entered his family as the wife of his younger son, the problem of having to hunt for a inn I wife was solved. She would run from the hospital as soon as word was sent. Forget about charging a fee, she'd present the baby with a cap and a kurta on the sixth day.

But today, when Chabba returned after the fight, he was feted as a crusader, a mard-i-ghazi having won a battle. Everyone asked him about his daring acts. Only Amma was mute, as she had been from the fifteenth of August when the tricolour was hoisted on the roof of Doctor Saheb's house and the Muslim League flag on ours. Between these two flags there was a chasm miles wide. Amma would look at its bottomless depth with her melancholy eyes and shudder. Then, like a deluge, refugees began to arrive. As the relatives of the eldest daughter-in-law arrived from Bhawalpur having lost all their possessions and somehow escaping with their lives, the chasm widened. And then, when the in-laws of Nirmala arrived from Hhawalpur in a half-dead state, the chasm became filled with venom-spewing snakes.

When Choti Bhabi sent word that her son had a stomach ailment, Sheela Bhabi drove the servant away. No one made any comment. Neither did anyone speak about one's ailment in the house. Barri I5habi forgot her fits of hysteria and began to pack up her belongings in haste.

'Don't touch my trunk,' Amma at last broke her silence. Everyone was stunned.

'Aren't you coming with us?' Barre Bhai asked sharply.

'No. Do you think I'll go to die among those Sindhis. God's curse on them! They wander about in flowing burkhas and pyjamas.'

'Why doesn't she go to the younger son in Dhaka?'

Aye, why should she go to Dhaka? Those headhunting Bengalis knead rice in their hands and then slurp it down,' taunted Mumani Bi, Sanjhle Bhai's mother-in-law.

'Then go and stay with Farida at Rawalpindi,' Khala suggested.

'Tauba! May Allah save us from the Punjabis. They speak like the denizens of hell.' My taciturn Amma was rather voluble that day.

'Aye, Bua, you're acting like a woman who would rather sit in the wilderness than seek shelter in anyone's house. Aye, Bi, stop throwing tantrums as though the emperor has invited you, sending his elephants and black horses to pick you up ...' In spite of the grim atmosphere, peals of laughter rang out. Amma's face fell further.

'Stop behaving like children,' Sardar Ali, the leader of the National Guards reprimanded.

'You're talking nonsense. Do you want us to stay back and get killed?'

'You all go. As for me, where shall I go at this age?'

'At the end, do you want your ruin at the hands of these kafirs?' Khala Bi kept count of her luggage. Along with gold and silver, she also stuffed bone powder, dry fenugreek and Multani mitti in bundles. She was taking them along with such care as though the sterling reserves in Pakistani banks would fall without them. Getting angry, Barre Bhai threw away these bundles three times, but she screamed so loudly it was as if Pakistan would become poor without this 'wealth'. Eventually one had to take out the cotton from the mattresses soaked with children's urine and pack them in bundles. Utensils were stuffed into gunny bags, beds

dismantled, and their legs tied together with rope. Right before our eyes the well-equipped house slowly turned into misshapen bundles and boxes.

Now the luggage seemed to have grown legs and danced through the house.

Amma's trunk, however, rested immobile.

'If you have decided to die here, no one can stop you,' Bhai Saheb said finally. And my simple, innocent looking Amma stared at the sky with her wandering eyes as though asking herself, "Who could kill me? When?'

'Amma has become senile. She's not all there,' Manjhle Bhai whispered.

What does she know how the kafirs have tortured innocents! At least life and property will be safe if we have a land of our own.'

If my taciturn Amma had had a sharp tongue, she would have retorted: What's this strange bird called 'our land'? Tell me where's that land? This is the place where one was born, one grew up in body and mind. If this cannot be one's own land, then how can the place where one simply goes and settles down for a couple of days be one's own? And who knows whether one won't be driven out from there as well and be told 'Go and inhabit a new land'? I am like a lamp in its last gasp. A mild gust of wind and all this fuss about choosing a land will be over. After all, this game of one's land vanishing, and inhabiting a new land, is not very interesting. There was a time when the Mughals left their country to inhabit a new country. And today you want to establish a new one. As though the land is no better than a pair of shoes—if it gets a title tight, throw it away and i',et a new one.' But she was silent, and her face looked more weary than before, as though she, after her quest for a land over centuries, was exhausted. And she seemed to have lost herself in that quest.

Time passed on, but Amma stayed steadfast in her position like a banyan tree that stands upright through storms and blizzards. But when the caravan consisting of her sons and daughters, sons-in-law, daughters-

in-law and grandchildren passed through the big gate and got on to the lorries under police supervision, her heart fluttered. Her restless eyes gazed helplessly towards the other side of the chasm. The house on the other side seemed as far removed as a fleeting cloud in the distant sky. The veranda of Roopchandji's house was desolate. Once or twice when the children came out, they were dragged in quickly. But Amma's tearful eyes caught glimpses of those eyes behind the door and chiks, eyes that were brimming over with tears.

When the lorries left kicking up a lot of dust, some dead soul on the left side seemed to take a breather. The door opened and Roopchandji emerged with heavy steps and gazed at the vacant house like a thief. For some time, he tried to trace the images of those who had left in the dust haze. Failing, his gaze wandered for a while in the desolation and got fixed to the ground.

Having surrendered all the assets of her life to the mercy of God, Amma stood in the desolate courtyard. Her heart sank, and she got scared like a small child, as though ghosts would pounce on her from all sides. She felt giddy and supported herself against a pillar. As she turned to the room in front, her heart came to her mouth. It was here that the ghunghat was lifted from the moon-like face of the young and timorous bride who had surrendered her life to her husband: In the room on the other side, her eldest daughter had been born, whose memory pierced through her heart like lightning. There, in the corner, her umbilical cord was buried. In fact, all her children had their umbilical cords buried there. Ten images of flesh and blood—ten human beings were born in that hallowed room from the sacred womb which they left behind that day. They had left her hung in thorns like an old snake-slough and made good their escape. In search of peace and contentment, looking for the place where wheat was sold for four seers a rupee. The voices of her children filled the room. She ran towards it with outstretched arms, but her lap was empty. The lap that newly wedded brides touched for luck, so that their wombs would not

remain barren. The room lay desolate, and she returned, terror-stricken.

However, she could not stop the flight of her imagination. Tottering, she ran to another room, the one where her life-partner had breathed his last after fifty years of married life. Wrapped in the shroud, his body had been laid near the door. The whole family had stood around it. He was fortunate to have passed away, lamented by his dear ones. But he left me behind, I who lie here today like an enshrouded corpse, uncared for. Her legs gave way, and she slumped at the spot where the head of her dead husband had rested and where she had been lighting lamps with trembling hands for the last ten years. But there was no oil in the lamp that day, and the wick had burnt out.

Roopchandji was pacing up and down his veranda. He was cursing everyone—his wife, children, the government and the silent street that stretched before him—also the bricks and stones, the knives and daggers. Indeed, the whole universe seemed to be afraid and cringe before his torrent of curses. His special target was the vacant house that stood across the road and seemed to taunt him as though he had broken it, brick by brick, with his own hands. He was wrenching out the things that were deeply entrenched in his very existence, like roots, but felt as though his flesh would come off his body with them. Eventually, he gave up the effort with a groan, and his curses stopped abruptly. He stopped pacing, got into the car and 'sped away.

As night descended and the street corner became desolate, Roopchandji's wife entered our house stealthily through the back door holding two trays of food. The two old women sat across each other silently. They were mute, but the eyes communicated everything. The food trays remained untouched. When two women indulge in backbiting, their tongues run like scissors; but when they are overwhelmed with emotion, their lips get sealed.

Alone in the house, Amma was oppressed by painful thoughts throughout the night. 'I hope they won't be done away with on the way.

Nowadays, whole trainloads of people are being slaughtered' – so ran her thoughts. She had nursed the crop with her heart's blood through fifty years, and that day it had been exiled from its own land in find a new land. 'Who knows whether the new soil will be conducive to these saplings or make them wilt. These poor saplings! Choti Bahu - may Allah protect her - her baby is due any moment. Who knows in which wilderness she will deliver it. They left everything - their homestead, job, business. Have the vultures

left anything for them in the new land? Or will they have to return soon? When they return, will they get the opportunity to develop their roots again? When knows whether this old skeleton of mine will be a witness to the return of spring?'

She kept on muttering to herself for hours, clutching the walls and parapets of the house. Then she slumped on the floor. There was no question of sleep amidst the nightmare in which she saw the mutilated corpse of her youthful daughter, her young daughter-in-law being paraded naked and the grandchildren being cut to pieces. Perhaps she had dozed off for a moment or two when she heard a great commotion at the door. One may not care for one's life, but even a lamp whose oil has run out shudders before its final gasp. 'Is natural death less terrifying that it should come in the form of men who have turned into demons? People say that they catch even old women by their locks and drag them along the street so violently that their skins come off revealing the bones. And then, the horrors of the world are let loose in such a manner that the horrors of hell pale into insignificance.'

The pounding on the door became more violent. Malik-ul-Maut, the angel of death, seemed to be in a hurry. The lights came on. A voice came from afar, as though from the bottom of a well. Perhaps the eldest son was calling out. No, it seemed like the voice of the younger ones from some hidden corner of the other world.

So, everyone has reached the new land? So fast? She could clearly



see the younger son and the youngest standing along with their wives and children. Then, all of a sudden, the whole house came back to life. The souls came alive and stood around the grieving mother. The hands of the old and the young touched her tenderly. Soft smiles spread on her dry lips. Apprehensions swirled and vanished in the overwhelming tumult of happiness.

As she opened her eyes, she felt the touch of familiar fingers on her pulse. 'Sorry, Bhabi, if you want to see me, just send word, and I'll be here. You need not fake illness.' Roopchandji said from behind the curtain. 'Bhabi, today I must be paid my fees. Look, I have brought back your good-for-nothing children from Loni junction. Scoundrels! They were running away. They were not ready to trust even the police superintendent.'

Again, a smile blossomed forth on the old lips. She sat up. There was silence for a while. Then two pearls of warm tears trickled down and fell on Roopchandji's wrinkled hands.

*Translated from Urdu by M. Asaduddin*

## **Glossary**

1. **tiffs, wrangles:** slight arguments, squabbles
2. **surfeit:** an amount or number that is more than necessary
3. **chastise:** to criticize severely
4. **feted:** praised or welcomed publicly due to their achievements

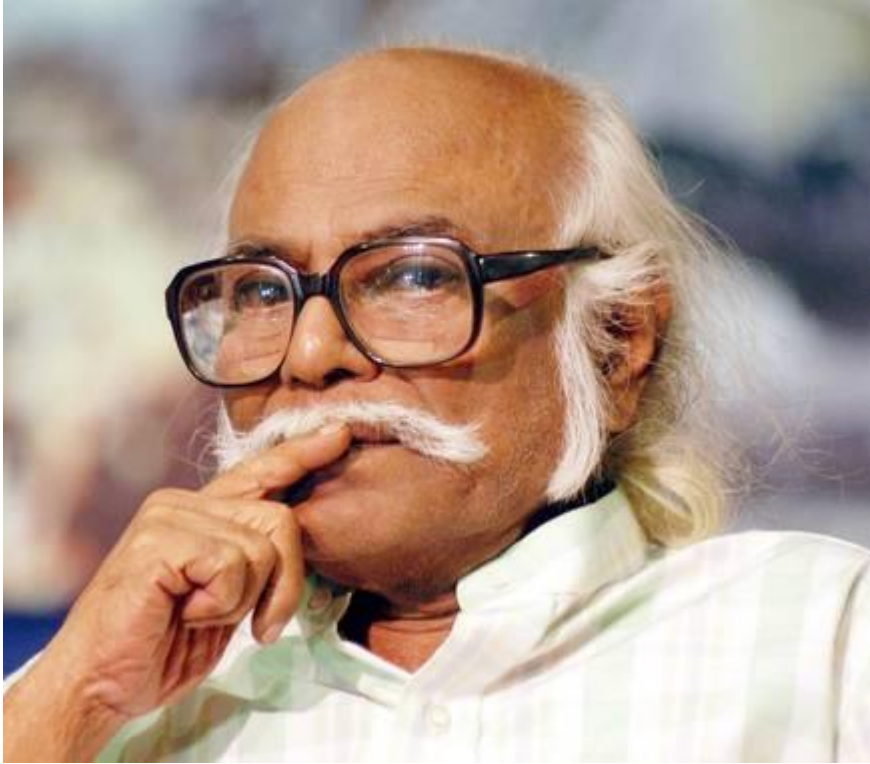
## **Suggested Questions**

1. Given the differences between the two families at the center of the story, identify and list the reasons why they are nonetheless close friends, almost family. (This requires you to firstly identify the differences, and then read

into the anecdotes, incidents and actions that transform the relationship from neighborliness to bonds of kinship.)

2. How does the prevailing communal discord infiltrate the two households? Distinguish the stages in the deterioration of the relationship and also the characters who get carried away by the rhetoric of communal violence and hatred.
3. Why, do you think, certain characters within the story retain their sanity and their emotional equilibrium in spite of the evidence before their eyes? What is it that they balance against the senseless brutality they see around them?
4. Though Chughtai's tale shows the reader the ferocity and rage of communal violence it ends with a message of hope. Within the text find words and phrases that directly contribute to creating these two moods.
5. The author uses a number of similes and metaphors in the text (in the first paragraph there is the metaphor of India being operated upon, in the second paragraph the last line about the garbage dump being raked is also a metaphor—many of the metaphors have to do with unsettling and/or brutal realities, which then reflect the times in which the story is set). What is the effect achieved by the liberal use of these figures of speech?
6. The title is itself a metaphor which is then evoked repeatedly within the text and also expanded (there is a passage in which Amma is compared to a banyan tree). Analyse and expand the idea of 'roots' in the context of the story and the 'uprootings' that occur.

## Heroine



***By D Jayakanthan  
(24 April 1934 – 8 April 2015)***

***About the Author:*** D. Jayakanthan (24 April 1934 – 8 April 2015), was an Indian writer, journalist, orator, filmmaker, critic and activist. Born in Cuddalore, he dropped out of school at the age of 9 and went to Chennai (Madras). He was part of the Communist Party of India. In his entire career he has written about 40 novels and around 200 short stories. He has also penned two autobiographies. He was not only a writer he also two films. He has

Jayakanthan's has won many accolades for his works. He is the recipient of the greatest honour for literature of our country the 'Jnanpith Award' for his works. He has also won Sahitya Akademi award. He was awarded Padma Bhushan in (2009). He has the honour of receiving the Soviet Land Nehru Award in 1978, and the Russian government's Order of Friendship (2011).

**About the Story:** This Jayakanthan's story 'Herovukku oru Heroine' was translated from Tamil by Deepalakshmi J. His works deal with common man and the issues that he faces in his day-to-day life. Many of his novels and stories focus more on psychological aspects of human nature in context with the social concerns. He discusses the marital issues arising in a normal South Indian family and the conflict arising between old beliefs or values and Modern life style practices.

*The Heroine* (Herovukku oru heroine) is a short story where the female protagonist Madhuram's husband Sitharaman being a typical Male chauvinist, is very confident of his wife's kind nature and so sends his girlfriend and colleague Kamala to her to persuade her to accept Kamala as part of the family. Hero is the nick name given to him by his colleagues. It's because he acts in all the plays staged by his office's recreational club and he is always the hero of the play. Kamala acted as his heroine in his recent play, and he wants Kamala in his life. Sitaraman has never valued the role of his wife in his life. Madhuram owns the house they live in and has enough tenements which she has let out, and the luxury life he leads is because Madhuram takes care of most of the expenses. He has taken her kindness and innocence for granted.

Madhuram is shocked to know that the hero of her life has another lady as his heroine. She is very upset to know that he does not value her feelings. Kamala requests Madhuram to let her share her life and Madhuram tells her to take her entire life. She tells Kamala that she does not believe in sharing and she asks Kamala to go to Sitaraman and take care of him. She out rightly refuses not only to share her life with Kamala but she refuses to share it even with Sitaraman. She now has realised that she has wasted her life slogging for a man who does not value her.

Kamala realises that when a less educated woman can be bold enough to

declare that she can survive without a man, She, a lady who is educated does not need an irresponsible man like Sitaraman in her life or as the father for her unborn child and decides to convey this to Sitaraman through a letter.

Sitaraman walks into the house with the impression of convincing his wife, but when she gives him her ultimatum, that her children will either have a mother or a father, he leaves the house not with concern but with fear that he may have to take the responsibility of his two girls.

Jayakanthan through Madhuran has passed the message to a ‘woman’ that she is strong enough to achieve anything in life and she can survive without a man.

## **The Heroine**

For the past 15 minutes, Sitaraman is glued to the mirror, engrossed in the all-important task of setting stylish waves on his neatly brushed hair.

The room smells heavily of hairspray, whitening cream, perfume, deodorant and the like. All of his various grooming products are scattered helter-skelter over the little dressing table, in the midst of which lies his shaving set, just-used, unwashed, with the lather still on it.

He who spends over half an hour to groom himself has neither the time nor the patience to clean his shaving set. He doesn't need to. To dutifully perform all those tasks and more, lives Madhuran, who now stands in the doorway watching him.

Madhuran is inherently proud of her husband about a lot of things. Every Morning, as she wakes him up with his bed coffee, she feels a glint of pride about his over sleeping!

Having finished all the other household chores, when she piles up his barely-worn shirts to wash, she feels an amused pride as she fishes out a soaked cigarette packet from one of its pockets, imagining his impish grin, if he were around.

She hands him a new handkerchief everyday as he leaves for work; Ah! His sheepish look when asked about the one she gave the previous

day; she is delightfully proud of that as well!

One wonders what the secret behind her relentless hard work and cheerful servitude towards her could be utterly irresponsible husband—a father of two daughters, at that.

As it is no secret if it gets past the soul it lurks within, only Madhuram knows why. Yes, one doubts even Sitaraman is aware of it. Had he even the slightest sensibility or wisdom about it, could he display such selfish indifference towards all that she cheerfully and selflessly does for him?

However, Madhuram wouldn't hear of his alleged indifference. 'He's always been like that!' she would reassure herself. His looks, stride, way of talking—all carry a unique sense of style that appears to be conceit but it isn't! After all, doesn't she know him the best?!

That Sitaraman is very popular as a happy-go-lucky chap among his colleagues is not because they know all about his wife. Yes, they like to call him 'Hero Sitaraman', for he performs in all the plays at his office recreation club. And, of course, he always plays the 'hero' and hence the name. Nobody has ever questioned if he's worthy of the role. Contrarily, everyone including himself believes that he's the only one so qualified!

They hail him that blessed with such good looks and luck, he's sure to land a meaty 'hero' role in the movies someday.

So Sitaraman, with a high-and-mighty air that his mere presence adorns the office, sits at his desk doing practically nothing. He gets away with shirking work, joking and laughing the whole day, while his colleagues slog their backs off, listening to him, giggling, bewitched by his charm.

Even bachelors' envy and wonder how Sitaraman, a father of two kids, is able to pull off such a fine lifestyle that includes expensive clothes, movie-going, and exorbitant spending.

Little do they know that it's only because Sitaraman is a family man, married to a woman like Madhuram that he's able to live with such luxury that they are unable to afford, though they are single.

Of course, they have no means to realize this. It doesn't even matter if they did not. And according to Madhuram, even Sitaraman need not; however, Sitaraman, for the sake of his own soul, surely ought to have realized it?

But our hero Sitaraman is oblivious and totally indifferent towards everything including his job, family, wife, and even life per se. His only object in life is that imminent 'hero role' that is sure to come his way.

Therefore, grooming himself with utmost care, he goes to work and sits at his desk, only to collect his unearned pay every month, waiting for the 'movie chance'. Haven't many people been lucky that way? His eyes shine with a constant glimmer of absolute arrogance.

And so, the stenographer Kamala, captivated by those handsome eyes, recently played the well-matched heroine for this 'hero'. Just as today, Madhuram was ecstatic to watch them both together on the stage, playing hero and heroine.

Stepping back from the mirror to admire his looks, now complete with his silk shirt unbuttoned at the top, revealing a gold chain and sweeping trousers that carelessly brush over his glossy shoes, he catches sight of Madhuram standing in a corner of the room, wiping sweat and soot off her face and drying her wet hands with her saree pallu.

Seeing that he has noticed her, she smiles at him through the reflection. Approaching him with the same smiling face, she says in a kind voice: 'Listen, this month onwards, I am arranging a lunch-service for you. You are eating only breakfast before leaving for work. Having done that, if you lunch out daily at random places, what happens to your health?' He hardly seems to be listening, though he brings both his hands forward, placing them on her shoulders, and looks sharply into her eyes; and quite unusually, he seems lost in some deep thought.

'Why are you looking at me that way?' says Madhuram, looking down and blushing.

'Hmm, you were saying something. I was not listening,' he asks disinterestedly, hesitant to reveal his actual thoughts.

'Oh, what were you thinking so deeply about? Any new play in which you're acting?' chuckles Madhuram. As he shakes his head, the curly locks gently brush his forehead. Gazing fondly, Madhuram explains. 'Why should you spoil your health eating out every day? I have made arrangements for a lunch-service. Starting tomorrow, you'll have your lunch brought to your workplace. How about that? I have done right, haven't I?' She doesn't expect him to go into raptures, though. He, who

couldn't care less, replies, 'What's the big deal about lunch, do whatever...' and brushes the matter aside. However, agitated about something else, his arms still around her neck, he addresses her in his sweetest manner, 'Madhuras...'

'What do you want?' she asks him lovingly; he smiles in reply. Madhuras is bewildered at this dilly-dallying, which is quite unlike him. He usually pays her no heed as he hurries out, whistling to himself.

Sitaraman does not reply, but turns around in thoughtful silence, retrieves his wallet, and opens it. That's when he remembers his salary, which he ought to have handed to her as early as the previous day. She takes the cash he hands her and counts—50 rupees.

'What's this? Where's the rest of your pay?' only her eyes question him, at which he smiles. She smiles back, satisfied too! That's it. The issue is resolved then and there.

Can one run an entire household relying on such a husband's earnings?

Madhuras's mother had left her this house when she passed away. Madhuras has kept the front portion for themselves and has let out the rear portions on rent. She also keeps a couple of cows and sells milk to her tenants. She never minds any of the hardships in bringing up her two little girls and this husband of hers, and deems it her own pleasure; however, she often wonders what he does with his salary—all of 170 rupees. She also consoles herself and forgives everything with the lame excuse, 'Oh, men have their own expenses!' Nevertheless, is she not obliged to make him realize his faults, albeit in a subtle way?

'This is why I tell you—eating out is a waste of money, as well as spoils your health. From the day you began eating out, you have gone down half in weight. From tomorrow, I am sending over your lunch-carrier for sure.' As she reiterates the matter again, he loses patience and yells: 'Alright, alright! I heard you. I'll eat any damned thing you send. Shan't go out to any damned place to eat; happy?' He leaves.

Madhuras's eyes fill with tears at the thought that he misunderstood her good intentions and that she has angered him, just as he leaves for work.

But surprisingly, Sitaraman, who left in a huff, stops for a moment at the doorway. Composing himself in a second, he turns around and sees Madhuras with her head hung and eyes wet.



Sitaraman goes to her and holding her in a tight embrace and asks, ‘Hey, are you upset?’

Madhura is now even more perplexed. ‘Oh, why should I be?’ she smiles, her eyelashes still wet. She realizes that her husband is beating around the bush only to get something out of her, but also wonders why. She stares at the 50 rupees in her hand.

‘Madhu, Madhu, won’t you come in, I have something to tell you,’ putting on a false expression of cheer, he ushers her back inside the room with his arm around her. The cheer dies down though, as soon as he sits down on the bed.

‘What is the matter? Tell me,’ hands on her waist, she asks him. She senses the notes clenched in her fist. She is almost sure that he wants them back and if so, she is not going to refuse.

‘Nothing...I have been thinking it over...it’s good for you too in a way...’ he falters, unable to bring himself to say what he really wants to. Watching his plight, Madhura sits beside him with a reassuring smile.

‘What are you hemming and hawing about...huh? What is it?’ She turns his chin towards her. Her eyes shine with the goodwill that meant ‘I shall give you whatever you ask.’ Finding his head still hung, she rises to leave, affecting impatience, ‘Fine, I’ve got work to do.’

‘Stay!’ he pulls her into a tight hug and brings his face close to hers, seemingly passionate. ‘Madhu, do you really mean it when you always say my happiness is just as yours?’ Her cheeks burn with his breath.

‘Yes, what of that now? Look, your clothes are getting creased; you need to leave for work,’ Madhura, draws herself from him.

‘I believe “his majesty” has exceeded his expenses beyond the limit last month,’ Madhura says to herself. ‘Maybe it was just pretence giving me this money and now he wants it back, but why? Can’t I do without these 50 rupees? I can manage somehow along with my other hardships. I feel sorry for him begging and fussing like this. But what does he do with so much money? I wonder!’ Though her mind wanders this way and that, thanks to her strict traditional upbringing, she firmly believes that a man, and a husband at that, is above such scrupulous interrogation about money matters, and so remains silent with a forlorn smile.

He goes on speaking, his lips caressing her earlobes: ‘I have a favour

to ask of you. It's not just for me, which is why I hesitate so much. You know Kamala, my colleague, the stenographer?' His voice breaks at these words.

'Who? Your heroine, Kamala?' Madhuram asks scathingly.

'Hmm, as though he is thrifty enough, he is also up to charity, I believe. Such vanity,' she murmurs to herself. Meanwhile, she also expected a reply when she emphasized on the words 'your heroine'.

The other day when they returned home from the play, he asked her playfully, 'So, what do you think of my heroine, eh?'

'Ah, your heroine indeed!' she pretended to be annoyed.

'Hey! Only in the play. Aren't you my real heroine?' This is what she wants to hear again.

Sitaraman distractedly nods his head, though. 'Yes, she's the one. She'll come home this afternoon, here! Whatever she asks of you, you must give wholeheartedly. Will you? She trusts you a lot. She'd be greatly indebted to you for this favour you'd be granting her. Poor thing, she is a very good girl; has nobody for herself.' As Sitaraman went on so compassionately, Madhuram finds it distasteful. She does not like it. She actually gets slightly irritated.

'Okay, okay, let her come. Aren't you getting late?' she hastily tries to distract him.

'Oh yes! Goodbye now,' Sitaraman takes her leave.

Madhuram is unable to put things together. She tries to envisage the childish face of Kamala who performed with her husband. 'Why should this man be so concerned about lending her money? 'As her mind deduces the various possible explanations for this, she rebukes herself saying, 'Gosh, how could I be so unfairly judgemental about a woman?'

That's Madhuram's disposition. Be it her husband or her household problems or her children's disputes, she easily finds an excuse for everything. For how can she spend all her day dwelling on such thoughts? Oh, in about an hour both her little girls will be back from school, hungry! All her husband's and children's clothes soaked in soapy water are waiting to be washed...the cooking pot is boiling in the kitchen...the cows need to be fed...how many chores to be done—she is both stressed and excited about completing all these tasks in front of her. Immediately, she forgets

everything, and as the very first task, she picks up her husband's neglected shaving set and runs into the bathroom to clean it.

After two in the afternoon, she gets a little rest. In that short while, less than an hour, she spreads her pallu on the drawing room floor and lies down near the back door, so as to enjoy the good breeze from the backyard. Before long, she'd be satisfied. She'd wake up, wash her face and sit down to comb her hair. If not for then, she can never find time to comb her hair at all. 'So what?' you ask. Well, how much ever a woman bustles with the oddest of chores, she ought not to look dirty and shabby when her husband comes back home; it is a bad omen for the family. Therefore, she would finish prettying herself up by as early as three in the afternoon.

So, what does this mean? Does she expect his arrival starting 3 pm? The flower seller comes at 4 pm. That's her time. And she has two little girls for whom she buys flowers too. But it's not true that she buys flowers only for their sake, as she claims!

Around dusk, she comes and stands at the front door, every now and then. She wants him to be surprised. 'Is this the same woman that I saw with shabby hair and dirty clothes in the morning?'

He would mostly pay her no notice as he enters. She would be unperturbed though. Sometimes he would smile at her decking up. She would not understand the scorn behind it.

This afternoon as she lays the mirror against the wall and begins combing her hair, she parts her hair and looks keenly at the grey lock on her forehead. 'Well, it gets hidden when you apply oil and braid your hair, doesn't it?'

She arrives just when Madhuram is oiling her hair. Anxious that the 'heroine Kamala' should not see her grey hair, Madhuram hastily picks up the comb and goes inside the bedroom and starts tying it into a bun. She asks herself though: 'Why? What if she sees my grey hairs? Why am I so concerned that she shouldn't?'

'Am I feeling insecure that the perfectly suited heroine would mock at me, his unsuitable real-life heroine?'

Kamala enters. 'Come dear; the last I saw you was at that play. Why don't you come home often? Please sit down. I'll be right there.' Carefully pressing down her front locks several times, Madhuram walks back into

the front hall smiling amiably.

‘Oh, why do you stand? Please sit down,’ offering her a seat on the two-seater bamboo sofa, she sits down opposite her on a single seater. That’s her usual hostess seat.

Seating herself, Kamala looks around, ‘Where are the children?’

‘They’re not yet back from school.’

‘Oh, the little one has started school too, has she?’

‘Yes, just this year. One day she’d go happily, throw tantrums the other!’ Madhuram smiles. There is a dearth of conversation for about a second. Madhuram quickly covers it by continuing to talk about her younger child. ‘If she doesn’t go to school, she behaves in such an unruly manner at home. My elder one is so docile. Goodness knows how this one is so naughty! She hates to put anything on. The moment she’s back from school, she pulls off her dress and underpants and runs around the house stark naked. I’ve even tried thrashing her, but to no avail!’ Madhuram vivaciously describes her child’s antics.

‘Oh, she’s just a child,’ Kamala now retrieves a biscuit tin and two big chocolate packets from her handbag and places them on the sofa.

Madhuram is perplexed. ‘Why should she who’s in need of money herself, spend so much on these?’

As usual she makes an excuse. ‘She is visiting us for the first time and felt she had to get something.’ She still asks, ‘What’s the need to get all this? Waste of money.’

‘Oh Akka! Must you talk as though to a stranger?’ Kamala asks Madhuram with an air of intimacy.

As Madhuram smiles good-humouredly at Kamala, she takes in her attire, make-up, hairstyle, and scrutinizes them all just as a goldsmith would inspect a gold ornament. She puts the kettle on and returns.

Waiting in vain for Kamala to speak, Madhuram begins herself, ‘Just this morning he was saying...’

‘Oh, what did he say?’ Kamala asks startled.

‘Oh, nothing. Only that you’ll come to visit. And well, he also said you have nobody. I wanted to ask him then and there, but there wasn’t time. Who do you live with? Which is your native place? If not parents, you must have some kin for sure?’ Madhuram piles up all her questions as one.

Kamala does not answer at once. She just sits there head down; her head lowers and lowers until the nerves on her neck swell and shiver; her earlobes turn pink. As she raises her head again, her eyes are reddened with tears.

Madhuram panics. 'Have I asked something amiss?' She draws near Kamala and kindly asks her, 'Why are you upset, dear?'

'I came to ask you of a favour, thinking of you as my own sister.' Choking with unsaid emotions, Kamala bites her lip, unable to say anymore.

'I lost my parents at an early age and went through school, living with many hardships at my uncle's. Somehow having secured a job, I earned my freedom from that hell. But how long can I stay at a hostel and live a companionless life? As Kamala asks this with her nose quivering with tears, Madhuram clearly empathizes with her situation.

Why? You could get married, make your own family and live like a queen. What are you lacking in? You are not even an illiterate like me. Is this what you are upset about? She comforts Kamala.

Kamala lets out a sigh. 'Marriage and stuff happen to only those with kith and kin or responsible guardians. I have none. In these 26 years of life, I got used to this fact and had resolved to live my life all alone. But he has been the only one who showed this orphan affection and has done a lot for me- Mr Sitaraman.' As Kamala said this and stopped speaking, the two women look at each other carefully.

Madhuram has a sudden premonition, a firm belief; it is not evident in her facial expressions. Undiscernible, it nails her as a statue and she now looks at kamala with piercing eyes. Kamala on her part, realizes that Madhuram had understood her intentions in coming here, and gapes back at her.

'What if she refuses me? What if she affronts me and drives me away? And what if she calls for justice and insults me in front of a huge crowd? With panic building up within her steadily, Kamala lets out a huge sob and drops her head on Madhuram's palms, wailing.

Now, Madhuram asks nothing but continues to stare into the now epty space as Kamala has moved and fallen into her arms.

Weeping bitterly, Kamala grabs Madhuram's hands tightly and finally manages to say: "I beg you to share your life with me, Akka.'

Holding tears as a shield, she has sliced Madhuram's heart with a mighty sword.

'You must show this orphan a way. My reputation depends on you. Please forgive my betrayal towards you and save me. Your child and my unborn one, are but the same, Akka!'

Now, she has drawn the sword and brought it down heavily, one more time. Madhuram shuts her eyes and bites her lips, mustering all the courage in her heart to bear this.

'I'll never forget this as long as I live. I shall remain indebted to you and your family; I mean our family....'

Madhuram cuts her in...'Enough Kamala! That's enough. Oh my God! This unbearable!' Wounded beyond measure Madhuram falls on the sofa shaking her head, shivering with agony.

Then, for at least half an hour, Madhuram stays still, her eyes shut.

Having said everything, and expecting Madhura's consent and reply, Kamala sits there trembling with fear and anticipation.

She feels deeply about Madhuram's plight as well. Contrary to her fears, Madhuram has neither yelled nor cursed her, and so she is guilt-ridden for having broken such a kind heart. She is overcome with sobs now.

Thus, sobbing quietly for a long time, she comes near Madhuram and nudges her, 'Akka! Akka!'

Madhuram opens her eyes and sits up, her expression completely nonchalant, and her face clear. Her resolute eyes are now as red as rose petals.

'Why are you crying *ma*? Be brave!' with those words Madhuram rises and goes inside the bedroom. She wishes to be alone for a while. Her eyes are fixed on the bed and his clothes on the coat stand.

As she paces up and down the room with her hands behind her back, Kamala keeps glancing at her.

Madhuram stands in front of the mirror and scans herself; at the same spot where her 'darling' husband stands and grooms himself every day. The grey locks have escaped their hidden place and protrude out having been combed in a hurry. Her face is wrinkled, her body flabby, and she looks much older than her age.

‘How good he looks? Just as I had seen years ago? She now steals a glance at Kamala sitting in the hall. ‘Yes, she’s the right match for him. I have become old! But how? How can I, who’s younger look older than him? It’s not age that has aged me but my stupidity.’ She gnashes her teeth in anger.

She has lost her entire life about him. As she stood admiring him, taking care of his youthfulness, she failed to realize her own youth leaving her.

She thinks about all that now. What is now gnawing at her is not the fact that another woman has stolen her husband, but that she has been so naïve to trust a falsehood and has lost all the sweetest years of life wasted labour and hardships. This now trickles as the bitterest of truths. She stands there staring into vacant space, becoming almost hysterical.

She keeps sighing and sighing. She has no words to speak what she felt. Yet, she is saying to herself. ‘If I bear the entire family responsibility on my head, then it’s no wonder my hair has greyed. Was I like him, without a care in the world? As I stood between every difficulty and him, of course. He could like a hero all his life. Yes, I was happy thinking about him. I had no time to think about even myself. But he has apparently needed more than me Ah, what a huge betrayal? What a shameful exploitation? What a nauseating life I have lived? Oh, dear Amma.....I’ll be damned if I am to see his face again.’ She keeps talking to herself.

Presently she comes to Kamala, looks at her with pity and says: ‘Kamala, what can I do for your fate? You are asking for a share in my life! But what kind of life have I lived? Have I really lived? Please, I entreat you with all my heart. Kindly take the whole of it! For 15 years, I have lived with him and it was all for naught. Oh, what not have I done and faced! It’s alright. You must run along now! Please go tell him there’s no room for him in this house anymore. If I even so much as glance at that face, I might scream and die. 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. You too please understand that. I may have lived for 15 years trusting him, but not a day relying on him; nobody can. He is so! You please hurry up and go tell him that he need not bother coming back. Go! As for your fate, what can I do, tell me? This heroine has had enough.

Doesn't he need another?' With these words, Madhuram walks away.

The determination in her voice and the composure in her words make it evident to Kamala that Madhuram's decision is not impulsive. Head hung; she's fidgeting with her fingernails. Madhuram stands tall and looks at her, eyes filled with sympathy.

She remembers her pleading words, 'Please show a way for this orphan,' and '.... I consider you as my own sister...'

'Kamala, you have counted on me as your own sister and asked me for guidance. How could I do that? My mother was alive then. When I was stubborn that I would marry this man, she tried a lot to dissuade me. But I paid heed to none of her good advice.' Madhuram sheds tears in memory of her mother.

'Maybe she foresaw all this and left this house for me and not her other children. It is this house that takes care of me and my children, Kamala. All the care I ought to have bestowed on this house, and the love on those two cows, I have sinfully wasted on him. 'At these words, Madhuram roars in a sudden rage. 'This is MY house. No stranger can dare cross its threshold.'

Kamala is astounded.

Madhuram quickly retreats, fearing she might blurt out anything too personal, if she stood there any longer.

Kamala's gaze is now fixed on the shut door of Madhuram's room. She buries her face in her hands and sobs bitterly. Why does she sob now? For her own fate?

She recollects Madhuram's strong words: 'This heroine has had enough; the nightmare is over.' She is awed at Madhuram's courage for having disowned him with such gumption. 'Oh! What a woman!' Kamala's chest heaves with pride.

The sheer determination of this woman, who unlike her, has neither the security of education nor a profession, gives Kamala undue confidence that she doesn't need to beg anything from anyone.

'Should I complicate my life anymore?' His face looms in front of her eyes, as if it were the answer. She is now able to clearly discern the abandon in those eyes.

'Such a good wife, all her hard work, her love, her benevolence-he has ruthlessly exploited and what has he done to her in return?' Analyzing



him thus as a third person would, Kamala is filled with a sudden loathing which grows rapidly into a venomous hatred.

Yes, she has not loved him for her rational reasons; it was a weakness. In these few months of acquaintance, she herself has unearthed thousands of reasons to despise him wholeheartedly.

‘Well,’ said Madhuran. ‘What a nauseating life I have lived!’ The depth and reason behind those words open her own eyes as well.

Kamala raises her head and sits up. There shines a new glint of hope in her own eyes.

‘Hmm. If a mother of two is so confident to stand on her own, why can’t I with my yet-to-be born child? And even if we suffer, can this man be my knight-in-arms?’

‘This heroine has had enough too...’ Biting her lips with grit, she opens her handbag, takes out a pen and paper and starts writing a letter.

Sitaraman stands waiting in the park until seven, for Kamala. She was supposed to meet him at six with the ‘good news’. However, he is unperturbed that she hasn’t turned up. He brims with utmost confidence and bravado that nothing contrary to his wishes can ever happen in life!

A wife to earn money, a wife to serve as a doormat—with these imminent selfish desires, he arrives home at eight, whistling gaily as usual. He is doubly excited that there will be two wives waiting to receive him home.

However, as he reaches the hall, he can neither find Kamala nor Madhuran but only his two daughters. His eldest, Uma is sitting on the sofa doing her homework. Little one, Latha stands behind her sister, playing pranks and pulling her plaits. On one side of the sofa, biscuits lie scattered.

Sitaraman feels kicked right in his chest as the kitchen door slams shut as he steps in. He walks towards the kitchen.

Gently he calls out to her, ‘Madhu! Madhu!’ She is leaning over the shut double doors, her frame visible through the narrow opening between them.

Her voice sounds loud and clear ‘If you have any sense of honour, get out of my house. There is no room for you here. This is MY house.’

‘Madhu. Open the door please, I tell you,’ her husband implores, as though tearfully.

‘No, if I so much as get a glimpse of your face, no please! I don’t want the tag of a woman who spat on her husband’s face.’

Sitaraman feels boxed on his ears. Sweat covers his face; he facing the biggest ever disaster in his life!

A sudden gush of anger rises through him!

‘Hey, what are you talking, woman? What will you do if I refuse to leave?’ he kicks at the kitchen the door.

Madhuram laughs hysterically; her laugh sounds like the shattering of a heavy glass vessel. In the midst of her mirth, she says, ‘Good, you stay. Those two children ought to have either their father or mother. By all means you be,’ saying this she tugs off the clothes line in the kitchen. Sitaraman starts panicking. His hands and knees begin shaking. He visualizes what could now happen behind the closed doors. Every moment that he dallies anymore, that rope could tighten a bit more around her neck!

He screams in sheer terror: ‘Madhuram, I am leaving! I am leaving! Here...I am leaving right now!’ he shouts, banging both his hands on the door.

‘Leave!’ Madhuram lashes back with utter disregard and strikes his hand with the rope. Sitaraman fully senses her anger and disgust in that blow.

Madhuram on her part realizes that Sitaraman has not panicked because of his love for her, but because he would be forced to bear the responsibility of the two children after her death. ‘*Chee!*’ She shudders with revulsion.

Finally, against her sweet nature of always finding an excuse for his behaviour, she fully comes to terms with all his failings in their true colours.

Sitaraman runs to his room, hurriedly packs his suitcases and stops for a moment in the hall. Finding a letter in the letterbox, he puts his suitcases down, retrieves it and starts reading.

Both the children, blissfully unaware of what’s happening around them, are happily eating the biscuits and chocolates. Uma takes a bite out of a big chocolate bar, places it by her side and continues to write in her note book. Latha sneaks up beside her and takes a bite out of the same chocolate. Uma picks it up saying ‘*Chee*, your drool! I don’t want it

anymore,’ and hands it back to her little sister.

Little Latha blinks at the chocolate in her hand. She learns that her sister had rejected it, because one is not supposed to eat another’s leftovers. She also realizes that she has just eaten her big sister’s ‘drool’. She is now repulsed too.

‘*Chee.. drool, I don’t want it either!*’ She throws away the chocolate bar and spitting out the remaining bits, wipes her mouth.

The half-bitten chocolate bar falls at Sitaraman’s feet. He glances at it for a second. Crumpling the letter in hand, picking up both the suitcases, he hurries out of the front door.

‘Hey Uma, come here! Appa is going, bye bye!’ calls out Latha running to the front door; Uma follows.

As Sitaraman turns to look at his kids from down the street, they wave their typical good byes, ‘*Appa, tata!*’ Sitaraman’s eyes, the eyes that always shine with a reckless abandon adorning them and making him a hero, now well up and glisten with tears.

## Glossary:

1. **Inherently:** in a natural or innate manner
2. **Raptures:** extreme pleasure and happiness or excitement.
3. **Reiterates:** say something again or a number of times, typically for emphasis or clarity.
4. **Envisage:** contemplate or conceive of as a possibility or a desirable future event.
5. **Amiably:** having or displaying a friendly and pleasant manner.
6. **Empathize:** understand and share the feelings of another.
7. **Undiscernible:** not able to be recognized, identified, or distinguished.
8. **Nonchalant:** feeling or appearing casually calm and relaxed; not displaying anxiety, interest, or enthusiasm.
9. **Unperturbed:** not perturbed or concerned.

10. **Drool:** usually saliva dropping from the mouth especially from babies or children's mouth. Here in this story the children talk about the saliva on the bitten food item.

**Suggested Questions:**

- 1 Trace the transformation of Madhuram from an innocent wife, a doormat to an empowered woman who boldly chased her husband out of her life.
- 2 Kamala decides not to beg anything from anyone. Explain this while sketching Kamala's character.
- 3 Justify the title 'Herovukku oru Heroine' which means 'a Heroine for the Hero'.
- 4 Explain the significance of the symbol 'drool'. How does Jayakanthan justify it in the story.

## The Weed



***By Amrita Pritam***

***About the Author:*** Amrita Pritam born on 31st August 1919 at Gujranwala, Punjab, which is now in Pakistan. Her father was a poet and a scholar of Brijhi Bhasha and a school teacher named Kartar Singh Hitkari. She was very young when her mother Raj Bibi died. Though Amrita born into a traditional Sikh family, she lost faith in God at a very young age of 11 due to untimely demise of her mother. After her mother's death in 1930 they went to Lahore. As a child she was influenced by her father who was a good writer and a poet of his time and used to write in Braj language.

In 1936, she was married to Pritam Singh to whom she was engaged in childhood. After marriage she did not find the environment that a writer needs for his or her creativity to thrive. So, she decided to create her own environment by sowing her own creative seeds. She adhered to the concept – to gain something one must be willing to lose something. Hence in 1960, on amicable terms she left her husband along with her two children.

In her compositions, from Dr.Dev and Pinjar to Ek Thi Sara and Nagamani, love is presented in a Sufiana style. She edited 'Nagamani', a monthly literary Magazine in Punjab for many years, which she ran together with Imroz. Actively participated in the Progressive Writers movement. In 1944, she was busy in social activities and also worked at Lahore Radio Station for some time. After partition, she came to India

## Mindscapes IV

*in 1947. She worked in the Punjabi service of All India Radio till 1961.*

*She is best remembered for her poignant poem, Ajj Aakhaan Waris Shah nu (Today I invoke Waris Shah – “Ode to Waris Shah”), an elegy to the eighteenth-century Punjabi poet, an expression of her anguish over massacres during the partition of India.*

*As a novelist, her most noted work is Pinjar. (The Skeleton) is a famous novel, which was written in 1950, in which she created her memorable character ‘Puro’. An epitome of violence and massacres during partition against women.*

*She is the first to receive the Punjab Ratan Award, she is the first woman, who received Sahitya Academy Award in 1956 for Suneny (Messages). Other prestigious award conferred to Amrita Pritam are-Bhartiya Jnanpith Award in 1982 for Kagaj te canvas (paper and canvas), Padma Shri in 1969, Padma Vibhushan in 2004, Sahitya Academy fellowship in 2004 to the “immortals of literature” for life time achievement, she received D Lit, the honorary degree from many universities such as Delhi University in 1973, Jabalpur University in 1973 and Vishabharati in 1987. Nominated as a member of Rajya Sabha from 1986 to 1992, she was awarded by Pakistan’s Punjabi Academy. Punjabi poets of Pakistan sent her a chadar from the tombs of Waris Shah and Sufi Mystic poets Bulle and Sultan Bahu. She died in her sleep on 31<sup>st</sup> October, 2005 at the age of 86 in New Delhi after a long illness.*

### **About the Story:**

The short story, “The Weed” is one of the best stories written by Amrita Pritam. The author tries to pass on the message that our society should do away with certain age-old customs. This story reflects how well Amrita Pritam’s has analyzed the mind of a woman. She deals with the outcome of a marriage between an old man and a young girl. She has created a character Angoori, whose sensitivity is portrayed perfectly. A simple village girl Angoori is unable to understand her own feelings. When she discovers her feelings, she is of the opinion that it is sin for a married girl to fall in love with a man who is not her husband. She attributes it to the weed that people add to paan. Angoori’s natural attraction for Ram Tara is beyond her understanding.

## The Weed

Angoori was the new bride of the old servant of my neighbour's . neighbour. Every bride is new, for that matter; but she was new in a different way: the second wife of her husband who could not be called new because he had already drunk once at the conjugal well. As such, the prerogatives of being new went to Angoori only. This realization was further accentuated when one considered the five years that passed before they could consummate their union

About six years ago Prabhati had gone home to cremate his first wife. When this was done, Angoori's father approached him and took his wet towel, wringing it dry, a symbolic gesture of wiping away the tears of grief that had wet the towel. There never was a man, though, who cried enough to wet a yard-and-a-half of calico. It had got wet only after Prabhati's bath. The simple act of drying the tear-stained towel on the part of a person with a nubile daughter was as much as to say, 'I give you my daughter to take the place of the one who died. Don't cry anymore. I've even dried your wet towel'.

This is how Angoori married Prabhati. However, their union was postponed for five years, for two reasons: her tender age, and her mother's paralytic attack. When, at last, Prabhati was invited to take his bride away, it seemed he would not be able to, for his employer was reluctant to feed another mouth from his kitchen. But when Prabhati told him that his new wife could keep her own house, the employer agreed.

At first, Angoori kept purdah from both men and women. But the veil soon started to shrink until it covered only her hair, as was becoming to an orthodox Hindu woman. She was a delight to both ear and eye. A laughter in the tinkling of her hundred ankle-bells, and a thousand bells in her laughter.

'What are you wearing, Angoori?'

'An anklet. Isn't it pretty?'

'And what's on your toe?'

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'A ring.'

'And on your arm?'

'A bracelet.'

'What do they call what's on your forehead?'

'They call it aliband.'

'Nothing on your waist today, Angoori?'

'It's too heavy. Tomorrow I'll wear it. Today, no necklace either. See! The clasp is broken. Tomorrow I'll go to the city to get a new clasp... and buy a nose-pin. I had a big nose-ring. But my mother-in-law kept it.'

Angoori was very proud of her silver jewellery, elated by the mere touch of her trinkets. Everything she did seemed to set them off to maximum effect.

The weather became hot with the turn of the season. Angoori too must have felt it in her hut where she passed a good part of the day, for now she stayed out more. There were a few huge neem trees in front of my house; underneath them an old well that nobody used except an occasional construction worker. The spilt water made several puddles, keeping the atmosphere around the well cool. She often sat near the well to relax.

'What are you reading, bibi?' Angoori asked me one day when I sat under a neem tree reading.

'Want to read it?'

'I don't know reading.'

'Want to learn?'

'Oh, no!'

'Why not? What's wrong with it?'

'It's a sin for women to read!'

'And what about men?'

'For them, it's not a sin.'

'Who told you this nonsense?'

'I just know it.'

'I read. I must be sinning.'

'For city women, it's no sin. It is for village women.'



We both laughed at this remark. She had not learned to question all that she was told to believe. I thought that if she found peace in her convictions, who was I to question them?

Her body redeemed her dark complexion, an intense sense of ecstasy always radiating from it, a resilient sweetness. They say a woman's body is like a lump of dough, some women have the looseness of under-kneaded dough while others have the clinging plasticity of leavened dough. Rarely does a woman have a body that can be equated to rightly kneaded dough, a baker's pride. Angoori's body belonged to this category, her rippling muscles impregnated with the metallic resilience of a coiled spring. I felt her face, arms, breasts, legs with my eyes and experienced a profound languor. I thought of Prabhati: old, short, loose jawed, a man whose stature and angularity would be the death of Euclid. Suddenly a funny idea struck me: Angoori was the dough covered by Prabhati. He was her napkin, not her taster. I felt a laugh welling up inside me, but I checked it for fear that Angoori would sense what I was laughing about. I asked her how marriages are arranged where she came from.

'A girl, when she's five or six, adores someone's feet. He is the husband.'

'How does she know it?'

'Her father takes money and flowers and puts them at his feet.'

'That's the father adoring, not the girl.'

'He does it for the girl. So, it's the girl herself.'

'But the girl has never seen him before!'

'Yes, girls don't see.'

'Not a single girl ever sees her future husband!'

'No....,' she hesitated. After a long, pensive pause, she added, 'Those in love..... they see them.'

'Do girls in your village have love-affairs?'

'A few'.

'Those in love, they don't sin?' I remembered her observation regarding education for women.

'They don't. See, what happens is that a man makes the girl eat the weed

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and then she starts loving him.'

'Which weed?'

'The wild one.'

'Doesn't the girl know that she has been given the weed?'

'No, he gives it to her in a paan. After that, nothing satisfies her but to be with him, her man. I know. I've seen it with my own eyes.'

'Whom did you see?'

'A friend; she was older than me.'

'And what happened?'

'She went crazy. Ran away with him to the city.'

'How do you know it was because of the weed?'

'What else could it be? Why would she leave her parents? He brought her many things from the city: clothes, trinkets, sweets.'

'Where does this weed come in?'

'In the sweets: otherwise, how could she love him?'

'Love can come in other ways. No other way here?'

'No other way. What her parents hated was that she was that way.'

'Have you seen the weed?'

'No, they bring it from a far country. My mother warned me not to take paan or sweets from anyone. Men put the weed in them.'

'You were very wise. How come your friend ate it?'

'To make herself suffer,' she said sternly. The next moment her face clouded, perhaps in remembering her friend. 'Crazy. She went crazy, the poor thing,' she said sadly. 'Never combed her hair, singing all night....'

'What did she sing?'

'I don't know. They all sing when they eat the weed. Cry too.'

The conversation was becoming a little too much to take, so I retired.

I found her sitting under the neem tree one day in a profoundly abstracted mood. Usually, one could hear Angoori coming to the well; her ankle-bells would announce her approach. They were silent that day.

'What's the matter, Angoori?'

She gave me a blank look and then, recovering a little, said, 'Teach me

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reading, bibi.'

'What has happened?'

'Teach me to write my name.'

'Why do you want to write? To write letters? To whom?'

She did not answer, but was once again lost in her thoughts.

'Won't you be sinning?' I asked, trying to draw her out of her mood. She would not respond. I went in for an afternoon nap. When I came out again in the evening, she was still there singing sadly to herself. When she heard me approaching, she turned around and stopped abruptly. She sat with hunched shoulders because of the chill in the evening breeze.

'You sing well, Angoori'. I watched her great effort to turn back the tears and spread a pale smile across her lips.

'I don't know singing'.

'But you do, Angoori!'

'This was the ...'

'The song your friend used to sing.' I completed the sentence for her.

'I heard it from her.'

'Sing it for me.'

She started to recite the words. 'Oh, it's just about the time of year for change. Four months winter, four months summer, four months rain!....'

'Not like that. Sing it for me,' I asked. She wouldn't, but continued with the words:

Four months of winter reign in my heart;

My heart shivers, O my love.

Four months of summer, wind shimmers in the sun.

Four months come the rains; clouds tremble in the sky.

'Angoori!' I said loudly. She looked as if in a trance, as if she had eaten the weed. I felt like shaking her by the shoulders. Instead, I took her by the shoulders and asked if she had been eating regularly. She had not; she cooked for herself only, since Prabhati ate at his master's. 'Did you cook today?' I asked.

'Not yet.'

'Did you have tea in the morning?'

'Tea? No milk today.'

'Why no milk today?'

'I didn't get any. Ram Tara.....'

'Fetches the milk for you?' I added. She nodded.

Ram Tara was the night-watchman. Before Angoori married Prabhati, Ram Tara used to get a cup of tea at our place at the end of his watch before retiring on his cot near the well. After Angoori's arrival, he made his tea at Prabhati's. He, Angoori and Prabhati would all have tea together sitting around the fire. Three days ago, Ram Tara went to his village for a visit.

'You haven't had tea for three days?' I asked. She nodded again. 'And you haven't eaten, I suppose?' She did not speak. Apparently, if she had been eating, it was as good as not eating at all.

I remembered Ram Tara: good-looking, quick-limbed, full of jokes. He had a way of talking with smiles trembling faintly at the corner of his lips.

'Angoori?'

'Yes, bibi.'

'Could it be weed?'

Tears flowed down her face in two rivulets, gathering into two tiny puddles at the corners of her mouth.

'Curse on me!' she started in a voice trembling with tears, 'I never took sweets from him... not a betel even.... but tea ...' She could not finish. Her words were drowned in a fast stream of tears.

**Glossary:**

1. **Conjugal:** relating to marriage or the relationship between a married couple
2. **Prerogative:** a right or privilege exclusive to a particular individual or class.
3. **Accentuated:** make more noticeable or prominent.
4. **Consummated:** make (a marriage or relationship) complete by having sexual intercourse.
5. **Resilience:** the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties; toughness.
6. **Langour:** tiredness or inactivity

**Suggested Questions:**

1. Sketch the character of Angoori.
2. Amrita Pritam presents various aspects of the rural Indian Society through the story? Discuss.
3. Is the title “The Weed” appropriate to the story.
4. “I never take sweets from him.... not a betel even...but tea.” Why does Angoori say this. Explain the implication of this statement keeping in mind Angoori’s beliefs and convictions.

**Facets of Language**

## **FACETS OF LANGUAGE DISCOURSE ANALYSIS**

Discourse Analysis, also called Discourse Studies, was developed during the 1970s as an academic field. Discourse Analysis is a broad term for the study of the ways in which a language is used between people, both in written texts and spoken contexts.

The other areas of language study might focus on individual parts of language—such as words and phrases (grammar) or the pieces that make up words (linguistics)—discourse analysis looks at a running conversation involving a speaker and listener (a writer's text and its reader).

In discourse analysis, the context of a conversation is taken into account as well as what's being said. This context may encompass a social and cultural framework, including the location of a speaker at the time of the discourse, as well as non-verbal cues such as body language, and, in the case of textual communication, it may also include images and symbols. "It's the study of real language use, by real speakers in real situations," explains Teun A. van Dijk, a noted author and scholar in the field.

In this section we will therefore examine what gives stretches of language unity, meaning, completeness and grammatical appropriacy. We will also try to understand why certain stretches of language are perceived as coherent discourse and others as disconnected jumbles.

It is important to link the forms of the language with its functions in order to appreciate how users operate the systems of communication as a whole.

Discourse therefore is a means of relating stretches of language not only to the phonological, lexical and syntactic aspects but also to the shared knowledge among people as well as social relationships existing in society- i.e., the preferences, the expectations of the addresser, addressee, along with the social and cultural norms.

Language in use, for communication is called the **Discourse** while the

search for what gives language coherence is Discourse Analysis.

Misunderstanding and misconstrued information can lead to problems—big or small. Being able to distinguish subtle subtext to differentiate between factual reporting and fake news, editorials, or propaganda is crucial to interpreting true meaning and intent. This is the reason that having well-developed skills in the critical analysis of discourse—to be able to "read between the lines" of verbal and/or written communication—is of utmost importance.

Since the establishment of the field, discourse analysis has evolved to include a wide range of topics, from the public versus private use of language to official versus colloquial rhetoric, and from oratory to written and multimedia discourses. The field of study has further branched out to be paired with the fields of psychology, anthropology, and philosophy, thus meshing linguistics with sociology.

### **Academic Applications of Discourse Analysis**

There are many avenues which can be studied through the lens of discourse analysis including discourse during a political debate, discourse in advertising, television programming/media, interviewing, and storytelling. By looking at the context of language use, not simply the words, we can understand nuanced layers of meaning that are added by the social or institutional aspects at work, such as gender, power imbalance, conflicts, cultural background, and racism.

As a result, discourse analysis can be used to study inequality in society, such as institutional racism, inherent bias in media, and sexism. We can also use it to examine and interpret discussions regarding religious symbols located in public places.

### **Real-World Applications of Discourse Analysis**

Apart from scholarly applications, discourse analysis has some very pragmatic uses as well. Specialists in the field are tasked with helping world leaders understand the true meaning behind communications from



their peers. In the field of medicine, it's used to help physicians find ways to ensure they're better understood by people with limited language skills, as well as guiding them in dealings when giving patients a challenging diagnosis.

For example, in one study, transcripts of conversations between doctors and patients were analyzed to determine where misunderstandings had occurred. In another, women were interviewed about their feelings regarding a diagnosis of breast cancer. How did it affect their relationships? What was the role of their social support network? How did "positive thinking" come into play?

Unlike grammar analysis, which focuses on the structure of sentences, discourse analysis focuses on the broad and general use of language within and between particular groups of people. Another important distinction is that while grammarians typically construct the examples they analyze, the analysis of discourse relies on actual writings and speech of the group being studied to determine popular usage.

In terms of textual analysis, grammarians may examine texts in isolation for elements such as the art of persuasion or word choice (diction), but only discourse analysis considers the social and cultural context of a given text.

In terms of verbal expression, discourse analysis takes in the colloquial, cultural, and living use of language—including every "um," "er," and "you know," as well as slips of the tongue, and awkward pauses. Grammar analysis, on the other hand, relies entirely on sentence structure, word usage, and stylistic choices. This does, of course, often include a cultural ingredient but it's missing the human element of spoken discourse.

### ***Linguistic characteristics and Social Context***

The focus in discourse analysis is primarily on the way we make meaning out of what people speak or write and the situation in which language is used. For example, a board with 'No Overtaking' written on it, when kept in a painter's shop with many other signboards is not

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significantly meaningful until placed at the beginning of a steep and narrow over bridge. The ‘appropriate social context’ is thus established, and a piece of discourse ‘No Overtaking’ communicates the necessary message to the users of the road, warning them against overtaking on the steep and narrow over bridge.

In this course, we shall try to investigate the rules governing discourse, identify similarities and differences between spoken and written discourse as well as analyze the functions of discourse in their specific contexts of use.

Such an analysis would demand identification of minimal units of discourse and the rules governing them. It also means we become sensitive to questions like:

Why was this discourse constructed at all?

Who is it addressed to?

What is the apparent purpose of the discourse?

Does it have concealed purposes as well?

What are the hidden assumptions and biases underlying the text?

What are the various functions of discourses?

As we have already learnt, the fundamental concepts/terms in the study of discourse are Cohesion and Coherence.

Cohesion, in simple words is the presence of explicit linguistic links which provide recognizable structure, such as he, also, too, before, but, and, after, however, etc.

Coherence, on the other hand, is the degree to which a discourse makes sense in terms of our knowledge of the world.

### **For example:**

Kiran: I have two tickets for Sonu Nigam’s musical night, tomorrow.

Arun: Oh, I have my exam tomorrow.

This conversation may seem irrelevant and uncooperative, but it makes perfect sense to us if we know the social context or the real world links

between the time spent on watching a movie and on studies, entertainment and so on.

As we recognize this piece of discourse as a conversation, we can say that it is in the spoken form. The addresser (speaker) has a concealed purpose of requesting while the addressee (listener) has another – that of refusing the offer.

Our knowledge of the social context makes us aware of the fact that Sonu Nigam is a famous playback singer, and his concerts are very popular. The hidden assumption of Arun's response is quite clear- that it would mean spending nearly three hours on it, when the same time can be spent on preparations for the exam.

So as users of language, we construct meaning from the discourses used by the people. Let us examine another example.

Here are headlines from two different local newspapers covering the same event or story.

“WB sanctions \$40.4m loan for state”

“State bags \$40.4m from WB”

These headlines suggest two different views of the event. The first lays emphasis on the World Bank (WB) sanctioning a loan, while the second stresses on the state's ability to get a loan from the reputed WB. The assumptions and biases are very apparent from the use of the words *sanctions and bags*. In this way comparing the coverage of events and stories in two or three different newspapers of different political leanings can be an interesting exercise. Similarly, conversations of people do provide a glimpse of their views and stances regarding other people or issues in their choice of words and presentation.

### ***Functions of Discourse***

Language, as we know, has various purposes. In the previous semester, we studied the broadly categorized functions of language and now we focus on the specific functions and their interplay in discourse. While we may assume that the basic function of language is communication, we

know that it serves a number of diverse functions, only some of which are reasonably regarded as communication. All of these functions are important, and it is difficult to argue that some are more important or more primary than others. For example, studies of conversation in restaurants have revealed that very little information, as such is typically exchanged on those occasions and that the social functions of language are more important. Of course, we must remember that a newspaper story, a sales talk, a seminar presentation a religious discourse, a political speech or even an advertisement would typically be very different from one another. Here are some functions of language that we can distinguish.

1. **Expressive function:** When feelings, emotions and moods are expressed by the addresser.

Examples: I am feeling wonderful today| I feel great| I feel lousy, etc.

2. **Directive function:** When we get someone to do something.

Examples: Clear the table| Close the windows| Speak louder| Silence/  
Mind your head| Please leave, etc.

3. **Conative function:** When we persuade other people to do something or see our point of view.

Examples: Can we do this tomorrow? | Try this technique it works well|  
This book is excellent – you want to read it? etc.

4. **Referential function:** When we pass on factual information to other people. Examples: The seminar is on the 16<sup>th</sup> of June| Class begins at 9.30 a.m. everyday| A special train to Mysore has been scheduled for the weekend, during summer, etc.

5. **Metalinguistic function:** When we talk about language itself. This could also include a battery of technical terms and concepts from various disciplines such as science, law, journalism, psychology, engineering, medicine, etc.

Examples: 'Paradigm' is not a common word| 'Content' is used both as a noun and a verb| An equilateral triangle is a triangle with three equal angles| Every action has an equal and opposite reaction| The accused was let off on bail| Full count on the pitcher and batter| 40 runs for no loss, etc.

6. **Poetic function:** When we focus on aesthetic features of language as in poetry, some advertisements, poetic prose, and eye-catching motto, rhyme and so on.

Examples: 'Neighbours' envy-Owner's pride'; 'For a man who dares to show he cares'; 'We bring good things to life'; 'Veni, vidi, Vici'; 'Break, break, break on the cold grey stones, oh Sea; Tide's In -Dirt's out, I am lovin' it, etc.

7. **Phatic function:** When we express our solidarity and empathy with others or express our membership in a particular group.

Examples: How are you? | Fine, thanks| How do you do? | Good morning| Nice day, isn't it? Nice talking to you, etc.

We must, however, remember that language is often used to fulfill more than one function simultaneously. For example: 'I feel like an ice cream' could be simultaneously referential, expressive and conative. It conveys information, expresses a feeling, and tries to persuade someone to get the addresser an ice cream or probably accompany her/him to the ice-cream joint. In general, however, language used in a given situation has a dominant function (macro function) with others becoming subordinate functions (micro function). Can you now identify the macro function of the above-mentioned example?

Now look at another sample. (This is a conversation between a principal and a student. Identify the dominant and subordinate functions of language used)

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Principal: Good morning, Geetha, what can I do for you?

Geetha: Good morning, Madam. Can you sign my application for a bus pass please?

Principal: Leave it with superintendent. I'll sign it later.

Geetha: Madam, today is the last date for submission.

Principal: Why didn't you get it signed earlier?

Geetha: Hmm.....actually..... Madam, I...

Principal: Alright, where do I sign?

Geetha: Here Madam.

Principal: Hmm.... I can't understand why students wait till the last minute.

Geetha: Thank you, Madam

Principal: Next time, submit your application in advance

Geetha: Yes, Madam, thank you.

We will deal with these functions in greater detail in the next few sections.

### *Speech and Writing*

In the history of the human race, spoken language certainly came before writing. We have little evidence of the existence of a writing system of any kind before about 5,500 years ago, whereas we assume that spoken language existed many millennia before then. In the history of societies, there is evidence to show that spoken language existed before written language, and many languages spoken today have no written form. For example, regional languages like Tulu, Konkani, etc. have only the spoken form and now the written form. For the individual, too, spoken language comes first: children learn to speak before they learn to write.

On the other hand, in societies which do have writing systems, the written language is very important from a social and educational point of view. It would be impossible to imagine our own society functioning as we know it without the advantage that writing gives.

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No user of language uses one uniform variety of language. People vary their language according to the use to which it is put; like, whether they are speaking or writing; who they are addressing; the context of the use and so on.

While the terms 'dialect' is convenient to refer to language variation according to the user, REGISTER can be used to refer to variation according to use (or 'style' in a general sense). Register can be subdivided into three factors of language use, each of which affects the language variety. These are: MODE, TENOR and DOMAIN.

### *Mode*

This has to do with the medium in which language is transmitted. Normally, we distinguish between speech and writing as two modes of language use. Spoken language used in face-to-face situations relies on many 'non-verbal' signals such as gestures and facial expressions. In writing, the effect of intonation, or 'tone of voice', cannot be conveyed, except, in part, by graphic means such as exclamation marks and question marks (!,?). Written language involves addressees who are not present and so cannot respond immediately.

Here are some features of the written and spoken mode which define and distinguish each clearly.

### *Speech*

1. Inexplicitness
2. Lack of clear sentence boundaries
3. Simple structure
4. Repetitiveness
5. Normal non-fluency
6. Monitoring features
7. Interaction features
8. Features reflecting informality

### *Writing*

1. Explicitness
2. Clear sentence boundaries
3. More complex structures
4. Non-repetitiveness
5. Fluency
6. No monitoring features
7. No interaction features
8. Features reflecting formality

### ***Explicitness/Inexplicitness***

Speech can be much less explicit than writing because it is generally used in face-to-face situations. Also, extra information can be conveyed by non-verbal modes such as facial expressions, gestures, etc. The participants can refer to the immediate physical environment by pointing to objects or people. If the message is unclear in a conversation it can be rephrased, clarified or repeated depending upon the feedback from the listener. Moreover, explicitness is unnecessary in a conversation because people engaged in the conversation have shared knowledge and they make references by using words like ‘it, this, that, etc.’ Consider the following imaginary conversation:

A: How did you take it?

B: Well, I didn’t have a choice, did I?

A: Is it the first time?

B: Not really.

A and B who are participants in this conversation can understand what the ‘it’ refers to because they have shared knowledge of something. It can be job transfer, an unsuccessful attempt at something, etc. however, one has to be more explicit than this in writing.

### ***Sentence Boundaries***

In the written mode the accepted norm is to use grammatically correct and complete sentences. This is also true of scripted speech such as a radio or television news bulletin. But in spontaneous speech one can use unfinished sentences if the speaker realizes that the listener(s) is/are aware of what s(he) might be saying and might choose, therefore, to terminate the sentences midway.

Example....and he was saying that um....you can watch a film in Bangalore ----- and watch Shah Rukh Khan for three hours....Um, may be



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ah...(speaking)

He said that we could engage ourselves for three hours in Bangalore by watching a Shah Rukh Khan film. (writing)

Speech is less complex than writing because of its inexplicitness and short sentences. Writing, on the other hand is more complex because the message will have to be explicitly stated. The writer cannot use non-verbal modes to clarify face to face what is not clear to the addressee.

### *Repetitiveness*

Writing can-be re-read. It is permanent. Therefore, information is not repeated in writing. However, because of the lack of permanence of speech it is more repetitive than writing. Information has to be repeated because the listener(s) cannot refer back to what was said previously.

### *Non-fluency*

This refers to features like hesitation, unintended repetitions, false starts, fillers, grammatical blends, unfinished sentences and so on.

Examples

I, I...

False starts: Kerala is a good-looking place-what I mean to say is Kerala is a beautiful place.

Fillers: um, er

A blend occurs when a sentence begins in one way and ends in another.

For example: ‘Would you mind repeating what’s the title?’

The sentence begins as an indirect question and ends as a direct question.

This is allowed in the spoken medium whereas in writing it would be

“Would you mind repeating what the title is?”

In speech it is possible to break off a sentence mid-way because of change of mind. For example: “What you could be doing is.... okay, do it your

way.”

Writing appears more fluent because the features of false starts, fillers, etc. are edited out in the written mode.

### *Simple Structures*

There is a strong correlation between complexity and length, i.e., the number of words used in a sentence. However, there are other ways of measuring complexity in discourse: For example:

- 1) The number of elements clauses contain
- 2) The number of modifiers in a noun phrase
- 3) The number of subordinate clauses in a sentence.

Example for (1)

(a) My mother bought a car

S                    V            O

(b) Last month my mother bought my father a car for his birthday

A                    S                    V                    O<sub>1</sub>        O<sub>D</sub>            A

The ASVOOA structure of the second sentence is obviously more complex than the SVO structure of the first sentence.

Example for (2)

(a) A film

(b) A thought-provoking film about war on show in the city

The noun phrase (a) with one pre-modifier ‘a’ is definitely simple.

(b) is made complex by pre- and post-modification.

Example for (3)

(a) Kumar visited us last night. – Simple sentence.

(b) Kumar who is a friend of Anand’s who graduated from the Institute which is in Bangalore visited us last night. – Complex sentence.

Evidently, (b) is made more complex than (a) because of the number of subordinate clauses.

### ***Monitoring and Interaction features***

Monitoring features have to do with adverbs and adverbials such as well, I mean, sort of, you know, you see/know what.

“I mean....” “Catch my point?”

These features indicate that the speaker is aware of the addressee’s presence and recognizes his/her reactions. Interaction features invite the active participation of the addressee as in questions:

“Do you see what I’m saying?”

“You understand?”

“Do you follow....?”

“Isn’t it?”

Both these features appear in speech which is reciprocal interaction as in a conversation or dialogue where the addressee is physically present. They are generally not found in a monologue or in writing.

### ***Degree of Formality/Informality***

The situation in which speech is used is generally less formal than those in which writing is used. We will discuss this in detail in the next section. We hope to have shown that speech and writing are generally complementary. However, there can be some overlap in their linguistic characteristics depending on what they are used for and in what situation. The situations in which speech and writing are distinct and those in which they tend to overlap can be shown on a continuum.

Typical speech	Conversation in a restaurant Telephone convers Interviews Television advertisement Lectures Television news Newspaper Business correspondence
Typical writing	A book

**Tenor**

This has to do with the relationship between a speaker and the addressee(s) in a given situation and is often shown by greater or lesser degrees of formality politeness, and impersonality. For example, a request to a friend to close the window may be ‘hey, close the window, will you? Here it is informal whereas between the student and the principal it is formal. A speaker has to know the right kind of language to use in a given situation. The three scales of use are inter-related and there are some linguistic features and expressions typical of them.

<b>FORMAL</b>	<b>INFORMAL</b>
Complex sentences Polysyllabic, classical Vocabulary	Simple sentences Mono-syllabic vocabulary Use of Phrasal Verbs
<b>POLITE</b>	<b>FAMILIAR</b>
Respectful terms of address Examples: Mr., Madam, Mrs. Ms Indirect requests	Intimate terms of address, if any Examples: John dear, honey Direct imperatives
<b>IMPERSONAL</b>	<b>PERSONAL</b>
Passive voice Third person noun phrases	Active voice first and second person pronouns

**Domain**

Domain has to do with how language varies according to the function it is fulfilling. Languages can be used to perform a variety of functions:

- i) Convey information: referential
- ii) Express feelings: expressive
- iii) Persuade someone to do something: conative
- iv) Make social contact: phatic
- v) Write poetry: poetic
- vi) Talk about language itself: metalinguistic

## Functions of Analysis

Language is often used to fulfill more than one function simultaneously. The example “I feel like an ice cream” in the section Functions of Discourse could be simultaneously referential, expressive, and conative. It conveys information, expresses a feeling, and tries to persuade someone to provide an ice cream. So, it follows that language used in a given situation has a dominant or macro-function with other subordinate or micro-functions

Let us look at some of the domains with the macro and micro functions associated with them.

DOMAIN	FUNCTION	
	<i>Dominant/Macro</i>	<i>Subordinate/Micro</i>
Journalism	Referential	Expressive, conative
Advertising	Conative	Expressive, conative
Business	Referential	Conative, metalinguistic
Science	Referential	Metalinguistic, directive
Public Speaking	Expressive	Conative, poetic
Conversation	Phatic	Referential, expressive

We must remember that the category of domain does not lend itself to clear-cut distinctions. For example, in the domain of journalism the table shows that the dominant function is referential while the subordinate/micro functions are expressive and conative. Though by and large this may be true of journalistic writing as in an editorial, letters to the editor, review of books or concerts the dominant function could either be expressive or conative and the subordinate function could be referential or even poetic. This further re-emphasizes the point that language and situations are to a large extent mutually determining.

Here are a few passages for analysis. They can be worked out along these lines

**MODE**

Identify the mode-whether spoken or written, with reference to the characteristics discussed in the relevant section. Give suitable examples from the passage to be analyzed.

**TENOR**

State whether formal, informal; polite, familiar; personal, impersonal with appropriate examples from the passage.

**DOMAIN**

Identify the domain and the predominant macro/micro functions. Justify with examples.

**GENERAL COMMENTS**

Comment on how all the three categories of mode, tenor and domain simultaneously affect language in the specific contexts of use as is evident in the passages. Identify the micro and macro functions of the discourse. Quote examples from the passage to illustrate the specific use of language.

***Journalistic Writing 1***

***Editorial***

***Privileged Prisoners***

When the rich and the powerful get on the wrong side of the law, it's the law that suffers the most. VIP offenders and convicts are often treated by law enforcers as VIP's and not as offenders or convicts. Security officials rolled out the red carpet for Jagir Kaur, former Minister in the Shiromani Akali Dal government in Punjab, following her conviction last week on charges of abduction and wrongful confinement of her daughter in 2000. Video footage from the Kapurthala jail captured the astonishing sight of officials rushing to touch the convict's feet when she arrived at the prison complex ostensibly to serve out her term. Although Ms. Kaur "resigned" as Minister immediately after her conviction, she appears to have lost none of the privileges that come with office. Twice president of the Shiromani

Gurudwara Parbandhak Committee, the powerful body responsible for the administration of gurudwaras, Ms. Kaur wields considerable clout within the current government headed by Parkash Singh Badal. Opposition members have already demanded that she be shifted to a jail outside Punjab so that she gets a taste of prison life as it is lived by countless other convicts.

Of course, Ms. Kaur is not the first person to receive comforts and favours inside a prison cell. Industrialists and politicians convicted for fraud and violent crime have always found ways to carry over their material advantages in the vast, outside world into the confines of a prison. In many cases, they abuse the legal provisions governing incarceration to evade the full rigor of the law. It has, for example, become the done thing for celebrity under trials and convicts to feign chest pain and seek refuge in high end hospitals which curiously seem able to delay diagnosing the illness for as long as the patient wants. Stories of well-heeled under trials being lavished attention in prisons-the 2G accused being a case in point are a legion. The other trick in the book is parole; the reason for the excursion can be anything, a parent's illness, the death of a relative, or simply the need to reconnect with the city's social circuit. Manu Sharma, convicted in the Jessica Lal murder case, famously spent the parole period granted to him (originally 30 days but extended by a month) partying, helped in no small measure by his benefactors in the Delhi government. India's criminal justice system is lax, and many literally get away with murder. For a select few convicted by a court of law, the journey from home to prison brings no ordeal that they cannot bear. When the prison cell door clanks shut behind them, the VIP inmates manage to force open a window to freedom. That's the sad truth.

## **Journalistic Writing 2**

### **FILM REVIEW**

He's not blond but desi bond meets Bourne for a spy masala mix---apna Agent Vinod. With all the makings of a save 007, always shaken

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never stirred. With guns, gadgets, girls and guts. Throw in style and sex-appeal and we almost have it all. AV in his slim-fit suits, bow-ties and tuxedos, is your metro sexual man on a mission. Cut to the chase, the story explodes in Afghanistan and the smoke trail leads to places like Russia, Morocco, Pakistan, Turkey; with our agents (Saif Ali Khan), high on his loaded ammunition of testosterone and with – on the job. He's tracing a nuclear suitcase bomb (talk about retro), which could possibly trigger a Nuclear War. His only clue is a number – 242. And a sire; sexing up the mission. Read: ISI agent, Iram (Kareena Kapoor).

Saif, like 007, is never averse to spouting a clear line even while drugged by the baddies – 'My name is Anthony Gonzalves' the most creative among them. Stripping his shirt to show off a chiseled six-pack, but decently desi enough to keep the pants on, and sensitively shed a tear. At his stylish best, Saif is the spy-to-die-for.

Ram Kapoor rolls his "R" s (for a Russian accent) as smoothly as his character trades arms, drugs and flesh. Prem Chopra weeps heartily for a dying camel, but shows a mean streak with good ol'7-s villainy. Adil Hussain, cut 'n'd® ied, plays the devious Colonel. Gulshan Grover pops up, only for a mujra, it seems.

Director, Sriram Raghavan, who's made fine mind-twisters (Ek Haseena Thi, Johnny Gaddar), attempts a spy thriller this time. His obsession for retro reflects here again, whether it's casting Prem Chopra and Gulshan Grover, references to classics, or infusing soundtracks from the bygone era. Aaaaah! Nostalgia! Agent Vinod is slick and visually stylized but loses steam at times. The movie is a tad long and often creatively compromised – for style over substance. With well-designed stunts and car chases, there are very few high points or shock value. One being the background score (Daniel b George) that changes, beautifully with the locations. Otherwise, Agent Vinod is cool, but not steamy enough to win a licence to thrill.



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## **PUBLIC SPEAKING-1**

Now I listened to the broadcast this afternoon with a great deal of interest, I almost forgot what a fight had been made to assure the rights of the working man. I know there was a time when hours were longer and wages lower, but I had forgotten just how long that fight for freedom, to bargain collectively, and to have freedom of assembly, had taken.

Sometimes, until some particular thing comes to your notice, you think something has been won for every working man, and then you come across, as I did the other day, a case where someone had taken the law into his own hands and beaten up a labour organizer. I didn't think we did those things any more in this country, but it appears that we do. Therefore, someone must be always on the lookout to see that someone is ready to take up the cudgels to defend those who can't defend themselves. This is the only way we are going to keep this country a law-abiding country, where law is looked upon with respect and where it is not considered necessary for everybody to take the law into his own hands. The minute you allow that, the you have acknowledged that you are no longer able to trust your courts and your law-enforcing machinery, and civil liberties are not very well off when anything like that happens; so I think that after listening to the broadcast today, I would like to remind you that behind all those who fight for the Constitution as it was written, for the rights of the weak and for the preservation of civil liberties, we have a long line of courageous people, which is something to be proud of and something to hold on to. Its value lies, however, in the fact that we profit by example and continue the tradition to the future.

We must not let down those people we represent; we must have courage; we must not succumb to fears of any kind; and we must live up to the things we believe in and see that justice is done to the people under the constitution, whether they belong to minority groups or not. This country

is a united country in which all people have the same rights as citizens. We are grateful that we can have trust in the youth of the nation that they are going on to uphold the real principles of democracy and put them into action in this country. They are going to make us an even more truly, a democratic nation.

## **PUBLIC SPEAKING-2**

I'd recently heard a story from a man named Malcolm Dalkoff. He is 48. For the last 24 years he has been a professional writer mostly in advertising. Here is what he told me. As a boy, Dalkoff was terribly insecure and shy. He had few friends and no self-confidence. One day in October 1965, his high school English teacher Ruth Brauch gave the class an assignment. The students had been reading *To kill a mocking bird*. Now they were to write their own chapter that would follow the last chapter of the novel. Today he cannot recall anything special about the chapter he wrote, or what grade Mrs. Brauch gave him. What he does remember – what he will never forget are the four words Mrs. Brauch wrote in the margin of the paper. *“This is good writing”*

Four words! They changed his life. “Until I read those words, I had no idea of who I was or what I was going to be,” he said. “After reading her note, I went home and wrote a short story, something I had always dreamed of doing but never believed I could do.” Over the rest of the year in school, he wrote many stories and always brought them to school for Mrs. Brauch to evaluate. She was encouraging, rough and honest. “She was just what I needed,” he said. His confidence grew, his horizons broadened; he started off on a successful fulfilling life. Dalkoff is convinced that none of this would have happened had that woman not written those four words in the margin of his paper.

For his 30<sup>th</sup> high school reunion, Dalkoff went back and visited Mrs.

Brauch, who had retired. He told her what her four words had done for him. He told her that because she had given him the confidence to be a writer he had been able to pass that confidence onto the woman who would become his wife, who became a writer herself. He also told Mrs. Brauch that a woman in his office, who was working the evenings towards a high school equivalency diploma, had come to him for advice and assistance. She had respected him and that is why she turned to him. Mrs. Brauch was especially moved by the story of helping the young woman. “At that moment I think we both realized that Mrs. Brauch had cast an incredibly long shadow,” he said. “This is good writing” so few words. They can change anything.

### **Business-I**

#### ***Look to locate***

Searching for the nearest beauty parlor while on a backwater cruise? Or a library while relaxing in an ayurvedic spa? Just hit the net. Quickerala.com, an online business directory was launched by malayala manorama, Chief Editor Mammen Mathew on July 15<sup>th</sup>. The website offers a user-friendly yellow page of businesses and services across Kerala.

“It is a listing service content to match the needs of the consumers to the local business available at the click of a key”, said Matthew. The portal is the first of its kind.

Business and services can register their details on the website directly, or for those without email ids through telephone. As of July 19, more than 10,000 companies have registered on the website, and an average 300 users have been searching the site daily.

A free listing option allows the company to upload its name, description, contact details and address of one branch. Priority listing at .750 for six months or .1500 for a year offers search highlighting and uploading one business photo and five branch addresses while premium listing at .2000 for six months and .3500 for a year allows links up to five photos, and ten

branch addresses. Companies can edit their details directly. Up to 25 businesses or services can be posted in one registration, each of which will be treated as an individual business.

Quickerala.com is easy to navigate and is a one-stop resource for people across the world who seek information on services in the state. Users can search by category, from abrasives to zoos and sub categories like food furniture strollers and wholesalers within baby care. They can also search by locality, send enquiries about the company and contact the company instantly through sms. Users can post comments and reviews on the business. A mobile version of the website will be released soon.

### ***Business-2***

Larsen and Toubro board announced a major restructuring plan based on the report of the Boston Consultancy Group prescribing transformation of the company into a premium conglomerate.

As per the blueprint prepared by the company, the business portfolio will consist of an engineering core and two thrust areas: cement and information technology and communication.

The plan envisages the creation of a separate division for L&T cement business, the initial public offering of its information technology business in mid-2001 and reducing equity exposure in two subsidiaries. The company even plans a foray into the telecom sector.

L&T is also considering an entry into other IT and communication services, such as Internet-based services and e-commerce in its pursuit of value creation.

### ***Conversation-1***

Mr. Rao: Hello, I'm Mr. Rao here, may I speak to Mr. Sen please.

Shreyas: Hello.....Uncle, but.... Dad is not at home.

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Mr. Rao: When will he be back?

Shreyas: Well, Uncle.... I'm not very sure.....

Mr. Rao: You see.... I was supposed to meet him this evening, but I will not be able to make it. Look.... could you pass on a message to him?

Shreyas: Sure, I will, Uncle.

Mr. Rao: Please tell him I cannot meet him today...But I'm free tomorrow. Please ask him to call me up and fix a convenient time for the meeting.

Shreyas: Fine uncle, I'll convey the message.

Mr. Rao: Thank you, Bye.

## ***Conversation-2***

Raj: Good Morning Sir, I'm Raj.

Secretary: Good Morning Raj, how can I help you?

Raj: I.... I'm new in this city Sir...and I'm seeking admission in this college.

Secretary: What course are you interested in?

Raj: I'm interested in a B. Com degree.

Secretary: Fine.... Can I have a look at your Marks card.....You can apply for the course by the 15<sup>th</sup> of this month. That is the last date for the submission of application.

Raj: Can I apply online?

Secretary: Yes, you may. Here...take a look at the prospectus.

Raj: Thank you very much Sir.... What about the college timings?

Secretary: We work from 9AM to 5PM.

Raj: Thank you Sir.

Secretary: Ok.... Let us know if you have any other question.

### ***Science-1***

Mind management is a way to control one's mind. To do this we need to be cautious about our thinking process and also need a high level of understanding and meditation as well. Understanding is wisdom-80% of people are knowledgeable, while 20% are wise. Knowledgeable men take sides without reason. They feel sad seeing deprived people, but jealous when they see happy people. They work in the guidance of others' inspiration, take unnecessary responsibility to keep themselves disturbed. A wise person does not stand for or against any idea without concrete reason. He works according to the situation and capacity. He looks at everything intellectually. To him, failure is a steppingstone for future success. So depression and conflict are not seen. Like the phrase "Stop, look, go", first one should see, and this needs patience. Meditation is necessary to control and manage mind which then becomes an easy task. Unless we control or manage our mind, it is difficult to achieve success and peace. Psychologists say every interest is first born in the mind as a seed. Then it continues to grow. Later it takes its real form which everybody can see. The interest that first appears in the mind remains weak for the first three minutes and it becomes strong within the next five minutes. All the negative aspects should be deleted within the first three minutes. If not taken out, they would become stronger later and you can never throw them out. After taking control over the mind, we can control passion, interest and unrest. Mind management is essential for a peaceful, successful and healthy life.

The age of computers has thrown us on the escalator of aspiration but has robbed us of simple charms like falling asleep. The compulsions of hectic schedules burden the mind and cause stress. However, the joys that elude us can be regained by practising power meditation. It creates tranquility, simplifies life and cleanses the mind. It helps control indolence, ego and anger and builds confidence and patience. With power meditation, negative thoughts get dissipated and a sense of happiness is achieved.

**Science-2**

SARS or Severe acute respiratory syndrome is a respiratory illness that has recently been reported in Asia especially the south east, North America, and Europe. The epicenter of the disease is believed to be South East Asia where the disease was first reported.

SARS generally begins with a fever exceeding 100.4°F. Other symptoms of the disease include headache, an overall feeling of discomfort and body aches. Some people may also experience mild respiratory symptoms. After two to seven days SARS patients develop a dry cough and have trouble in breathing. The minimum incubation period of the disease is 10 days.

SARS spreads through close person to person contact. Most cases of SARS have involved people who cared for or lived with someone with SARS or had direct contact with infectious material (for example, respiratory secretions) from a person who has SARS. Potential ways in which SARS can be spread include touching the skin of other people or objects that are contaminated with infectious droplets and then touching your eyes, nose or mouth. This can happen when someone who is sick with SARS coughs or sneezes droplets onto themselves, other people or nearby surfaces. It is also possible that SARS can be spread more broadly through the air or by other ways.

The high-risk category or those most vulnerable to SARS are health care workers and those sharing a household with a SARS afflicted person. It is thus necessary for health workers and others in contact with possible infected persons to observe precautions like wearing face masks and other infection control measures.

***Suggested pattern of questions for the passage***

- 1. What is the Mode of the passage? Give two examples. 2
- 2. Identify the domain of the passage. 2
- 3. What is the macro function? 2



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4. Write a note on the sentence structures	2
5. Identify an example of a) referential function	2
b) meta linguistic function	
Theory based questions -	10marks
Passage Analysis question -	10 marks
Total Marks Allotted -	20 marks

### Theory based Questions

1. What is Discourse Analysis (DA)? 2
2. How is social context important in discourse? Give an example. 2
3. What are the avenues for academic application of Discourse Analysis?
4. Mention any two pragmatic uses of discourse analysis? 2
5. What is the expressive function of language? 2
6. What is Phatic function of discourse? 2
7. Mention any two features that distinguish speech from writing? 2
8. Mention any two characteristics of formal style of language. 2
9. Mention the two factors that govern the formality or informality of language use. 2
10. What are the two different functions of language? 2

### 11. Read the following passage and answer the questions:

Why does mankind turn against the one who tries to save it from sorrow and suffering? Every saviour, be it the Buddha, Jesus or even Mahatma Gandhi, had aimed at saving the world from sorrow and suffering by showing it a path out of the darkness of human ignorance into eternal light. Escape from sorrow is tempting, therefore, many have turned to them as

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sunflowers turn to the Sun but few have been able to walk the sunlit path. Man is quite content to depend on his mind because he is motivated by worldly pleasures which hide from him, the 'Immortal Bliss'.

What jolts man out of smug satisfaction is pain. Therefore, pain is a necessity for man to reset his aims higher, wider and deeper. "Pain is the hammer of Gods to break a dead resistance in the mortal's heart." But man is so much in love with his ignorance that even pain has only limited access. Man's supremely efficient amnesia ensures that he forgets quickly the awakening evoked by a painful episode. Thus, man treats all difficulties and traumatic events like a speed breaker. He somehow negotiates the speed breaker and once past the speed breaker, he is back on the same road. That is what makes the saviour's path hard. "Hard is the world redeemer's heavy task; The world itself becomes his adversary.... It gives the Cross in payment for the crown." The Cross, visible or invisible, is what every savior has received from those whom he tried to save.

1. What is the mode of the passage?
2. Mention the micro functions.
3. What is the macro function?
4. Write a note on the essence of the passage.
5. Identify an example of
  - (a) Poetic function
  - (b) Expressive function

\*\*\*\*\*

<b>Question Paper Pattern</b>	
<b>Semester IV</b>	
<b>Paper IV</b>	<b>Maximum Marks – 100</b>
Section A: Poetry	20
Section B: Novel	20
Section C: Drama	20
Section D: Prose	20
Section E: Facets of Language	20

## Model Question Paper

### Indian Writing in English Translation and Facets of Language

**Time: 3 Hours**

**Max. Marks: 100**

**Instruction: Answer all Sections**

#### Section – A (Poetry)

**I A) Answer any one of the following: (1X15 = 15)**

- i. Bring out the significance of Gandhi's questions in the poem 'Gandhi and Poetry'.
- ii. Sugathakumari's poetry 'makes an odyssey into the very essence of womanhood'. Substantiate.

**B) Write a short note on any one of the following: (1X5 = 5)**

- i. Tamil Sangam Literature with reference to Kurunthogai 207.
- ii. The Nature of Devotion according to Basavanna.
- iii. Feelings of the past and a hope for the future in 'The Song of the Bird'.

#### Section – B (Novel – Rudali)

**II A) Answer any one of the following (1X15 = 15)**

- i. How does Rudali delineate the struggle and exploitation of women in the patriarchal set up?

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ii. Bring out the suffering of the lower caste Ganjus and Dushads of the village at the hands of the upper caste men.

**B) Write a short note on any two of the following: (1X5 = 5)**

- i. Bikhni.
- ii. Dulan as a mentor.
- iii. Temple episode.

### **Section – C**

#### **(Drama – The Fire and the Rain)**

**III A) Answer any one of the following: (1X15 = 15)**

- i. What is the importance of the Brahma Rakshasa in ‘The Fire and the Rain’?
- ii. Discuss the significance of the title The Fire and the Rain.

**B) Write a short note on any two of the following: (1X5 = 5)**

- i. Themes and issues in the play.
- ii. Hunter girl Nittilai.
- iii. Play within the play.

### **Section – D**

#### **(Essays and Short stories)**

**IV A) Answer any one of the following: (1X15 = 15)**

- i. ‘The Voice of God’ beautifully intertwines the flaws of human nature as well as the strength to overcome them. Elucidate.
- ii. How does ‘Roots’ depict the resilience of love and mutual respect among persons, against the Partition that sought to create differences and divides?

**B) Write a short note on any one of the following: (1X5 = 5)**

- i. Jumman Shaikh and Alagu Chowdhary in Premchand’s story.

- ii. Transformation of Madhuram in 'The Heroine'.
- iii. Aspects of the rural Indian Society through 'The Weed'.

**Section – E**  
**(Facets of Language)**

**V) A) Answer all the questions**

- 1. What is Discourse Analysis? 2
- 2. How is social context important in discourse? Give an example. 3
- 3. Mention any three features of written mode of language. 3
- 4. Explain the poetic function of language. Give an example. 2

**5. Read the following passage and answer the questions**

Whether it is that biscuit you ate while standing in the kitchen waiting for the kettle to boil or the pastry you bought while walking past a bakery, unplanned eating happens to all of us. Unplanned eating is rarely motivated by hunger. It usually happens when you are thinking about something else. When you eat without thinking, you rarely make the best choices and then your diet is not as good as it can be. Worse still, you're likely to be over-eating and putting yourself at the risk of gaining weight.

To counteract unplanned eating, try keeping a food diary for a couple of weeks. Recording everything that you eat, brings your food choices to the fore front of your mind, making you more aware of what you are doing. Plus by paying more attention to your food, you're likely to make better food choices – and enjoy it more.

- a) What is the mode of the passage? Give two examples. 2
- b) Identify the domain of the passage. 2
- c) What is the macro function? 2
- d) Write a note on the sentence structures. 2
- e) Identify an example of 2

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- i. Conative function
- ii. Directive function

(or)

**Ram:** Could you please tell me the bus I have to take to go to XYZ College from Majestic?

**Lakshman:** You may board bus number 276 from Platform 22.

Ram: How is the frequency of the bus?

**Lakshman:** Frequency?... Hmm..... I think there is one every 10 or 15 minutes.

**Ram:** Do I have any other option?

**Lakshman:** You do. You can go by auto. But it is very expensive.

**Ram:** Oh.. Then I think I'll better wait for bus number 276 then.

**Lakshman:** I suggest that too.

**Ram:** Thank you.

- a) What is the mode of the passage? Give two examples. 2
- b) Highlight the monitoring and interactional features of the passage. 2
- c) Is the tenor of the passage formal or informal? 1
- d) What is the macro function of the passage? 2
- e) Identify examples that primarily serve as: 3
  - i. Phatic function
  - ii. Conative function
  - iii. Referential function

\*\*\*\*\*