

INDIAN LITERATURE IN TRANSLATION

M.A., (English)

Semester – IV, Paper-III

Lesson Writers

Dr. E. Dileep

Assistant Professor
Dept. of English & Comm.,
Dravidian University , Kuppam.

Dr. P.V.N.D. Mahesh

Principal S.S.N. College,
Narasaraopet, Guntur.

Dr. G. Srilatha,

Reader in English,
P.B. Siddhartha College of
Arts and Science, P.G. Centre,
Vijayawada.

Dr. Inturi Kesava Rao

Sr. Lecturer
Dept. of English
VSR & NVR College, Tenali

Lesson Writer & Editor

Prof. M. Suresh Kumar

Professor
Dept. of English
Acharya Nagarjuna University

Director

Dr. NAGARAJU BATTU

MBA., MHRM., LL.M., M.Sc. (Psy), MA (Soc), M.Ed., M.Phil., Ph.D

CENTRE FOR DISTANCE EDUCATION

ACHARAYA NAGARJUNA UNIVERSITY

NAGARJUNANAGAR – 522510

Ph:0863-2346222, 2346208,

0863-2346259(Study Material)

Website: www.anucde.info

e-mail:anucdedirector@gmail.com

M.A. (ENGLISH) - Indian Literature in Translation

First Edition 2023

No. of Copies :

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Published by:

**Dr. NAGARAJU BATTU,
Director
Centre for Distance Education,
Acharya Nagarjuna University**

Printed at:

FOREWORD

Since its establishment in 1976, Acharya Nagarjuna University has been forging ahead in the path of progress and dynamism, offering a variety of courses and research contributions. I am extremely happy that by gaining 'A' grade from the NAAC in the year 2016, Acharya Nagarjuna University is offering educational opportunities at the UG, PG levels apart from research degrees to students from over 443 affiliated colleges spread over the two districts of Guntur and Prakasam.

The University has also started the Centre for Distance Education in 2003-04 with the aim of taking higher education to the door step of all the sectors of the society. The centre will be a great help to those who cannot join in colleges, those who cannot afford the exorbitant fees as regular students, and even to housewives desirous of pursuing higher studies. Acharya Nagarjuna University has started offering B.A., and B.Com courses at the Degree level and M.A., M.Com., M.Sc., M.B.A., and L.L.M., courses at the PG level from the academic year 2003-2004 onwards.

To facilitate easier understanding by students studying through the distance mode, these self-instruction materials have been prepared by eminent and experienced teachers. The lessons have been drafted with great care and expertise in the stipulated time by these teachers. Constructive ideas and scholarly suggestions are welcome from students and teachers involved respectively. Such ideas will be incorporated for the greater efficacy of this distance mode of education. For clarification of doubts and feedback, weekly classes and contact classes will be arranged at the UG and PG levels respectively.

It is my aim that students getting higher education through the Centre for Distance Education should improve their qualification, have better employment opportunities and in turn be part of country's progress. It is my fond desire that in the years to come, the Centre for Distance Education will go from strength to strength in the form of new courses and by catering to larger number of people. My Congratulations to all the Directors, Academic Coordinators, Editors and Lesson-writers of the Centre who have helped in these endeavours.

*Prof. P. RajaSekhar
Vice-Chancellor
Acharya Nagarjuna University*

M.A.(English)
Semester – IV, Paper-III
403EG21: INDIAN LITERATURE IN TRANSLATION

SYLLABUS

Unit - I

Nationalist sentiment, Emergence of regional literatures, Social reform, Social Realism, Indian drama, Protest literature, Pragativada movement, Indian society and literature, Novel as Satire, Dramatic Technique, Reinterpretation of Myths, Drama for social purpose, Modernism

Unit -II

Gurram Jashuva : “Graveyard”, Sahitya Academy, New Delhi.
Bala Gangadhar Tilak : “Ambrosia Dripped”, “ My Poesy”
Subrahmanya Bharati : “Phoenix”, “Truth”, “Deception”

Unit –III

Badal Sarkar : Evam Indrajit , OUP, New Delhi.

Unit -IV

U.R. Ananta Murthy : Samskara, Translated by A.K. Ramanujan,
OUP Chandu Menon : Indulekha, Translated by W. Dumargue.

Unit –V

Premchand : Godan, Translated by Jai Ratan and P. Lal. G.V.
Krishna Rao : Puppets, Translated by Kesava Rao, Macmillan
(India).

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LESSON 1

LITERARY TRANSLATION AND INDO-ENGLISH LITERATURE

OBJECTIVES

- To define the term “Translation” and “Literary Translation”
- To study the cultural, idiomatic and linguistic problems that crop up when translating literary texts.
- To study the method of translation or various methods and approaches to literary translation.
- To discuss various methods and techniques to understand translated texts.

STRUCTURE

- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Literary Translation
- 1.3 Importance of Translation
- 1.4 Translation as an Academic Exercise
- 1.5 Defining Translation
- 1.6 Indian School of Translation Studies
- 1.7 Self assessment questions
- 1.8 Suggested Readings.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The idea of India makes itself available to people of different regions and languages only through translation.

Prof. Bh. Krishnamurti, an eminent linguist observes:

“Translation as an act of communication across cultural barriers” has been a part of the literary history of all major Indian languages. Rendering the great epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, marked the beginning of learned literature in most languages of India, Indo-Aryan as well as Dravidian. The resultant works are not truly “translations” but “transcreations” in which the original text acted only as a trigger for the language poets to create their own texts suited to regional subcultures and languages” (1998: 11).

The need for translation emerges because of the divergence of languages i.e., people belonging to different parts of the globe use different languages. Hence translation is a way of circumventing this difficulty and it offers a wide scope in matters of getting acquainted with various literatures of the world. It has been mentioned that Noam Chomsky proposed the theory that more than 4000 existing languages ‘possessed a surprisingly similar syntax in spite of their phonological and graphic differences. This aspect of language makes translation process possible.’ (qtd. in Asha N. Rabb, 36). In a multi-cultural, pluralistic society like in India, that we inhabit mutual understanding is basis for harmony and order in civic life, which is possible with translation. In fact, in such societies, translation assumes a bigger role transcending the mere textual, linguistic level. It has been rightly pointed out that “...translations, as such, do not have to play only a literary and aesthetic role. In a country

rife with myriad forms of linguistic, religious, caste and class divisions, translations can contribute to the formation of a literary democracy.” (Rita Kothari, 2008: 1)

In fact, without translation the world would be poorer; nowadays translation has been gaining importance throughout the world, because it is only through translation one could transmit knowledge from one end of the globe to the other edge. To have access to such distant regions translation remains an unavoidable step. In other words, the underlying key for information explosion and communication today, the facilitator is translation. More importantly, sharing of human achievements in Arts, Sciences and Technology on a massive scale depends on translation. As a result translation has become a separate study with special significance in the field of pedagogy, literature and cultural studies. This is all the more so in the present context of globalization.

Traditional translation theorists divided translation into two types: literary translation and non-literary translation. In literary translation, translators are concerned with both sense and style. In non-literary translation the emphasis is on sense, no need to mind the style. This kind of translation takes place in the realms of physical science, social science, journalism and law. Besides, translation also involves oral translation, written translation, machine translation, scientific translation, technical translation, transliteration and transformation etc.

1.2 LITERARY TRANSLATION

It is said that only with the help of translation literature has flourished. Literary translation is a very important and difficult process; it is important because it is the mode of cultural exchange in a multilingual society like India. It is difficult because, in literary translation the translators must be thorough with the two languages, their sensibility, and their techniques and subtleties. The translators are expected to follow the style and diction of the original text while translating into the target text, more or less with the same spirit as the original text. In non-literary translation these are not necessary except the meaning. So literary translation is more important and a difficult one at that, when compared to the non-literary translations because of practices of adherence to style, intones and rhythms one hand, and cultural practices on the other.

Translation is not merely linguistic conversion or transmission of information between languages but it involves accommodation in scope of culture, politics, aesthetics, history and many other areas of knowledge. Accommodation is also translation, a free, rather than literal, kind of translation. Accommodation has to be carried out very sensibly, especially when it comes to translating poetry or any such text which is highly emotive and artistic in nature. For example translating poetry has never been simple because poetry is fundamentally valuable for its metaphorical import and aesthetic accommodation. As such translation also becomes an art in itself instead of mere basic requirement. A good poetry translator with a good measure of accommodation and adequate knowledge of aesthetic traditions of both the cultures and languages is better equipped for such a task and he, in turn, is better appreciated by the target reader.

India’s ‘Sanathana Dharma’ roots are supposed to exist in the Itihasas like Ramayana and Mahabharata, Upanishads and Vedas which are purely written in Sanskrit. On one hand Indian Puranas can be understood only those who have knowledge in Sanskrit and on the other hand the same Puranas cannot be understood those who does not have knowledge in it.

Therefore Upanishads, Vedas and Itihasas have translated into all Indian languages. Hence majority of Indians came to learn about great ancient history of India and its richness in values, traditions and the way of living. The source language text which was written in Sanskrit is considered as source language texts in India. The literary tradition of India is completely offering of Sanskrit texts into all diversified languages.

Indian artists were also believed to be the first translators and the literatures that are found on basing of free translations and make use of suitable themes from the epics like Ramayana and Mahabharata. Indian literature contained mostly in translations, adaptations, re-telling and interpretations up to 19th century. Literary translation function along with knowledge texts treatises on architecture, ship-building, travelling, metallurgy, astronomy, medical and pharmaceuticals, philosophy, religion, poetics from Sanskrit, Pali and Prakrit and then Arabic and Persian enriched its awareness and had kept the Indian cultural panorama resonant for a long time all over the world.

Translation plays a crucial role in spreading the language scope reorganizing the expressible of the bourns. In order to create new vocabulary and contribute to express extensively new terms and coins are direly needed by translation. Thus anyone will be able to understand not only philosophy and Western literature through the mother tongue but also speaks about the knowledge of present in the regional languages from Quantum Physics to Nano-Technology and Computer Science to Molecular Biology. Translation invigorates the democracy by setting up equality among distinct languages and interrogating the domination of few special honored and over the others as it proves that all the thoughts, opinions, expressions and experiences can be expressed in every language and are transferable from one to another language despite of unrivalled. It also strengthens the lower sections of the society to be able to write in their languages and later they get translated into other languages which are widely perceived and spoken. Hence translation helps to empower oppressed and depressed including women.

Translation helps to combat with imperial bias, for instance, Indians proved to the world that the colonial ruler is no superior them as they have a very long history of writing their culture by translating Indian literary works into English. The British started to translate from India that are fit to them but now the English kingdom is writing back, telling them what they have to assimilate by reading the cultures and people, so changing their old orientalist notions of India. The rich treasure of other literatures and cultures are being carried into Indian languages by promoting the native literature and knowledge through translation.

By translating the original works from other Indian languages are also been from other nations that they make their own literatures rich and pure. Thus Indians improved their standards particularly when they have translated the works of Stalwarts of English literature like William Shakespeare, Homer, and contemporary writers as J.M. Coetzee, Orhan Pamuk, Gabriel Garcia Marquez etc., such exchanges will also create novel movements and methods in different literatures.

It is a known fact that the present age is the age of translation; efforts are going on in translating Indian languages in to the western languages and vice – versa and from one Indian language to the other Indian languages. These activities are providing benefits to the all translators. Both native and English languages have an inspiring list of translations publications in regional literary associations and publishing houses, Sahitya Academy and

National Book Trust. A new thought of interest rose in the young non-resident Indians who are very eager to know and read their own literatures which are translated into their languages and also the foreign readers are curious to know what kind of transformation is taking place in Indian literature. The recent freshet of literary festivals all over the world from Jaipur to Germany, and book fairs held yearly at once at Frankfurt, Paris, London, Bologna and Abudhabi that have contributed much to this increasing passion towards Indian literary works. Recently the Government of India has identified the need of translation and begins ILA i.e., Indian Literature Abroad. Some major publishing houses like Penguin, Macmillan, Orient Black Swan, Hachet, Harper Collins, Oxford University Press etc. and smaller houses are encouraging literary translations and rambling works extensively. Therefore in Indian context, translation has to play a vital role. Some regional literatures of the country can reach vast Indian readers only through medium of translation. Translation is not only a media in India that reaches out to the people but also it acts a construction between different people with different regional languages.

1.3 IMPORTANCE OF TRANSLATION

In an era of LPG and the continuing craze for IT and its allied services, the linguistic boundaries of this multi-lingual society are being erased. This has facilitated greater communication and understanding among people globally.

Anna Bernacka (2012) writes that translation is not merely an inter-linguistic process. It is a more complex process than replacing SLT with TLT and it “includes cultural and educational nuances that can shape the options and attitudes of recipients” (Anna Bernacka, 2012:113). In the same tone, Dingwaney and Maier propose that “Translations are never produced in a cultural or political vacuum and cannot be isolated from the context in which the texts are embedded” (Dingwaney and Maier, 1995:3). It goes to prove beyond any measure that translations have to be inter-language mediators and inter-cultural mediators.

They have to be both “bilingual and bicultural” (Aniela Korzeniowska and PiotiKuhiwczak, 2006: 71).

In this context, it is fitting to note what Juri Lotman writes about the importance of translation for cross-cultural communication. He says, “No language can exist unless it is steeped in the context of culture; and no culture can exist which doesn’t have at its centre, the structure of natural language” (Juri Lotman, quoted in Mc Guire 1980:13).

Expressing a similar sentiment Lakshmi H. (2007:1) writes, “It is for this reason that translation can never be an innocent linguistic activity but a trans-cultural activity, an activity involving the source and the target cultures.” Whenever there crops up a gap between the source and the target cultures, the translation entails wide range of problems. Then in the case of literary translations, there are additional problems as the form and content become inseparable in literary texts.

Thus translation can be said to unify new worlds; they can be a source of real knowledge about lesser known cultures, life styles and traditions and they can make a political and social impact. Prasad G.J.V, in the introductory part of his book *Translation and Culture Indian Perspectives*, opines that “Translation is a basic human activity, one that conceptualizes the world for us” (Prasad, 2010:11). He also says that “all languages are born in translation” (Prasad, 2010:11).

The translator may never be considered equal to a creative writer, yet the yeoman service he renders can't be underplayed. But for a translator, the world could not have had access to the great works of literature like *the Bible*, *the Mahabharata*, *the Ramayana* and *the Gita*. These works became popular only after their translations into a number of languages. Thus, translation serves as a source of diffusion and dissipation of knowledge.

In the 21st century, translation is both desirable and indispensable. If one looks at it in a broader sense, translation is very vital for multinational companies and cosmopolitan nature of our existence. It is important in maintaining external affairs of a nation and for cultural exchange. In transfer of news, in boosting tourism and for the all important mission of realizing the universal concept of a global village, translation plays a significant role with far-reaching consequences. If someone wants to enjoy reading the best literatures of various languages, translation is the only route.

1.4 TRANSLATION AS AN ACADEMIC EXERCISE

Generations of teachers have used translation as an essential aid to language learning. Researchers from the Middle East have used translation as a tool in foreign language learning. When one looks at it a broader sense, the importance of translation can also be understood in the following way:

(a) Both translation and critical act are extensions of creative exercise:

Both translation and critical act engage in almost the same process. The translator reads, understands and grasps the exact intention and meaning that the original author wishes to convey. Translation is a way of reading, interpreting, criticizing and creating a new text.

Thus a translator becomes a creative reader-critic. Looking at it in this perspective, the translator is not surely a failed writer or a disappointed author as some critics of TS would like to believe. The act of translation is a demanding task as the translator is in continuous quest for finding the equivalent words and expressions and choosing the right ones.

(b) Translation is a preserver of ancient literary and cultural heritage:

The ancient Indian literary heritage which is mainly found in Sanskrit language or Pali or Prakrit or even various Dravidian languages can only be preserved and even rescued if those classics are translated into modern Indian languages which can be understood by a large body of readers of this century. Moreover, the advantage of the ancient literary texts must be made available to the youth of today so that they can read the texts in their own language, assimilate what classics like *the Gita*, the Upanishads etc., say and follow them for their own personal growth and development.

It is only because of translation of various literatures that regional languages and their literatures were popularized at the national level and national literature gained prominence at the international level.

(c) Translation is a communication of message:

One charge that is leveled against translation is that translation is merely an imitation of text in another linguistic system. When one looks at it in an affirmative frame of mind, one understands that it is also a communication of message to the target readers whose culture and language is different from the culture of the original text. The real test of good

communication is whether the communication is intelligible and acceptable to the receiver. Translation, in fact, validates both the criteria and makes communication more effective.

(d) Development and importance of translations in colonial countries:

The comment of Karl Marx that the thief, the translator and the seller were necessary for 19th century European colonial enterprise may sound to be very harsh but when one reflects more on this, one realizes that one of the more positive aspects of the colonial situation was the beginning of intercultural relationships between diverse peoples, which the 20th century has learned to treasure.

As per the sources available, in India, the first translator in Bengal was Pratap Chandra Roy. P. Lal in his work *An Annotated Mahabharata Bibliography* (1967) mentions that Pratap Chandra Roy became a bookseller in Calcutta. In 1869, he set up a publishing concern. By the end of 1876, he brought out a complete Bengali translation of *the Mahabharata*. The success of this volume goaded him towards a new goal of bringing out the complete *Mahabharata* in English. Having realized that his own English was not good enough to complete the task, he requested Babu Kisari Mohan Ganguli, a man with a brilliant academic record in English to take up the daunting task on his shoulders. From 1888 to 1896, Roy published *The Mahabharata of Krishna-Dwaipayana Vyasa* in English in eleven volumes, for free distribution. He wanted to unravel the richness of the Indian heritage to the British rulers in particular and to foreigners in general. Thus in India, translations were used for spreading religious belief.

It is easier to translate from one Indian language into another Indian language because here the culture is more or less the same. But translating from an Indian language into English or from English into an Indian language poses many problems to the translator. In India, translations from one Indian language into another are available in good numbers. Translations from native Indian languages to English or vice versa are required.

1.5 DEFINING TRANSLATION

In simple terms, translation is an act of rendering a text from one language into another. Looked at it in this way, one can understand that it is as old as original authorship. Peter Newmark has given a simple definition of translation.

“Often though not by any means always, it is rendering the meaning of a text into another language in that way the author intended the text. Common sense tells us that this ought to be simple, as one ought to be able to say something as well in one language as in another” (Newmark, 1976:96).

Susan Bassnett-McGuire defines translation as a “process involving a transfer of meaning from signs of one set of language into another set of language signs” (Bassnett-McGuire, 1985:13).

Eugene. A. Nida calls translation as a process by means of which a person with knowledge of both the SL and the RL decodes the message of the SL and encodes it in the RL in the most appropriate form. “Translation consists in reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source language message first in terms of the meaning and second in style” (Nida, and Tabor, 1969:12).

J.C. Catford's *A Linguistic Theory of Translation* (1965) defines total translation as "replacement of SL grammar and lexis by equivalent TL grammar and lexis with consequential replacement of SL phonology/ graphology by (non-equivalent) TL phonology/graphology" (Catford, 1965:22).

Whatever are the definitions and the approaches of translation, the moment one makes an attempt at translation, one realizes that it is a complex process and it needs an analytical study and good practice.

1.6 INDIAN SCHOOL OF TRANSLATION STUDIES

Jhumpa Lahiri (2000:120) says, "Whether I write as an American or an Indian, about things American or Indian or otherwise, one thing remains constant: I translate, therefore I am".

Translation of a text from one language to another language is like re-birth of the original text. But the way of looking at this different piece of work in comparison with the earlier original one brings with it a lot of trouble. It is in this context that we need to identify whether there is some sort of 'Indian School of Translation Studies'.

In the recent past, there is a sudden upsurge of translation activity in English Studies in India pioneered by reputed scholars like Harish Trivedi, G.N.Devy, Dilip Chitre, Tejaswini Niranjana and Sujit Mukherjee. They have proposed what is now called as Indian Literature in English Translation, or Indo-English Literature.

Harish Trivedi (1996) has provided a fourfold division of Indian literature translated into English:

- i) Indic and Indological works, mainly translations of the ancient and medieval Sanskrit or Pali texts into English
- ii) The translations of late ancient and medieval works, largely to do with *bhakti*
- iii) Fictional works depicting various aspects of modern India realistically like the work of Tagore or of Premchand
- iv) Modernist or High modernist writers translated into English (A.K. Singh (ed.), 1996:52) Devy too divides the history of translating Indian literature into English into the following four phases:
 - i. The colonial phase (1776-1910),
 - ii. The revivalist phase (1876-1900),
 - iii. The nationalist phase (1902-1929), and
 - iv. The formalist phase (1912-) (Devy, 1993:120).

Commenting on contribution of Indian-English literature in the growth of Indian literature in English translation, Devy contends that "many Indian creative writers in English, who are bilinguals, are translators (1993:124).

Tejaswini Niranjana's book, *Siting Translation: History, Post Structuralism and the Colonial Context* (1992) is about complex relationships that exist between colonialism, post-structuralist philosophy and translation.

According to Susan Bassett and Harish Trivedi, "Translation does not happen in a

vacuum, but in a continuum. It is not an isolated act, it is part of an ongoing process of intercultural transfer. Translation is not an innocent, transparent activity but is highly charged with significance at every stage” (Bassnett & Trivedi, 1998:2).

Devy speaks of how translation is contrastingly perceived in India and in the West. Devy states that Indian consciousness is a ‘translating consciousness’ and it exploits the ‘potential openness of language systems’ (Devy, 1993:139-141). Devy is hopeful that an acceptable theoretical perspective on translation can emerge from India since she enjoys a culture that accepts metamorphosis as the basic principle of its existence.

Devy’s call for indigenous theory of translation based on local context and local social, literary and cultural traditions is also reflected in Ayyappa K. Paniker’s book *The Anxiety of Authenticity: Reflection on Literary Translation* (1996:36-45). Paniker notes, “All through the Middle Ages, throughout the length and breadth of India, Sanskrit classics like the epics and puranas continued to be retold, adapted, subverted and ‘translated’ without worrying about the exactness and accuracy of formal equivalence.” (Paniker, 1996: 37).

Paniker (1998) also mentions about the absence of an exact equivalent for the modern sense of ‘translation’ in medieval Indian languages. It suggests that the Indian practice tolerated a great deal of creative deviance in retelling or adaptation of a literary text.

Sunitikumar Pathak (1978) furnishes an interesting account of the spread of the Buddhist religion in Tibet, Mongolia, and Siberia. He mentions that thousands of highly accurate renderings of Buddhist and Brahminical texts were produced under royal patronage in Tibet in the 9th century A.D. Several secular texts like the plays of Kalidasa or famous *Amarkosha* were translated. In this connection, the stress of the translation was on high fidelity to source texts and translations had to get approval from a council of editors. They were so accurate that scholars could reconstruct many Mahayana Buddhist texts missing in their original languages by translating the Tibetan translation back into Sanskrit and Prakrit.

In the recent times, writers such as Umashankar Joshi, Harivallabh Bhayani in Gujarati, Bhalchandra Nemade in Marathi and Bholanath Tiwari in Hindi have produced many scholarly writings, which can be of great use to anyone studying translation theory in the Indian context.

In a comprehensive essay, the noted Marathi novelist and critic Bhalchandra Nemade (1987) has lamented the lack of significant development in TS (Nemade, 1987:78-85). He laments the fact that even if the original work is badly done, it gets more importance than an excellent translation. His view of ‘equivalence’ is interesting. He believes that it is easier to find equivalence in genealogically and geographically closer languages like Marathi and Gujarati or Marathi and Kannada.

None of these theoretical writings, whether in English or in regional Indian languages can be called representative of a truly ‘Indian’ School of Translation Studies. If a truly ‘Indian’ School of Translation Studies is to emerge, it should basically explore the relationships between the multiplicities of Indian languages and not itself to translations into English.

St. Pierre makes the best advancement in the direction of a really Indian School of Translation Studies. The essay, “*Translation in a Plurilingual Post-colonial Context: India*”

by Paul St.Pierre(1997) is an illuminating analysis of the problems of translating from one Indian language to another. He points out that the projects like Aadan Pradan of the National Book Trust, and the Sahitya Akademi aim at ‘forging national integration through the exchange of creative literature’ (Prasad(ed.), 2010:56). St. Pierre ends his essay by underscoring the need to contextualize the practice of translation in India and says that Translation... underscores the connection of translation to power: relations between languages and between communities are actualized and transformed through translation; translation strategies reproduce more than mere meaning. The close examination of such relations and strategies makes it possible to elucidate the locations of powers within and between cultures in a concrete fashion, and this should, it seems to be one the goals of TS (1997:145 and 2010:62).

A sound theoretical framework for studying a crucial, yet neglected area of TS in India has come from someone who is not an Indian.

The study of translation practice and theory in the context of globalization is of crucial significance for a multilingual, post-colonial nation like India. Paul St. Pierre (2002) and Lawrence Venuti (1998) have made some insightful reflections on the relationship between translation practices and the processes of globalization. St. Pierre points out the problems of making generalized observations regarding the relationship that exists between globalization and translation. Venuti has made a generalized observation that globalization results in more capital being spent on translation into the regional languages.

1.7 SELF –ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. Define the term Translation and its importance in the modern society?
2. Examine translation as a tool to national Integration?
3. Examine the focal issues of Indian School of Translation Studies?
4. How did G.N.Devy divide the history of translating Indian literature into English and explain in detail?
5. Elucidate the following statement and examine with examples:
“Translation theory in Indian languages has always been something which was practiced and not written down.”
6. Explain the difference between “the act of writing” and “the act of translation”.

1.8 SUGGESTED READINGS

- 1) Prasad.B. *Translation and Practice*, Visalandhra: Hyderabad: 2010.
- 2) Suresh Kumar. Madupalli, *Text and Context in Literary Translation*, Kalyani, New Delhi: 2012
- 3) Lawrence Venuti, *The Translator’s Invisibility: A History of Translation*: Routledge: 2008

Prof. M. Suresh Kumar

LESSON 2

HISTORY OF TRANSLATIONS IN THE INDIAN CONTEXT

OBJECTIVES

- To define the term “Translation” and its importance in India.
- To study the cultural, idiomatic and linguistic problems that crop up when translating literary texts.
- To check whether it is possible to meticulously follow one method of translation or be open to various methods and approaches in literary translation.
- To discuss various methods and techniques to understand translated texts.

STRUCTURE

- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Prerequisites of Translation
- 2.3 History of Translations in the Indian Context
- 2.4 Work of Translation Societies and Text Book Societies
- 2.5 Translation of Scientific Terminology
- 2.6 Translations from English into Telugu
- 2.7 Translations from Telugu into English
- 2.8 Quality of translation, and theory and practice of translation
- 2.9 Qualities of Good translation

2.1 INTRODUCTION

“It is not Manuvad that unites us but anuvad” (Prasad,2010:11).

21st century has heralded good tidings to a new stream of research called Translation Studies (TS) because as Trivedi puts it, “Over the last two or three decades, translation has become more prolific, more visible and more respectable activity than perhaps ever before” (St.Pierre and Prafulla (eds.),2009: 251). Trivedi argues that the present globally-recognized boom in TS can be attributed to three momentous historical reasons across the span of the 20th century. The first reason is the movement of translating Russian fiction into English from 1890s to 1930s. It revealed to English readers new, exciting and shocking body of imaginative work from an area outside Western Europe. The other two movements belonged to the other end of the 20th century between 1970s and 1980s when literature from Latin America and from the East European countries was translated into English. The latter movement helped “transform globally our very expectations of what literature looks like or should look like” (St.Pierre and Prafulla (eds.), 2009:251; Prasad (ed.), 2010:189).

In this world of perishable nature, there are quite a few things that are non-perishable. One non-perishable and long-lasting thing is the printed text. A spoken word, which is limited by space and time, may inspire a large gathering of people present at that time, but a written variety inspires generation after generation. It continues to enthuse, entertain, educate, inform, inspire and help in evaluating the quality of life the civilized people are supposed to lead a life which is fully human and fully alive. In fact, George

Gordon Byron's quote "A drop of ink may make a million think" is absolutely right. It is the light of the world, a beacon of hope for the hopeless and the hapless, the delight of both the connoisseur and the common man with its rich variety and vitality. It outperforms every other means of communication.

Whether it is Gautama Buddha, Jesus, Krishna or Socrates of the ancient world or Rousseau, Voltaire, Karl Marx, Gandhi, Freud or Shakespeare of the later time, what they have uttered in their time is brought out in the form of books and it is these books which lead people on to the path of making their lives more sublime and full of substance.

Human beings speak thousands of languages which are mutually incomprehensible, and this fact creates a need for translation. Moreover, the electronic revolution of the 1990s and the processes of globalization triggered a sea-change in the way the world started looking at the new found research field of Translation Studies. Translation plays a crucial role in aiding understanding of a fast evolving global village. Any work of quality in one language will benefit the readers of that language. But when a book is translated into another language, the social, cultural, psychological, emotional, informative and aesthetic aspects of the original work may be read, understood, assimilated and used by the people who don't know the SL but who knows the TL. Translating these great works of literature is the need of the hour.

In the Indian context, the necessity of translation reaches an entirely different magnitude. In India which boasts of multi-linguistic flavor, there are many great works of literature by gifted authors. Many of these works enjoy universal appeal. Each language has its own speech community and its own cultural and linguistic heritage. This rich heritage can be made available to people at large if one can get these good works of literature translated into English and vice versa.

According to the history of translation, the theory of equivalence has become the key element of TS during 1960s and 1970s. Equivalence may be referred to as achieving accuracy and fidelity between SLT and TLT. In his *Approaches to Translation (1981)*, Newmark proposes semantic equivalence as opposed to communicative equivalence. The semantic focuses on semantic content of the SLT. The communicative focuses on the comprehension and response of the receptor. The distinction that is made is relevant not just for the Bible but for a diversity of the text types. Newmark prefers communicative equivalence to semantic equivalence. The researcher wishes to look at his translation of autobiography and biographical sketches (not biography proper) within the framework of semantic equivalence and communicative equivalence approach of Peter Newmark in general and the communicative equivalence approach in particular. As mentioned before, most of the recent translations focus on translating in stylized text book language the meaning of which may not be within the grasp of TL readers. Translators need to keep the TLR in mind and produce translations which are intelligible to him. After all, customer is the king and the customer (TLR) should clearly understand the text/translated text by himself, in single reading.

Translation is an age old practice but when one tries to search for a proper translation theory, it continues to elude us. Most of the translators can't explicitly state what theory of translation they have adapted and sometimes they may not even know which theory of translation is working on his/her work. As mentioned before in the same lesson, a clear gap between theory and practice of translation exists.

The last five decades in India have witnessed a new upsurge in translation activities. Sahitya Academy, National Book Trust, Central Institute of Indian Languages, international publishers like Penguin, Oxford and Macmillan and local publishers like Navajeevan Book Trust, Hyderabad Book Trust, Visalandhra Publishers, Alakananda Prachuranalu etc., have published some good translations.

Newmark argues that today translation is the most powerful weapon for carrying the fruits of development and progress to the less developed and underprivileged people and nations. The translator becomes the visionary missionary for carrying the culture along with the message. Translation ventures to establish contact between two languages, two cultures and two minds. Translation, of course, is the rewriting of the original text in the TL but it is by no means a mere imitation of a text from one language to another.

Throughout these centuries, translation is practised everywhere in the world. In the modern age, globalization leads to the added significance of translation especially in the fields of trade and commerce, particularly in advertisement and journalism. One can say that the increasing number of translators and translation teams leads to the formulation of different translation theories. Thus one can say that the need for inter-language communication drives the need for translation and translation theory.

2.2. PREREQUISITES OF TRANSLATION

A good knowledge of literary and non-literary textual criticism is required for the assessment of the quality of the text before being translated. Literary and technical translations enjoy a distinct flavor and both should not be approached in the same spirit. The technical translator is concerned with content and the literary translator with the form.

The translator himself needs to be a good judge of literary writing. He must assess the literary quality of the text to be translated. Moreover, a translator must acknowledge good writing and understand whether the piece is scientific or poetic, philosophical or fictional. Besides this, knowledge of logic and philosophy is an added advantage because they have a bearing on the grammatical and lexical aspects of translation.

2.3 HISTORY OF TRANSLATIONS IN THE INDIAN CONTEXT

P. Lal of Writers Workshop of Calcutta, whom Sujit Mukherjee admiringly calls as “one-man publishing venture” (Prasad (ed.), 2010:168-169), was instrumental as a publisher and as a translator to bring out translations of wide range of poetry and fiction from various Indian languages. About 200 titles were published by Writers Workshop in Calcutta (by December 1996). About 22 titles were translated by P.Lal—“twelve from Sanskrit, one from Pali, two from Bangla, five from Hindi, one each from Urdu and Punjabi” (Prasad (ed.), 2010:168-169). Sujit Mukherjee is all praise for P.Lal when he says that he will perhaps one day “make a comprehensive statement on what may be regarded as a theory of translation” (Prasad (ed.), 2010:169).

Translation in India is an age-old practice. Mukherjee claims that “In India that was Bharatvarsha, we were engaged in literary translation for a considerably long time.”(Prasad (ed.), 2010:169). The following translations emerged in India over a period of 1,000 years:

1. *Pampa-Bharata* in Kannada or *Vikrama-Arjuna-Vijayam of Pampa* in Kannada (10th century)
2. *Kamba-Ramayanam* of Kamban in Tamil (11th century)
3. *Vilanka-Ramayana* of Sarala Dasa in Oriya (14th century)
4. *Maha Bharata* (Asamiya version) by Harihara Vipra and Kaviratna Sarasvati (14th century)
5. *Ramayana* (Bangla version) by Krittibas Ojha (15th century)

Many other Sanskrit kavyas and puranic tales were translated from Sanskrit into Asamiya, Bangla, Gujarati etc. Yet, Mukherjee claims that “These were not, of course, translations as we understand the term today” (Prasad (ed.), 2010:170). In his opinion, they are transcreations.

In India, translational activities were taken up at the individual level, public level and a combination of both public and private enterprise. At the public level, we have the following organizations which have been rendering yeoman service.

Sahitya Academi: Sahitya Academi was established in 1954 with the sole aim of commissioning translations and publishing them in various languages. It has launched Centres for Translation in Bangalore, Ahmedabad, Kolkata and Delhi, and an Archive of Indian Literature in Delhi. The focus was on translating texts of Indian literature into other Indian languages. The translation of classic texts of world literature into Indian languages was also commissioned. The Academi has so far brought out over 6000 books, the present pace of publication being one book every 19 hours.

The National Book Trust: The NBT was set up in 1957 to promote book consciousness in the country. It runs ten different publishing programmes, one of which is *adan-pradan* (which literally means ‘give and take’). A modern literary work of fiction is taken up for translation into 12 other Indian languages. Till now, they have brought out 800 publications in 12 languages. Thanks to this project, Kannadigas are able to read Premchand in Kannada and Pannalal Patel in Bangla. Between 1988 and 1994, 76% of new publications from NBT are translations.

In the private sphere, the first ever book to be published in India was in 1554. St. Francis Xavier’s book in Portuguese was printed in Goa after the first printing press was imported to India. In January 1800, Joshua Marshman, William Ward and William Carey published Bible in different Indian languages.

Tagore’s award of Nobel Prize for Literature for his self-translated work *Gitanjali* ignited many poets who wished that even their works were translated.

The following works in translation were also brought out:

1. Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay’s *Durgeshnandini: or The Chieftain’s Daughter*, translated by Charuchandra Mukherjee (Calcutta, 1880)
2. *Kapalkundala: A Tale of Bengal Life*, translated by A.A.D. Davies (London, 1885)
3. *Indulekha* of O. Chandu Menon, translated by W. Dumergue (Madras, 1890)
4. Ramesh Chandra Dutta’s *Shivaji: or, the Morning of Marhatta Life*, translated by K.M.Jhaveri (Ahmedabad, 1899)
5. *Bharatipura* of U.R. Anantha Murthy from Kannada (Macmillan, 1996)

Sujit Mukherjee says, “Indian translators into English have never had it so good. The translator duly gets named in the title-page, sometimes even on the cover-front, while the half-title page or back-flap matter carries some information about her or him. She or he has earned and been given a proper place in print”(Prasad (ed.), 2010:176-177). Mukherjee also mentions that language is one of our greatest wealth and translation enables us to continue to speak or write or read to each other. “In such diversity is our security, durability and unity” (Prasad (ed.), 2010:177).

In the paper “*Translation and their Quest for Identity: Democratization of Knowledge in 19th Century India*”, Shantha Ramakrishna studies the close relationship between translations of scientific and cultural texts, colonial power, and anti-colonial awareness in 19th century India. She demonstrates how democratization of knowledge was made possible (Prasad (ed.), 2010:19-35).

India has always been a land of translations. “Even during the Mughal period, which is often considered unproductive in translation, there was a successful cross-fertilization of Indian and Islamic sciences, especially in the field of medicine, and the role of translation in this field cannot be overlooked” (Sen, 1991:23-26).

In the second half of the 19th century, there was a demand for teaching science in Indian languages and for democratizing knowledge. All the scientific terms had to be translated and during this time, Raja Rajendralala Mitra emerged on to the literary scene. He was the author of 50 books and translations. If Indians are to maintain their supremacy in literature and arts and intellectuality which they take pride in, “it is not by the lurid light of a few translated school books but by the broad sunshine of European literature in its integrity. They must drink deep at the fountainhead and not satisfy themselves with an impure muddy stream far away from its source” (Mitra, 1892:17). He made this statement “considering the practical difficulties in translating into not yet fully developed Indian languages” (Prasad (ed.), 2010:21).

In 1849, Madhusudan Gupta, a Professor in the Medical College of Calcutta, had translated and published in Bengali the *London Pharmacopaeia* under the translated title of *London Pharmacopoeia arthath Inghlandia Ausadkalpabali*.

Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay translated many works into Bengali. If Bengal was the first to propagate this new knowledge, other cities like Delhi, Aligarh and Madras followed suit. In Bengal, translations were done to foster local languages. Students of Delhi College translated English books into Urdu. This is how “New Learning spread” (Prasad (ed.), 2010:22).

In the 21st century, special mention should be made of The Murty Classical Library which is run by Rohan Narayana Murty. The home page of the website www.murtylibrary.com mentions about its vision thus:

“To present the greatest literary works of India from the past two millennia to the largest readership in the world is the mission of the Murty Classical Library of India. The series aims to reintroduce these works, a part of world literature’s treasured heritage, to a new generation.”

These books are translated into English by world-class scholars. These volumes serve as an invitation to diverse pre-modern literary worlds in languages such as Bangla, Hindi, Kannada, Marathi, Pali, Panjabi, Persian, Sanskrit, Sindhi, Tamil, Telugu and Urdu.

2.4 WORK OF TRANSLATION SOCIETIES AND TEXT BOOK SOCIETIES

Several Translation Societies namely Aligarh Scientific Society, Bihar Scientific Society, Delhi College Vernacular Translation Society, Calcutta School Book Society and Agra School Book Society helped “dissipate prejudices against science, prepare the ground for introducing Western Science to Indian students and open up their mind” (Prasad (ed.), 2010:25) through various translations that were rendered into native languages. Balshastri Jambekar, a Professor of Mathematics translated *Mathematical Geography* into Marathi and Master Ramachandra, Professor of Mathematics translated into Urdu.

The Role of Teacher –Translators: During this period, some teachers acted as intercultural agents for translating science text books. Moulvi Samsam-ul-haq of Sheikpura translated a treatise on astronomy. *Risalah Faiz-I-Aam* by Syud Tahawar Ali was a popular work on astronomy. Moulvi Obydullah-ul-Obydi through his translated work *Dabistan Danish Amoz* brings out the merits of Western Science. Munshi Zaka Ullah brought out 8 volumes of mathematical works in Urdu under the title *silsilat-ul-ulum*. Because of the impact of their work in intellectual renewal and growth, the period is termed as a “Period of Renaissance” (Prasad (ed.), 2010:26).

2.5 TRANSLATION OF SCIENTIFIC TERMINOLOGY

The 19th century also witnessed a debate on whether scientific and technical terms must be translated or transliterated. Tytler, who taught medicine in Bengali, favored transliteration. Felix Carey practically showed that Latin terms could be translated into Bengali. Prof. Mudhusudan Gupta preferred Sanskrit equivalents. Dr. Ballantyne translated scientific terms into Sanskrit.

During this term, since the Indian languages were not yet fully developed, Raja Rajendralala Mitra, a member of Asiatic Society prepared a scheme for ‘rendering European scientific terms in the vernacular’(Mitra, 1877:27). For finding equivalents, he advocated going for a judicious mix of translation, adaptation, and transliteration. Things indicating attributes should be translated and adapted but the names of simple objects could be borrowed from European languages.

The Nizam of Hyderabad set up a translation bureau to prepare text books in Urdu. The bureau translated nearly 300 books. The Darutharjuma Osmania which composed of translators, linguists and writers of Arab, Persian, Urdu, Bengali, English and French brought out many glossaries of specialized terminology.

Maharaja of Baroda and Prof. T.K. Gajjar wanted to teach science in Gujarati and Marathi. Maharaja set up *Sayani Gnyana Manjusha* to coin new technical terms in Gujarati and Marathi. Bureau of translation of the Education Department in Gujarat prepared a list of 8000 words in Gujarati.

Everywhere in India, in every effort invested by various translators, there was a distinct effort to give Indian character to the translation of scientific and technical terms.

Thus thanks to the efforts of so many people and institutions, “the quest for an Indian identity was born in the 19th century, in a context, where the role of translation in shaping this identity was by no means small” (Prasad (ed.), 2010:34).

2.6 TRANSLATIONS FROM ENGLISH INTO TELUGU

During the 20th century, the works of Shakespeare, Milton, Keats, Tennyson, Lamb and Goldsmith etc., were translated into Telugu. It all happened under the influence of English literature. Modeled on Goldsmith's novel, *The Vicar of Wakefield*, Veeresalingam wrote **Rajasekhara Charithamu**, which is credited to be the first novel in Telugu. Lamb's *Tales from Shakespeare* is credited to him. Gurajada Srirama Murthy rendered *Merchant of Venice* into Telugu. Adibhatla Narayana Dasu's **Baatasari** was the translation of Goldsmith's work *The Traveller*. Keats' *Isabella* was adapted as **Indubaala** by Anjaneya Sastri. Matthew Arnold's poem *Sohrab and Rustum* was translated by two people- Mocharla Hanumantha Rao's work is **Soharaabu** and Ellapanthula Jagannadham's translation is **Agarbhasuurulu**.

Dickens' novel *A Tale of Two Cities* is translated by Tenneti Suri as **Rendu Mahanagaralu** and by K. Sundaram as **Gupta Gnanam**. Janamanchi Ramakrishna translated George Orwell's novel *Animal Farm* as **Pasuwula Diwanam**. **Mantrikaamani** by Cherukupalli Sitarama Murthy and **Swamiji** by Moslikanti Samjiwa Rao are the two translations of Scott's *The Talisman*. **Kaanchanadiipam** by Nanduri Ramamohana Rao is a translation of Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island* and **Gaaliwaru Naukaa yaatralu** by Kallakuri Hanumantha Rao is a translation of Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*. Susurla Anantha Rao translated *Bacon's Essays* as **Bacon Upanyaasamulu**. *Julius Caesar* was translated by Vavilala Vasudevasastri, *Macbeth* by Narasimha Sastry, and *Hamlet* by D. Ramamurti.

Of late, a publisher named A. Gandhi under the banner of Peacock Classics has got the following famous books, among many others, translated into Telugu:

1. *Benhur* by Lew Wallace is translated as **Benhur** by Madabhushi Krishna Prasad
2. *The Stranger* by Albert Camu as **Aparichithudu** by G.Srikshmi
3. *The Old Man and the Sea* by Ernest Hemingway as **Musalodoo, samudhramoo** by Prudhvi Raju and Ramesh babu
4. *Indian Philosophy* of Dr.Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan as **Bharatheeya Thathvashaasthram** by Musunuru Siva Ramakrishna Rao
5. *A Brief History of Time* of Stephen Hawking as **Kaalam Katha** by A. Gandhi

Alakananda Prachuranalu, Visakhapatnam translated books by Sudha Murthy, Abdul Kalam, Nietzsche, P.V. Narasimha Rao, Madhu Dandavathe, Varghese Kurien etc. Emesco Books, Vijayawada is into translating many books from English into Telugu, particularly the books on personality development.

In this context, it is worth mentioning the individual effort of Dr. Lanka Siva Rama Prasad, a cardiologist by vocation and a translator by avocation. He has translated many classics from English into Telugu. *Paradise Lost*, *Paradise Regained*, *Iliad and Odyssey*, *Blake's poetry*, and *Divine Comedy* are some of his translations.

Sanskrit in the medieval period and English in the modern period have exerted influence on Telugu language and literature and they have been enriched greatly.

2.7 TRANSLATIONS FROM TELUGU INTO ENGLISH

The history of translations from the other languages into English is already presented in this chapter. Here the researcher wishes to limit himself to presenting the history of translations from Indian languages especially from Telugu into English.

During the latter half of the 20th century, there appeared many translations from Telugu into English. The list includes the works of Sri Sri (1910-1983), Viswanatha Satyanarayana (1893-1976), and Devulapalli Krishna Sastri (1897-1980). Susie Tharu and K. Lalitha edited *Women Writing in India: 600 B.C. to the Present* (1991) which contains poems (in English translation) of Molla (early 16th century), Muddupalani (1730-1790), Bandaru Acchamamba (1874-1904), Tallapragada Viswasundaramma (1899-1949) and Darisi Annapurnamma (1907-1931).

A brief history of translation in Telugu is given here to understand how the practice of translation has enriched the Telugu language and literature. It seems that the translators of Telugu have neither the knowledge of translation theory nor practised it. Their main goal is to satisfy the TLR and most of these translations appear like original works. They can be called “transcreations”.

In all these years of translation practice in the East and in the Indian sub-continent, no theory of translation is proposed. In fact, there are no theories of translation as there are no translation theorists in the Indian context. However, there are some experts who believe that Indian Aesthetics can be applied to translation practice. They opine that since Indian Aesthetics is a philosophy of integration or harmony and since its essence is the identification of beauty and joy, the same rules of Indian Aesthetics can be applied to the theory and practice of translation in India.

Indian Aesthetics comprises concepts like ‘*Alamkara*’ (figurative use of language), ‘*Auchitya*’ (propriety), ‘*Guna*’ (Quality or merit), ‘*Dhvani*’ (suggestiveness of art) ‘*Rasa*’ (emotive appeal), ‘*Riti*’ (diction), and ‘*Vakrokti*’ (artistic expression). It is opined that *Rasa Siddhantha* of Bharata Muni and *Dhvani Siddhantha* of Anandavardhana can be used to understand the theory of translation. Yet, since the goal of the researcher is not to propose any theory of translation, which is beyond him by any standards, he wishes to leave the discussion here and now.

In India, throughout these centuries of translations, our translators indulged in translation as a sacred duty without bothering about any theories. They did not try to construct/follow a theory in the practice of translation.

In the preface to the first edition of his book *Translation as Discovery and Other Essays on Indian Literature in English Translation*, Sujit Mukherjee contends that “No attempt has been made here to propound any theory of translation: this may be left to those who do not actually translate” (Mukherjee, 1994: Preface, ix).

2.8 QUALITY OF TRANSLATION, AND THEORY AND PRACTICE OF TRANSLATION

The quality of translation is a matter of choice, for it never depends on any theory. Good theory is based on information gained from practice. Good practice is based on carefully worked-out theory. The two are interdependent.

The ideal translation should be accurate as to meaning and natural as to the receptor language forms used and communicative. The success of a translation is measured by how closely it measures up to these ideals. Translation consists of studying the lexicon, grammatical structure, communication situation and cultural context of the SLT, analyzing it in order to determine its meaning, and then reconstructing this same meaning using the lexicon and grammatical structure which are appropriate in the RL and its cultural context.

In practice, there is a considerable variation in the types of translations produced by translators. Some translators work only in two languages and are competent in both. Others work from their first language to their second language, and still others from their second language to their first language. Depending on these matters of language proficiency, the procedures used will vary from project to project.

Translation into English and other Indian languages: Translating regional literatures into English has been widely recognized as a priority item in our present literary agenda in India. Now English is an Indian language. Now is the time to throw open the treasures in our regional literatures to the entire world via the world language. In the context of the much needed and unusual spurt in translation activity, it is essential for translators to exchange their views, relate their experiences, and make the path easier to tread for the new entrants and further aspirants. In the absence of a universally valid and accepted theory, translators necessarily follow their own strategies in practice.

The problems of culture in translating native literary texts into English: One language cannot express the meanings of another; instead, there is a distinction between the meanings built in and the meanings that must be captured and expressed. Cultural meanings are intricately woven into the texture of the language. The creative writer's ability to capture and project them is of primary importance. Caught between the need to capture the local color and the need to be understood by an audience outside the original cultural and linguistic situation, a translator must be aware of both cultures.

There has been a spurt of translation from Indian languages into English in the last decade or so, and most of these translations have been widely published. As a result, literature in the regional languages is now becoming increasingly available to pan-Indian and international readership. No matter whether English gains the most of all this or the regional languages concerned, the study of the process of translation is poor in quantity, if not in quality, when compared to the amount of translations done and made accessible to the public eye.

If one observes around him, one would realize that 21st century is a century of sea change in lifestyle and practices. The world has never been like what it is in this century. Life is fast paced and people have no time for reading. People are interested only in 'self'.

Selflessness is a utopian personality found only in books. There is a great trending for learning soft skills. Hard skills coupled with soft skills are ruling the roost and many training centres have mushroomed in the market. These soft skills trainers and schools 'try' vigorously, in vain, to nurture soft skills. It is to be noted that nurturing of soft skills can't be done from outside. It has to happen from within. It can't be forced on you. When a person reads a good article, or listens to a motivational speech, he is moved or motivated from within and it is possible only with translations.

Translations are bound to vary from one translator to another. In this Study fifty short stories are translated and presented in the second part and analysis of translation is done as a sample for 10 short stories. But the differences in translation cannot diminish the merit of the translation. Besides this, it is to be noted that every translation can be improved upon. No translator, however great he may be, can claim that his is the best translation. Even the supposed to be best translation by a distinguished translator can be improved. The writer wishes to state that a good translation is one that carries all the ideas of the original as well as its structural and cultural features besides making it suitable to the needs of the TLR.

2.9 QUALITIES OF GOOD TRANSLATION

1. A good translation extends the horizon of the art. Every translation acquires its own individual identity because the subtleties of transcreation get inadvertently infused into the exercise of translation. This does not mean that the original work gets totally "lost" in the translation or is demolished in the translator's endeavor to rationally unravel its mystery. But certainly, there will be a tension between the SL and the TL; of the translator's creative self and of his style. In other words, there comes into existence a thin line between the original and the translated text, no matter whether the product is better than the original or worse, for in both cases, a departure from the original gets confirmed. However, an active effort can be made by the translator to minimize this departure if he/she is careful in the process of translation. This requires complete grasp of the linguistic, cultural and stylistic aspects of both SLT and TLT.
2. It is important to comprehend the original text in all its totality as the original writer envisaged. This task is not as simple as it sounds, and involves far too many psychological, ethnological and philosophical exercises on the part of the translator.
3. The process of translation involves the conversion of meaningful utterances of one linguistic system into related meaningful utterances of another linguistic system. The translator's job begins at the pre-verbal level. What changes or gets transferred while translating is the form of the original text that is comprised of actual words, sentences; and the other higher units that are spoken or written. During translation, the form of the SLT is replaced by that of the TLT. Much of the translator's work consists of the operation of a series of reflexes. This does not imply that one can take every possible liberty with the original text and, finally, produce an excessively free translation as it generally happens with translations commissioned by commercial publishers to target the market.
4. Further it is stated that the communicative approach, which focuses the need of the target language reader, is an integrated approach when it is compared with the other approaches. Each type of translation has its own advantage and limitations. But communicative translation type has more advantages when it is compared with other

types when it comes to the translation of a literary text. A translator who translates communicatively projects himself as one who is 'loyal' to the TL reader in opposition to the adherent of the semantic method who manifests his loyalty to the author of the SLT. Accordingly, a communicative translation tends to be more 'idiomatic' as its primary aim is to create an effective text in the TL. Its primary aim is to retain as much correspondence as possible to the SLT. Semantic translation, on the other hand, almost always sacrifices effectiveness in order to render, with as much formal rigour as possible, the exact historical and contextual meaning of the SLT. Thus the ultimate aim of communicative translation is to produce 'equivalent effect' in the typical reader's mind.

In translation processes, there are normally two attitudes that the translators can adopt: one is to make the translated text and style comply with the writers, and the other one is to translate the texts according to the target language. The main difference between semantic translation and communicative translation is that the former respects source text above all and the latter considers primarily the readers.

5. A translation can be more, or less, semantic – more, or less, communicative – even a particular section or sentence can be treated more communicatively or less semantically. The writer is of the opinion that there are some sections in texts that need to be translated communicatively and others semantically. There may be some translators who might erroneously think that semantic translation is not good and communicative translation is good. Both are relevant depending on the text type and they are used together.
6. Which is the best method of translating a literary text or any text for that matter? The investigator would like to subscribe to the opinion that there cannot be any, among scholars as to which is the best method of translating a literary text. Different scholars subscribe to different methods depending on their ideology. Since the Study concerns a study of communicative equivalence and semantic equivalence, the investigator has tried to follow the same method in this translation.
7. When one needs to answer the question of whether or not a translation is a boon or a threat, the investigator would like to state that it is a boon when translation is done communicatively and with sufficient care after understanding all the nuances of the SLT expressed by the SLT author. On the contrary, if it is done callously and carelessly and if it has been done only for commercial purposes by indulging in totally free translation as it generally happens in the Indian system, it becomes a threat to the original.
8. Literary texts are open ended. Both SLT and TLT have diverse cultural and linguistic styles. The otherness of the SLT doesn't lend itself easily as it lacks equivalents. The readability and the salability factors guide the translation market in India. In the process of making reading smoother and readable, TL culture is sacrificed. But the investigator of this Study hasn't made any changes to the cultural component. The figurative language, mannerisms, social structures, cultural values etc., trigger problems in translation. While translating these texts, a translator has three options he / she can transliterate with / without adding a footnote; paraphrase by making explicit the implicit meaning and domesticate the original choosing to replace the alien

elements by the native. This choice depends on the purpose of translation, nature of the text and intended readers.

2.10 SELF –ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. Define the term Translation and its importance in the modern society?
2. Examine translation as a tool to national Integration?
3. Examine the focal issues of Indian School of Translation Studies?
4. How did G.N.Devy divide the history of translating Indian literature into English?
5. Elucidate the following statement and examine with examples:“Translation theory in Indian languages has always been something which was practiced and not written down.”
7. What are the different methods of evaluating a translated text?
8. Write an Essay on the functions of different translation agencies working in India.
9. Examine the factors which determine the quality of a translation.

2.11 SUGGESTED READINGS

- 1) Prasad.B. *Translation and Practice*, Visalandhra: Hyderabad: 2010.
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Prof. M. Suresh Kumar,

LESSON 3

BACKGROUND STUDIES: EMERGENCE INDIAN REGIONAL LITERATURES

OBJECTIVES

This unit enables the learner to understand

- Different Indian languages and their literary history.
- The Nationalist sentiment and social reforms.
- The rise Nationalism.
- How does India undergo a self-discovery through History.

STRUCTURE

3.1 Themes

3.1.1 Nationalist Sentiment in Indian Context

3.1.2 Nationalist Sentiment

3.1.3 Emergence of Regional literatures

3.2 Indian region literatures

3.3 Conclusion

3.4 Comprehensive Check Questions

3.5 References

3.1 THEMES

3.1.1 Nationalist Sentiment in Indian Context

Indian nationalism refers to the many underlying forces that defined the principles of the Indian independence movement, and strongly continue to influence the politics of India, as well as being the heart of many contrasting ideologies that have caused ethnic and religious conflict in Indian society. Indian nationalism often imbibes the consciousness of Indians that prior to 1947, India embodied the broader Indian subcontinent and influenced a part of Asia, known as Greater India. India has been unified under many emperors and governments in history. Ancient texts mention India under emperor Bharata and Akhand Bharat, these regions roughly form the entities of modern-day greater India. The Mauryan Empire was the first to unite all of India, and South Asia (including much of Afghanistan). In addition, much of India has also been unified under a central government by empires, such as the Gupta Empire, Rashtrakuta Empire, Pala Empire, Mughal Empire, Indian Empire etc.

Conception of Pan-South Asianism

India's concept of nationhood is based not merely on territorial extent of its sovereignty. Nationalistic sentiments and expression encompass that India's ancient history, as the birthplace of the Indus Valley Civilization and Vedic Civilization, as well as four major world religions – Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism. Indian nationalists see India stretching along these lines across the Indian Subcontinent.

India today celebrates many kings and queens for combating foreign invasion and domination, such as Shivaji of the Maratha Empire, Rani Laxmibai of Jhansi, Kittur Chennamma, Maharana Pratap of Rajputana, Prithviraj Chauhan and Tipu Sultan who fought the British. The kings of Ancient India, such as Chandragupta Maurya and Emperor Ashoka the Great of the Magadha Empire, are also remembered for their military genius, incredible conquests and remarkable religious tolerance.

Muslim kings are also a part of Indian pride. Akbar the Great was a powerful Mughal emperor who sought to resolve religious differences, and was known to have a good relationship with the Roman Catholic Church as well as with his subjects – Hindus, Buddhists, Sikhs and Jains. He forged familial and political bonds with Hindu Rajput kings.

Although previous Sultans had been more or less tolerant, Akbar took religious intermingling to new level of exploration. He developed for the first time in Islamic India an environment of complete religious freedom. Akbar undid most forms of religious discrimination, and invited the participation of wise Hindu ministers and kings, and even religious scholars to debate in his court.

The consolidation of the British East India Company's rule in the Indian subcontinent during the 18th century brought about socio-economic changes which led to the rise of an Indian middle class and steadily eroded pre-colonial socio-religious institutions and barriers.

The emerging economic and financial power of Indian business-owners and merchants and the professional class brought them increasingly into conflict with the British Raj. A rising political consciousness among the native Indian social elite (including lawyers, doctors, university graduates, government officials and similar groups) spawned an Indian identity and fed a growing nationalist sentiment in India in the last decades of the nineteenth century.

The creation in 1885 of the Indian National Congress in India by the political reformer A.O. Hume intensified the process by providing an important platform from which demands could be made for political liberalisation, increased autonomy, and social reform.

The leaders of the Congress advocated dialogue and debate with the Raj administration to achieve their political goals. Distinct from these moderate voices (or loyalists) who did not preach or support violence was the nationalist movement, which grew particularly strong, radical and violent in Bengal and in Punjab. Notable but smaller movements also appeared in Maharashtra, Madras and other areas across the south.

Swadeshi

The controversial 1905 partition of Bengal escalated the growing unrest, stimulating radical nationalist sentiments and becoming a driving force for Indian revolutionaries.

The Gandhian era

Mohandas Gandhi pioneered the art of *Satyagraha*, typified with a strict adherence to ahimsa (non-violence), and civil disobedience. This permitted common individuals to engage the British in revolution, without employing violence or other distasteful means. Gandhi's

equally strict adherence to democracy, religious and ethnic equality and brotherhood, as well as activist rejection of caste-based discrimination and untouchability united people across these demographic lines for the first time in India's history. The masses participated in India's independence struggle for the first time, and the membership of the Congress grew over tens of millions by the 1930s. In addition, Gandhi's victories in the Champaran and Kheda Satyagraha in 1918–19, gave confidence to a rising younger generation of Indian nationalists that the British Raj could be defeated. National leaders like Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Jawaharlal Nehru, Maulana Azad, Chakravarti Rajagopalachari, Mohandas Gandhi, Rajendra Prasad and Badshah Khan brought together generations of Indians across regions and demographics, and provided a strong leadership base giving the country political direction.

More than just "Indian"

Indian nationalism is as much a diverse blend of nationalistic sentiments as its people are ethnically and religiously diverse. Thus the most influential undercurrents are more than just *Indian* in nature. The most controversial and emotionally charged fibre in the fabric of Indian nationalism is religion. Religion forms a major, and in many cases, the central element of Indian life. Ethnic communities are diverse in terms of linguistics, social traditions and history across India.

Hindu Rashtra

An important influence upon Hindu consciousness arises from the time of Islamic empires in India. Entering the 20th century, Hindus formed over 75% of the population and thus unsurprisingly the backbone and platform of the nationalist movement. Modern Hindu thinking desired to unite Hindu society across the boundaries of caste, linguistic groups and ethnicity. In 1925, K.B. Hedgewar founded the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh in Nagpur, Maharashtra, which grew into the largest civil organisation in the country, and more potent, mainstream base of Hindu nationalism.

Vinayak Damodar Savarkar coined the term *Hindutva* for his ideology that described India as a *Hindu Rashtra*, a Hindu nation. This ideology has become the cornerstone of the political and religious agendas of modern Hindu nationalist bodies like the Bharatiya Janata Party and the Vishwa Hindu Parishad. Hindutva political demands include revoking Article 370 of the Constitution that grants a special semi-autonomous status to the Muslim-majority state of Kashmir, adopting a uniform civil code, thus ending a special legal framework for Muslims. These particular demands are based upon ending laws that Hindu nationalists consider as offering special treatment to Muslims.

The Qaum

Indian Muslim nationalism and Two-Nation Theory

In 1906–1907, the All India Muslim League was founded, created due to the suspicion of Muslim intellectuals and religious leaders with the Indian National Congress, which was perceived as dominated by Hindu membership and opinions. However, Mahatma Gandhi's leadership attracted a wide array of Muslims to the independence struggle and the Congress Party. The Aligarh Muslim University and the Jamia Millia Islamia stand apart –

the former helped form the Muslim league, while the JMI was founded to promote Muslim education and consciousness upon nationalistic and Gandhian values and thought.

While prominent Muslims like Allama Iqbal, Muhammad Ali Jinnah and Liaquat Ali Khan embraced the notion that Hindus and Muslims were distinct nations, other major leaders like Mukhtar Ahmed Ansari, Maulana Azad and most of Deobandi clerics strongly backed the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi and the Indian independence struggle, opposing any notion of Muslim nationalism and separatism. The Muslim school of Indian nationalism failed to attract Muslim masses and the Islamic nationalist Muslim League enjoyed extensive popular political support. State of Pakistan was ultimately formed following Partition of India. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi led India to victory in 1971 against Pakistan, imposed the Indian Emergency, led it to become a nuclear power state in 1974 and is blamed for the Khalistan insurgency and Operation Blue Star – a controversial blend of nationalism and hard politics.

The political identity of the Indian National Congress, India's largest political party and one which controlled government for over 45 years, is reliant on the connection to Mohandas K. Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru, and the Nehru-Gandhi family which has controlled the Congress since independence. The Congress Party's fortunes up till the 1970s were single-handedly propelled by its legacy as the flagship of India's Independence Movement, and the core platform of the party today evokes that past strongly, considering itself to be the guardian of India's independence, democracy and unity. Muslims have remained loyal voters of the Congress Party, seen as defender of Nehruvian secularism. In contrast, the Bharatiya Janata Party employs a more aggressively nationalistic expression.

The BJP seeks to preserve and spread the culture of the Hindus, the majority population. It ties nationalism with the aggressive defence of India's borders and interests against archrivals China and Pakistan, with the defence of the majority's right to be a majority.

Religious nationalist parties include the Shiromani Akali Dal, which is closely identified with the creation of a Sikh-majority state in Punjab and includes many Sikh religious leaders in its organisation. In Maharashtra, the Shiv Sena uses the legacy of the independent Maratha kingdom under famous figures like Shivaji to stir up support, and has adopted Hindutva as well. In Assam, the Asom Gana Parishad is a more state-focused party, arising after the frustration of the United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA) as a benevolent expression of Assamese nationalism. In Tamil Nadu came the first of such parties, the Dravidar Kazhagam (DK). Today the DK stands for a collection of parties,^[11] with the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK), the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK), the Pattali Makkal Katchi (PMK) and the Marumalarchi Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (MDMK). Caste-based politics invite the participation of the Bahujan Samaj Party and the party of Laloo Prasad Yadav, who build upon the support of poor low-caste and dalit Hindus in the northern, and most populated states of India like Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.

Almost every Indian state has a regional party devoted solely to the culture of the native people of that state.

3.1.3 Emergence of Regional Literatures in Indian context

Indian literature refers to the literature produced on the Indian subcontinent until 1947 and in the Republic of India thereafter. The Republic of India has 22 officially recognized languages.

All dates about the ancient Indian literature are not only uncertain, but are contested. European scholars from the 18th century onwards estimated dates of various texts based on methods that Indian scholars consider arbitrary. The earliest works of Indian literature were orally transmitted. Sanskrit literature begins with the oral literature of the Rig Veda a collection of sacred hymns dating to the period 1500–1200 BCE. The Sanskrit epics *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* appeared towards the end of the first millennium BCE.

Classical Sanskrit literature developed rapidly during the first few centuries of the first millennium BCE, as did the Tamil Sangam literature, and the Pāli Canon. In the medieval period, literature in Kannada and Telugu appeared in the 9th and 11th centuries respectively. Later, literature in Marathi, Odia, Bengali, various dialects of Hindi, Persian and Urdu began to appear as well. Early in the 20th century, Bengali poet Rabindranath Tagore became India's first Nobel laureate. In contemporary Indian literature, there are two major literary awards; these are the Sahitya Akademi Fellowship and the Jnanpith Award. Eight Jnanpith Awards each have been awarded in Hindi and Kannada, followed by five in Bengali and Malayalam, four in Odia, three in Gujarati, Marathi, Telugu and Urdu, two each in Assamese and Tamil, and one in Sanskrit.

3.2 INDIAN LITERATURE IN ARCHAIC INDIAN LANGUAGES

Vedic literature

Examples of early works written in Vedic Sanskrit include the holy Hindu texts, such as the core Vedas. Other examples include the Sulba Sutras, which are some of the earliest texts on geometry.

Classical Sanskrit literature

Sanskrit literature

The famous poet and playwright Kālidāsa wrote one epic: *Raghuvamsha* (*Dynasty of Raghu*); it was written in Classical Sanskrit rather than Epic Sanskrit. Other examples of works written in Classical Sanskrit include the Pāṇini's *Ashtadhyayi* which standardized the grammar and phonetics of Classical Sanskrit. The *Laws of Manu* is an important text in Hinduism. Kālidāsa is often considered to be the greatest playwright in Sanskrit literature, and one of the greatest poets in Sanskrit literature, whose *Recognition of Shakuntala* and *Meghaduuta* are the most famous Sanskrit plays. He occupies the same position in Sanskrit literature that Shakespeare occupies in English literature. Some other famous plays were *Mricchakatika* by Shudraka, *Svapna Vasavadattam* by Bhasa, and *Ratnavali* by Sri Harsha. Later poetic works include *Geeta Govinda* by Jayadeva. Some other famous works are Chanakya's *Arthashastra* and Vatsyayana's *Kamasutra*.

Prakrit literature

The most notable Prakrit languages were the Jain Prakrit (Ardhamagadhi), Pali, Maharashtri and Shauraseni.

One of the earliest extant Prakrit works is Hāla's anthology of poems in Maharashtri, the *Gāhā Sattasāī*, dating to the 3rd to 5th century CE. Kālidāsa and Harsha also used Maharashtri in some of their plays and poetry. In Jainism, many Svetambara works were written in Maharashtri.

Many of Aśvaghōṣa's plays were written in Shauraseni as were a sizable number of Jain works and Rajasekhara's *Karpuramanjari*. Canto 13 of the *Bhaṭṭikāvya* is written in what is called "like the vernacular" (*bhāṣāsama*), that is, it can be read in two languages simultaneously: Prakrit and Sanskrit.

Pali literature

Pali Canon

The Pali Canon is mostly of Indian origin. Later Pali literature however was mostly produced outside of the mainland Indian subcontinent, particularly in Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia.

Pali literature includes Buddhist philosophical works, poetry and some grammatical works. Major works in Pali are *Jataka tales*, *Dhammapada*, *Atthakatha*, and *Mahavamsa*. Some of the major Pali grammarians were Kaccayana, Moggallana and Vararuci (who wrote *Prakrit Prakash*).

Assamese literature

Assamese literature

The Charyapadas are often cited as the earliest example of Assamese literature. The Charyapadas are Buddhist songs composed in the 8th to 12th centuries. These writings bear similarities to Oriya and Bengali languages as well. The phonological and morphological traits of these songs bear very strong resemblance to Assamese some of which are extant.

After the Charyapadas, the period may again be split into (a) Pre-Vaishnavite and (b) Vaishnavite sub-periods. The earliest known Assamese writer is Hema Saraswati, who wrote a small poem "Prahlada Charita". In the time of the King Indranarayana (1350–1365) of Kamatapur the two poets Harihara Vipra and Kaviratna Saraswati composed *Asvamedha Parva* and *Jayadratha Vadha* respectively. Another poet named Rudra Kandali translated *Drona Parva* into Assamese. But the most well-known poet of the Pre-Vaishnavite sub period is Madhav Kandali, who rendered Valmiki's *Ramayana* into Assamese verse (Kotha *Ramayana*, 11th century) under the patronage of Mahamanikya, a Kachari king of Jayantapura.

Assamese writers of Vaishnavite periods had been Srimanta Sankardev, Madhabdev, Damodardev, Haridev and Bhattadev. Among these, Srimanta Sankardev has been widely

acknowledged as the top Assamese littérateur of all-time, and generally acknowledged as the one who introduced drama, poetry, classical dance form called Satriya, classical music form called Borgeet, art and painting, stage enactment of drama called Bhaona and Satra tradition of monastic lifestyle. His main disciples Madhabdev and Damodardev followed in his footsteps, and enriched Assamese literary world with their own contributions. Damodardev's disciple Bhattadev is acknowledged as the first Indian prose writer, who introduced the unique prose writing style in Assamese.

Of the post-Vaishnavite age of Assamese literature, notable modern Assamese writers are Lakshminath Bezbaruah, Padmanath Gohain Baruah, Hemchandra Goswami, Hem Chandra Barua, Atul Chandra Hazarika, Nalini Bala Devi, Birendra Kumar Bhattacharya, Amulya Barua, Navakanta Barua, Syed Abdul Malik, Bhabananda Deka, Jogesh Das, Homen Borgohain, Bhabendra Nath Saikia, Lakshmi Nandan Bora, Nirmal Prabha Bordoloi, Mahim Bora, Hiren Gohain, Arun Sharma, Hiren Bhattacharyya, Mamoni Raisom Goswami, Nalini Prava Deka, Nilamani Phukan, Arupa Kalita Patangia, Dhrubajyoti Bora, Arnab Jan Deka, Rita Chowdhury, Anuradha Sharma Pujari, Manikuntala Bhattacharya and several others.

A comprehensive introductory book *Assamese Language-Literature & Sahityarathi Lakshminath Bezbaroa* originally authored by leading Assamese littérateur of *Awahon-Ramdheni Era* and pioneer Assam economist Bhabananda Deka together with his three deputies, Parikshit Hazarika, Upendra Nath Goswami and Prabhat Chandra Sarma, was published in 1968. This book was officially released in New Delhi on 24 Nov 1968 by then President of India Dr Zakir Hussain in commemoration of the birth centenary celebration of doyen of Assamese literature Lakshminath Bezbaroa. After almost half a century, this historic book has been recovered and re-edited by Assamese award-winning short-story writer & novelist Arnab Jan Deka, which was published by Assam Foundation-India in 2014. This second enlarged edition was officially released on 4 December 2014 on the occasion of 150th birth anniversary of Lakshminath Bezbaroa and 8th Death Anniversary of Bhabananda Deka by Great Britain-based bilingual magazine *Luit to Thames (Luitor Pora Thamsoloi)* editor Dr Karuna Sagar Das.

Bengali literature

The first evidence of Bengali literature is known as Charyapada or Charyageeti, which were Buddhist hymns from the 8th century. Charyapada is in the oldest known written form of Bengali. The famous Bengali linguist Harprashad Shastri discovered the palm leaf Charyapada manuscript in the Nepal Royal Court Library in 1907. The most internationally famous Bengali writer is Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore, who received the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1913 for his work "Gitanjali". He wrote the national anthem of India and Bangladesh namely, "Jana Gana Mana" and "Amar Sonar Bangla", respectively. He was the first Asian who won the Nobel Prize. Rabindranath has written enormous amount of poems, songs, essays, novels, plays and short stories. His songs remain popular and are still widely sung in Bengal.

Kazi Nazrul Islam, who is one generation younger than Tagore, is also equally popular, valuable, and influential in socio-cultural context of the Bengal, though virtually unknown in foreign countries. And among later generation poets, Jibanananda Das is considered the most important figure. Other famous Indian Bengali writers were Sharat Chandra Chattopadhyay, Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, Michael Madhusudan Dutt, Sunil Gangopadhyay etc.

Sukanta Bhattacharya (15 August 1926 – 13 May 1947) was a Bengali poet and playwright. Along with Rabindranath Tagore and Kazi Nazrul Islam, he was one of the key figures of modern Bengali poetry, despite the fact that most of his works had been in publication posthumously. During his life, his poems were not widely circulated, but after his death his reputation grew to the extent that he became one of the most popular Bengali poet of the 20th century.

Bengali is the second most commonly spoken language in India (after Hindi). As a result of the Bengal Renaissance in the 19th and 20th centuries, many of India's most famous, and relatively recent, literature, poetry, and songs are in Bengali. In the history of Bengali literature there has been only one pathbreaking literary movement by a group of poets and artists who called themselves Hungryalists.

Chhattisgarhi Literature

Literature in Chhattisgarh reflects the regional consciousness and the evolution of an identity distinct from others in Central India. The social problems of the lower castes/untouchables were highlighted in the writings of Khub Chand Baghel through his plays 'Jarnail Singh' and 'Unch Neech'.

English literature

In the 20th century, several Indian writers have distinguished themselves not only in traditional Indian languages but also in English, a language inherited from the British. As a result of British colonisation, India has developed its own unique dialect of English known as Indian English. Indian English typically follows British spelling and pronunciation as opposed to American, and books published in India reflect this phenomenon. Indian English literature, however, tends to utilise more internationally recognisable vocabulary than does colloquial Indian English, in the same way that American English literature does so as compared to American slang.

India's only Nobel laureate in literature was the Bengali writer Rabindranath Tagore, who wrote some of his work originally in English, and did some of his own English translations from Bengali. India's best selling English-language novelists of all-time are the contemporary writers like Chetan Bhagat, Manjiri Prabhu and Ashok Banker. More recent major writers in English who are either Indian or of Indian origin and derive much inspiration from Indian themes are R. K. Narayan, Vikram Seth, Salman Rushdie, Arundhati Roy, Raja Rao, Amitav Ghosh, Rohinton Mistry, Vikram Chandra, Mukul Kesavan, Raj Kamal Jha, Vikas Swarup, Khushwant Singh, Shashi Tharoor, Nayantara Sehgal, Anita Desai, Kiran Desai, Ashok Banker, Shashi Deshpande, Arnab Jan Deka, Jhumpa Lahiri, Kamala Markandaya, Gita Mehta, Manil Suri, Manjiri Prabhu, Ruskin Bond, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni and Bharati Mukherjee.

In category of Indian writing in English is poetry. Rabindranath Tagore wrote in Bengali and English and was responsible for the translations of his own work into English.

Other early notable poets in English include Derozio, Michael Madhusudan Dutt, Toru Dutt, Romesh Chunder Dutt, Sri Aurobindo, Sarojini Naidu, and her brother Harindranath Chattopadhyay.

In the 1950s, the Writers Workshop collective in Calcutta was founded by the poet and essayist P. Lal to advocate and publish Indian writing in English. The press was the first to publish Pritish Nandy, Sasthi Brata, and others; it continues to this day to provide a forum for English writing in India. In modern times, Indian poetry in English was typified by two very different poets. Dom Moraes, winner of the Hawthornden Prize at the age of 19 for his first book of poems *A* India's only Nobel laureate in literature was the Bengali writer Rabindranath Tagore, who wrote some of his work originally in English, and did some of his own English translations from Bengali. India's best selling English-language novelists of all-time are the contemporary writers like Chetan Bhagat, Manjiri Prabhu and Ashok Banker.

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Their contemporaries in English poetry in India were Jayanta Mahapatra, Gieve Patel, A. K. Ramanujan, Arun Kolatkar, Dilip Chitre, Arvind Krishna Mehrotra, Eunice De Souza, Kersi Katrak, P. Lal and Kamala Das among several others.

Younger generations of poets writing in English include G. S. Sharat Chandra, Hoshang Merchant, Makarand Paranjape, Anuradha Bhattacharyya, Nandini Sahu, Arundhati Subramaniam, Jeet Thayil, Ranjit Hoskote, Sudeep Sen, Abhay K, Jerry Pinto, K Srilata, Gopi Kottoor, Tapan Kumar Pradhan, Arnab Jan Deka, Anju Makhija, Robin Ngangom, Rukmini Bhaya Nair, Smita Agarwal, Vihang A. Naik and Vivekanand Jha among others.

A generation of exiles also sprang from the Indian diaspora. Among these are names like Agha Shahid Ali, Sujata Bhatt, Richard Crasta, Yuyutsu Sharma, Shampa Sinha, Tabish Khair and Vikram Seth.

In recent years, English-language writers of Indian origin are being published in the West at an increasing rate.

Salman Rushdie, Arundhati Roy, Kiran Desai and Arvind Adiga have won the prestigious Man Booker Prize, with Salman Rushdie going on to win the Booker of Bookers.

Hindi literature

Hindi literature started as religious and philosophical poetry in medieval periods in dialects like Avadhi and Brij. The most famous figures from this period are Kabir and Tulsidas. In modern times, the *Khariboli dialect* became more prominent than Sanskrit.

Chandrakanta, written by Devaki Nandan Khatri, is considered to be the first work of prose in Hindi. Munshi Premchand was the most famous Hindi novelist. The *chhayavadip* poets include Suryakant Tripathi 'Nirala', Prem Bajpai, Jaishankar Prasad, Sumitranandan Pant, and Mahadevi Varma. Other renowned poets include Ramdhari Singh 'Dinkar', Maithili Sharan Gupt, Agyeya, Harivansh Rai Bachchan, and Dharmveer Bharti. *Shankani*, written by Gaurav Bhasin,

Gujarati literature

Gujarati literature's history may be traced to 1000 AD. Since then literature has flourished till date. Well known laureates of Gujarati literature are Hemchandracharya, Narsinh Mehta, Mirabai, Akho, Premanand Bhatt, Shamal Bhatt, Dayaram, Dalpatram, Narmad, Govardhanram Tripathi, Gandhi, K. M. Munshi, Umashankar Joshi, Suresh Joshi, Pannalal Patel and Rajendra Keshavlal Shah.

Gujarat Vidhya Sabha, Gujarat Sahitya Sabha, and Gujarati Sahitya Parishad are Ahmedabad based literary institutions promoting the spread of Gujarati literature. Umashankar Joshi, Pannalal Patel and Rajendra Keshavlal Shah have won the Jnanpith Award, the highest literary award in India.

Kannada literature

The oldest existing record of Kannada prose is the Halmidi inscription of 450 CE, and poetry in *tripadi* metre is the Kappe Arabhatta record of 700 CE. The folk form of literature began earlier than any other literature in Kannada. *Gajashtaka* (800 CE) by King Shivamara II, *Chudamani* (650 CE) by Thumbalacharya are examples of early literature now considered extinct. *Kavirajamarga* by King Nripatunga Amoghavarsha I (850 CE) is the earliest existing literary work in Kannada. It is writing on literary criticism and poetics meant to standardize various written Kannada dialects used in literature in previous centuries. The book makes reference to Kannada works by early writers such as King Durvinita of the 6th century and Ravikirti, the author of the Aihole record of 636 CE. An early extant prose work, the *Vaddaradhane* by Shivakotiacharya of 900 CE provides an elaborate description of the life of Bhadrabahu of Shravanabelagola. Since the earliest available Kannada work is one on grammar and a guide of sorts to unify existing variants of Kannada grammar and literary styles, it can be safely assumed that literature in Kannada must have started several centuries earlier. Pampa who popularized Champu style which is unique to Kannada wrote the epic "Vikramarjuna Vijaya". He also wrote "Adipurana". Other famous poets like Ponna and

Ranna wrote "Shantipurana" and "Ghadayudha" respectively. The Jain poet Nagavarma 2 wrote "Kavyavalokana", "Karnatabhashabhushana" and "Vardhamanapurana". Janna was the author of "Yashodhara Charitha". Rudhrabhata and Durgashima wrote "Jagannatha Vijaya" and "Panchatantra" respectively. The works of the medieval period are based on Jain and Hindu principles. The Vachana Sahitya tradition of the 12th century is purely native and unique in world literature.^[11] It is the sum of contributions by all sections of society.

Vachanas were pithy comments on that period's social, religious and economic conditions. More importantly, they held a mirror to the seed of social revolution, which caused a radical re-examination of the ideas of caste, creed and religion. Some of the important writers of Vachana literature include Basavanna, Allama Prabhu and Akka Mahadevi. Kumara Vyasa, who wrote the *Karnata Bharata Katamanjari*, has arguably been the most famous and most influential Kannada writer of the 15th century. The Bhakti movement gave rise to Dasa Sahitya around the 15th century which significantly contributed to the evolution of Carnatic music in its present form. This period witnessed great Haridasas like Purandara Dasa who has been aptly called the *Pioneer of Carnatic music*, Kanaka Dasa, Vyasathirtha and Vijaya Dasa. Modern Kannada in the 20th century has been influenced by many movements, notably *Navodaya*, *Navya*, *Navyottara*, *Dalita* and *Bandaya*. Contemporary Kannada literature has been highly successful in reaching people of all classes in society. Works of Kannada literature have received Eight Jnanpith awards, which is the highest number awarded for the literature in any Indian language. It has also received forty-seven Sahitya Academy awards.

Malayalam literature

Even up to 500 years since the start of the Malayalam calendar which commenced in 825 AD, Malayalam literature remained in preliminary stage. During this time, Malayalam literature consisted mainly of various genres of songs. *Ramacharitham* written by *Cheeramakavi* is a collection of poems written at the end of preliminary stage in Malayalam literature's evolution, and is the oldest Malayalam book available. Thunchaththu Ramanujan Ezhuthachan (17th century) is considered as the Father of the Malayalam language, because of his influence on the acceptance of the Malayalam alphabet and his extremely popular poetic works like *Adhyathma ramayanam*. Several noted works were written during the 19th century, but it was in the 20th century the Malayalam literary movement came to prominence.

Malayalam literature flourished under various genres and today it is a fully developed part of Indian literature.

Manipuri literature

Manipuri literature is the literature written in the Manipuri Language (Meiteilon), including literature composed in Manipuri Language by writers from Manipur, Assam, Tripura, Myanmar and Bangladesh. The history of Manipuri literature traces back to thousands of years with flourish of its civilization. The survival of Manipuri literature after passing through the massive devastation, the terror event of history, by burning of Meitei Scriptures, which is known as Puya Meithaba, was a miracle. The resilience that Meiteis could acquire in the event of devastation proved their ability to survive in history. Most of the early literary works found in Manipuri Literature were in Poetry and Prose. Some of the books were

written with combination of both the Prose and Poetry. One of the most famous Manipuri Writers of the twentieth century is M. K. Binodini Devi.

Marathi literature

Marathi literature began with saint-poets like Dnyaneshwar, Tukaram, Ramdas, and Eknath. Modern Marathi literature was marked by a theme of social reform. Well-known figures from this phase include Mahatma Jyotiba Phule, Lokhitwadi, and others. Prominent modern literary figures include Jnanpith Award winners Vishnu Sakharam Khandekar, Vishnu Vaman Shirvadakar (*Kavi Kusumagraj*) and Govind Vinayak Karandikar. Though the earliest known Marathi inscription found at the foot of the statue at Shravanabelgola in Karnataka is dated c. 983 CE, the Marathi literature actually started with the religious writings by the saint-poets belonging to Mahanubhava and Warkari sects. Mahanubhava saints used prose as their main medium, while Warkari saints preferred poetry as the medium. The early saint-poets were Mukundaraj who wrote Vivekasindhu, Dnyaneshwar (1275–1296) (who wrote Amrutanubhav and Bhawarthadeepika, which is popularly known as Dnyaneshwari, a 9000-couplets long commentary on the Bhagavad Gita) and Namdev. They were followed by the Warkari saint-poet Eknath (1528–1599). Mukteswar translated the great epic Mahabharata into Marathi. Social reformers like saint-poet Tukaram transformed Marathi into an enriched literary language. Ramdas's (1608–1681) Dasbodh and Manache Shlok are well-known products of this tradition.

In the 18th century, some well-known works like Yatharthadeepika (by Vaman Pandit), Naladamayanti Swayamvara (by Raghunath Pandit), Pandava Pratap, Harivijay, Ramvijay (by Shridhar Pandit) and Mahabharata (by Moropant) were produced. However, the most versatile and voluminous writer among the poets was Moropanta (1729–1794) whose Mahabharata was the first epic poem in Marathi. The historical section of the old Marathi literature was unique as it contained both prose and poetry. The prose section contained the Bakhars that were written after the foundation of the Maratha kingdom by Shivaji. The poetry section contained the Povadas and the Katavas composed by the Shahirs. The period from 1794 to 1818 is regarded as the closing period of the Old Marathi literature and the beginning of the Modern Marathi literature.

The first English book was translated in Marathi in 1817. The first Marathi newspaper started in 1835. Many books on social reforms were written by Baba Padamji (Yamuna Paryatana, 1857), Mahatma Jyotiba Phule, Lokhitwadi, Justice Mahadev Govind Ranade, Hari Narayan Apte (1864–1919) etc. Lokmanya Tilak's newspaper Kesari, set up in 1880, provided a platform for sharing literary views. Marathi at this time was efficiently aided by Marathi Drama. Here, there also was a different genre called 'Sangit Natya' or musicals. The first play was V.A. Bhave's *Sita Swayamvar* in 1843. Later Kirioskar (1843–85) and G.B. Deval (1854-1916) brought a romantic aroma and social content. But Krishnaji Prabhakar Khadilkar (1872~1948) with his banned play *Kichaka-Vadh* (1910) set the trend of political playwriting. Later on this "stage" was ably served by stalwarts like Ram Ganesh Gadkari and Prahlad Keshav Atre.

The drama flourished in the 1960s and 70s with few of the best Indian actors available to take on a variety of protagonists. Mohan Agashe, Sriram Lagoo, Kashinath Ghanekar, Prabhakar Panshikar playing many immortal characters penned by greats like Vasant Kanetkar, Kusumagraj, vijay Tendulkar to name a few. This drama movement was ably supported by Marathi films which did not enjoy a continuous success. Starting with

V. Shantaram and before him the pioneer Dada Saheb Phalke, Marathi cinema went on to influence contemporary Hindi cinema. Director Raja Paranjape, Music director Sudhir Phadke, lyricist G. Madgulkar and actor Raja Gosavi came together to give quite a few hits in later period. Marathi language as spoken by people here was throughout influenced by drama and cinema along with contemporary literature. Modern Marathi poetry began with Mahatma Jyotiba Phule's compositions.

The later poets like Keshavsuta, Balakavi, Govindagraj, and the poets of Ravi Kiran Mandal like Madhav Julian wrote poetry which was influenced by the Romantic and Victorian English poetry. It was largely sentimental and lyrical. Prahlad Keshav Atre, the renowned satirist and a politician wrote a parody of this sort of poetry in his collection *Jhenduchi Phule*. Sane Guruji (1899–1950) contributed to the children's literature in Marathi. His major works are *Shyamchi Aai* (Shyam's Mother), *Astik* (Believer), *Gode Shevat* (The Sweet Ending) etc. He translated and simplified many Western classics and published them in a book of stories titled *Gode Goshti* (Sweet Stories).

Mizo literature

Mizo literature is the literature written in Mizo ṭawng, the principal language of the Mizo peoples, which has both written and oral traditions. It has undergone a considerable change in the 20th century. The language developed mainly from the Lushai language, with significant influence from Pawi language, Paite language and Hmar language, especially at the literary level.^[12] All Mizo languages such as Pawi language, Paite language etc. remained unwritten until the beginning of the 20th century. However, there was unwritten secular literature in the form of folktales, war chants etc. passed down from one generation to another. And there was rich religious literature in the form of sacerdotal chants. These are the chants used by the two types of priests, namely *Bawlpu* and *Sadâwt*. This article is about the written literature.

Odia literature

Odia language literary history started with the charyapadas written in the 8th century AD. Odia has a rich literary heritage, the medieval period dating back to the 13th century. Sarala Dasa who lived in the 14th century is known as the Vyasa of Odisha. He translated the Mahabharata into Odia. In fact the language was initially standardized through a process of translation of classical Sanskrit texts like the Mahabharata, the Ramayana and the Srimad Bhagabatam. Jagannatha Das translated the Srimad Bhagabatam into Odia and his translation standardized the written form of the language. Odia has had a strong tradition of poetry, especially that of devotional poetry. Some other eminent ancient Odia Poets include Kabi Samrat Upendra Bhanja and Kavisurya Baladev Rath.

Odia language is replete in classicism. Various forms of poetry like champu, chhanda, bhajan, janan, poi, chautisha etc. were written during the medieval ages.

In the 19th century, Swabhab Kavi Gangadhar Meher (1862-1924), Fakir Mohan Senapati (1843–1918), Gouri Shankar Ray, Gopal Chandra Praharaj, Pandit Nilmani Vidyaratna, Kabibar Radhanath Ray were few of the prominent figures in prose and poetry writings of Odia literature. In the 20th century Godabarish Mohapatra, Kalindi Charana Panigrahi, Kanhu Charan Mohanty (1906–1994), Godabarish Mishra, Gopinath Mohanty (1914–1991), Sachidananda Routray (1916–2004), Sitakant Mahapatra (born 17 September

1937), Surendra Mohanty, Manoj Das, Kishori Charan Das, Ramakanta Rath (born 13 December 1934), Binapani Mohanty, Jagadish Mohanty, Sarojini Sahoo, Rajendra Kishore Panda, Padmaj Pal, Ramchandra Behera, Pratibha Satpathy, Nandini Sahu, Debaraj Samantray are few names who created Odia literature. Recently¹ the Government of India accorded classical status to Odia.

Punjabi literature

The history of Punjabi literature starts with advent of Aryan in Punjab. Punjab provided them the perfect environment in which to compose the ancient texts. The Rig-Veda is first example in which references are made to the rivers, flora and fauna of Punjab. The Punjabi literary tradition is generally conceived to commence with Fariduddin Ganjshakar (1173–1266).[2]. Farid's mostly spiritual and devotional verse were compiled after his death in the Adi Granth.

The Janamsakhis, stories on the life and legend of Guru Nanak (1469–1539), are early examples of Punjabi prose literature. Nanak himself composed Punjabi verse incorporating vocabulary from Sanskrit, Arabic, Persian, and other Indic languages as characteristic of the Gurbani tradition. Sufi poetry developed under Shah Hussain (1538–1599), Sultan Bahu (1628–1691), Shah Sharaf (1640–1724), Ali Haider (1690–1785), and Bulleh Shah (1680–1757). In contrast to Persian poets who had preferred the ghazal for poetic expression, Punjabi Sufi poets tended to compose in the Kafi.

Punjabi Sufi poetry also influenced other Punjabi literary traditions particularly the Punjabi Qissa, a genre of romantic tragedy which also derived inspiration from Indic, Persian and Qur'anic sources. The Qissa of Heer Ranjha by Waris Shah (1706–1798) is among the most popular of Punjabi qisse. Other popular stories include Sohni Mahiwal by Fazal Shah, Mirza Sahiba by Hafiz Barkhudar (1658–1707), Sassi Punnun by Hashim Shah (1735?-1843?), and Qissa Puran Bhagat by Qadaryar (1802–1892).

The Victorian novel, Elizabethan drama, free verse and Modernism entered Punjabi literature through the introduction of British education during colonial rule. The setting up of a Christian mission at Ludhiana in 1835 (where a printing press was installed for using Gurmukhi fonts, and which also issued the first Punjabi grammar in 1838), the publication of a Punjabi dictionary by Reverend J. Newton in 1854 and the ripple-down effect of the strengthening and modernizing the education system under the patronage of the Singh Sabha Movement in the 1860s, were some of the developments that made it possible for 'modernism' to emerge in Punjabi literary culture. It needs to be pointed out here that 'modernism' is being used here as an umbrella term to cover a whole range of developments in the Punjabi literary culture, starting with the break from tradition or the past to a commitment to progressive ideology, from the experimental nature of the avant-garde to the newness of the forward-looking.

Tamil literature

Tamil literature has a rich and long literary tradition spanning more than 2000 years. *Tolkaappiyam* has been credited as the oldest work in Tamil available today. The history of Tamil literature follows the history of Tamil Nadu, closely following the social and political trends of various periods. The secular nature of the early Sangam poetry gave way to works

of religious and didactic nature during the Middle Ages. *Tirukkural* is a fine example of such work on human behaviour and political morals. A wave of religious revival helped generate a great volume of literary output by Saivite and Vaishnavite authors. Jain and Buddhist authors during the medieval period and Muslim and European authors later also contributed to the growth of **Tamil literature**

A revival of Tamil literature took place from the late 19th century when works of religious and philosophical nature were written in a style that made it easier for the common people to enjoy. Nationalist poets began to utilise the power of poetry in influencing the masses. Short stories and novels began to appear. The popularity of Tamil Cinema has also provided opportunities for modern Tamil poets to emerge.

Telugu literature

Telugu, the Indian language with the third largest number of speakers (after Hindi & Bengali), is rich in literary traditions. The earliest written literature dates back to the 7th century. The epic literary tradition started with Nannayya who is acclaimed as Telugu's *Aadikavi* meaning the first poet. He belongs to the 10th or 11th century.

Vemana was a prince, also called Pedakomati or Vemaa Reddy, who lived in the 14th century and wrote poems in the language of the common man. He questioned the prevailing values and conventions and religious practices in his poems. His philosophy made him a unique poet of the masses.

Viswanadha Satyanarayana (*Veyipadagalu*) (1895–1976), a doyen of conventional yet creative literature, was the first to receive the Jnanpith Award for Telugu followed by C. Narayana Reddy and Ravuri Bharadwaja.

Srirangam Srinivasarao or **Sri Sri** (born 1910) was a popular 20th century poet and lyricist. Srisri took the "Telugu literary band wagon that travelled in roads of kings and queens in to that of muddy roads of common man".

Literary Movements: Old Era: Telugu literature has been enriched by many literary movements like Veera Shaiva movement which gave birth to *dvipada kavitvam* (couplets).

Bhakti movement which gave us immortal compilations by Annamayya, Kshetrayya and Tyagaraja and *kancharla Gopanna* (Ramadasu). The renaissance movement heralded by Vemana stand for the old Telugu literary movements.

New era:

Romantic Movement (led by Krishna sashtri, Rayaprolu, Vedula), Progressive Writers Movement, Digambara Kavitvam (Nagnamuni, Cherabanda Raju, Jwalamukhi, Nikhileswar, Bhairavayya and Mahaswapna Revolutionary Writers' Movement, Streevada Kavitvam and Dalita Kavitvam all flourished in Telugu Literature and in fact, Telugu Literature has been the standard bearer of Indian Literature in these respects.

Fiction and Prose literature:

Kandukuri Veeresalingam, is said to be the father of Modern Telugu fiction. Kodavatiganti Kutumba Rao laid foundation for the realistic modern Telugu Novel and Short Story, Rachakonda and Kalipatnam carried the flag in to excellency.

Annamaya, Gurajada Appa Rao, Kandukuri, Devulapalli, Jashuva, Unnava Laxminarayana (*Malapalli*), Bucchi Babu, Tripuraneni Gopichand and many more had a profound impact on Telugu literature.

Urdu literature

Main article: Urdu literature

Among other traditions, Urdu poetry is a fine example of linguistic and cultural synthesis. Arab and Persian vocabulary based on the Hindi language resulted in a vast and extremely beloved class of ghazal literature, usually written by Muslims in contexts ranging from romance and society to philosophy and Tassawuf(Sufism). Urdu soon became the court language of the Mughals and in its higher forms was once called the "Kohinoor" of Indian languages. Its surely most refined, enriched, sophisticated and ripended language and literature, producing world-class renowned poets like, Meer Ghalib, Iqbal and Faiz. The revolutionary poetry of Allama Sir Dr. Mohammed Iqbal, known as the POET of EAST, POET OF ISLAM, POET OF QURAN, invoked a spirit of freedom among the Muslims of India, thus contributing a pivotal role in the making of Pakistan.

In Urdu literature fiction has also flourished well. Umrao Jaan Ada of Mirza Hadi Ruswa is first significant Urdu novel. Premchand is treated as father of modern Urdu fiction with his novel Godan and short stories like Kafan. The art of short story was further taken ahead by Manto, Bedi, Krishn Chander and a host of highly acclaimed writers. Urdu novel reached further heights in the 1960s with novels of Qurratulain Haider and Abdullah Hussain. Towards the end of the 20th century Urdu novel entered into a new phase with trend setter novel MAKAAAN of Paigham Afaqui. Urdu ghazal has also recently changed its colour with more and more penetration in and synchronization with modern and contemporary issues of life.

Indian literature in foreign languages

Indian Persian literature

During the early Muslim period, Persian became the official language of the northern part of Indian subcontinent, used by most of the educated and the government. The language had, from its earliest days in the 11th century AD, been imported to the subcontinent by various culturally Persianised Central Asian Turkic and Afghan dynasties. Several Indians became major Persian poets later on, the most notable being Amir Khusro and in more modern times Allama Iqbal. Much of the older Sanskrit literature was also translated into Persian. For a time, it remained the court language of the Mughals, soon to be replaced by Urdu. Persian still held its status, despite the spread of Urdu, well into the early years of the British rule in India.

Most British officials had to learn Persian on coming to India and concluded their conversations in Persian. In 1837, however, the British, in an effort to expand their influence, made a government ruling to discontinue the use of Persian and commence the use of English instead. Thus started the decline of Persian as most of the subcontinent's official governmental language, a position to be taken up by the new language of the British Raj, English. Many modern Indian languages still show signs of relatively heavy Persian influence, most notably Urdu and Hindi.

Literature from North East India

Literature from North East India refers to literature of Languages of North East India, and also the body of work by English-language writers from this region. North-East India is an under-represented region in many ways. The troubled political climate, the beautiful landscape and the confluence of various ethnic groups perhaps have given rise to a body of writing that is completely different from Indian English Literature. North-East India was a colonial construct and continues to be one by virtue of having a historically difficult relationship with the Indian nation state.

3.3 CONCLUSION

After observing the numerous regional literatures in most parts of India has been an impression all these literatures reflect the pan Indian culture and the spread of Nationalism. This unit gives a comprehensive idea on social, geological and cultural and detailed history of major regional literatures of India and changing social conditions of India.

3.4 COMPREHENSION CHECK QUESTIONS

1. Write a note on Regional literatures of India, illustrating your answer with reference to the topic prescribed for your study.
2. What is your assessment of Indian English literature and its place among other regional literatures of India? Illustrate your answer.
3. Discuss in detail the rise of different regional literatures in India and their common features.
4. Write a critical analysis on “Multi language” system in India.
5. Discuss “India as a land of multi languages.” with reference to your prescribed works.

3.5 REFERENCES

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Dr. Inturi Keshavarao

LESSON 4

BACKGROUND STUDIES: INDIAN SOCIETY AND LITERATURE

OBJECTIVES

This unit enables the learner to understand

- The life of Indians and their social history.
- The rigidity of caste system and social reforms.
- The rise Nationalism.
- How does India undergo a self-discovery through History?

STRUCTURE

- 4.1 Themes
- 4.2 Indian society and literature
- 4.3 Conclusion
- 4.4 Comprehensive Check Questions
- 4.5 References

4.1 THEMES

- (a) Indian Society and literature
- (b) Nationalist Sentiment
- (c) Emergence of Regional literatures
- (d) Social Reform

4.2 INDIAN SOCIETY AND LITERATURE

The **Culture of India** is the way of living of the people of India.

India's languages, religions, dance, music, architecture, food, and customs differ from place to place within the country. The Indian culture often labelled as an amalgamation of several cultures, spans across the Indian subcontinent and has been influenced by a history that is several millennia old. Many elements of India's diverse cultures, such as Indian religions, Indian philosophy and Indian cuisine, have had a profound impact across the world.

4.2.1 Culture

India is one of the world's oldest civilizations. The Indian culture, often labeled as an amalgamation of several various cultures, spans across the Indian subcontinent and has been influenced and shaped by a history that is several thousand years old. Throughout the history of India, Indian culture has been heavily influenced by Dharmic religions. They have been credited with shaping much of Indian philosophy, literature, architecture, art and music.

Greater was the historical extent of Indian culture beyond the Indian subcontinent. This particularly concerns the spread of Hinduism, Buddhism, architecture, administration and writing system from India to other parts of Asia through the Silk Road by the travellers

and maritime traders during the early centuries of the Common Era. To the west, Greater India overlaps with Greater Persia in the Hindu Kush and Pamir Mountains. During the medieval period, Islam played a significant role in shaping Indian cultural heritage. Over the centuries, there has been significant integration of Hindus, Jains, and Sikhs with Muslims across India.

4.2.2. Religions

India is the birthplace of Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism, collectively known as Indian religions. Indian religions are a major form of world religions along with a brahmic ones. Today, Hinduism and Buddhism are the world's third and fourth-largest religions respectively, with over 2 billion followers altogether, and possibly as many as 2.5 or 2.6 billion followers.

India is one of the most religiously diverse nations in the world, with some of the most deeply religious societies and cultures. Religion plays a central and definitive role in the life of many of its people.

According to the 2011 census, 80% of the population of India practice Hinduism. Islam (14.2%), Christianity (2.3%), Sikhism (1.7%), Buddhism (0.7%) and Jainism (0.4%) are the other major religions followed by the people of India. Many tribal religions, such as Sarnaism, are found in India, though these have been affected by major religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam and Christianity. Jainism, Zoroastrianism, Judaism, and the Bahá'í Faith are also influential but their numbers are smaller. Atheism and agnostics also have visible influence in India, along with a self-ascribed tolerance to other faiths.

Atheism and agnosticism have a long history in India and flourished within Śramaṇa movement. The *Cārvāka* school originated in India around the 6th century BCE. It is one of the earliest form of materialistic and atheistic movement in ancient India.

Sramana, Buddhism, Jainism, Ājīvika and some schools of Hinduism consider atheism to be valid and reject the concept of creator deity, ritualism and superstitions. India has produced some notable atheist politicians and social reformers. According to the 2012 WIN-Gallup Global Index of Religion and Atheism report, 81% of Indians were religious, 13% were not religious, 3% were convinced atheists, and 3% were unsure or did not respond.

4.2.3. Philosophy

Indian philosophy comprises the philosophical traditions of the Indian subcontinent. There are six schools of orthodox Hindu philosophy Nyaya, Vaisheshika, Samkhya, Yoga, Mīmāṃsā and Vedānta and four heterodox schools Jain, Buddhist, Ājīvika and Cārvāka last two are also schools of Hinduism. However, there are other methods of classification; Vidyaṛanya for instance identifies sixteen schools of Indian philosophy by including those that belong to the Śaiva and Rāśvara traditions. Since medieval India (ca.1000–1500), schools of Indian philosophical thought have been classified by the Brahmanical tradition as either orthodox or non-orthodox āstika or nāstika depending on whether they regard the Vedas as an infallible source of knowledge.

The main schools of Indian philosophy were formalised chiefly between 1000 BCE to the early centuries of the Common Era. According to philosopher Sarvepalli Radha krishnan, the earliest of these, which date back to the composition of the Upanishads in the later Vedic

period (1000–500 BCE), constitute "the earliest philosophical compositions of the world." Competition and integration between the various schools was intense during their formative years, especially between 800 BCE and 200 CE. Some schools like Jainism, Buddhism, Śaiva and Advaita Vedanta survived, but others, like Samkhya and Ājīvika, did not; they were either assimilated or went extinct. Subsequent centuries produced commentaries and reformulations continuing up to as late as the 20th century. Authors who gave contemporary meaning to traditional philosophies include Swami Vivekananda, Ram Mohan Roy, and Swami Dayananda Saraswati.

4.2.4. Family structure and marriage

For generations, India has a prevailing tradition of the joint family system. It is a system under which extended members of a family – parents, children, the children's spouses and their offspring, etc. – live together. Usually, the oldest male member is the head in the joint Indian family system. He mostly makes all important decisions and rules, and other family members are likely abide by them.

In a 1966 study, Orenstein and Micklin analysed India's population data and family structure. Their studies suggest that Indian household sizes had remained similar over the 1911 to 1951 period. Thereafter, with urbanisation and economic development, India has witnessed a break up of traditional joint family into more nuclear-like families. Sinha, in his book, after summarising the numerous sociological studies done on Indian family, notes that over the last 60 years, the cultural trend in most parts of India has been an accelerated change from joint family to nuclear families, much like population trends in other parts of the world.

The traditional large joint family in India, in the 1990s, accounted for a small percent of Indian households, and on average had lower per capita household income. He finds that joint family still persists in some areas and in certain conditions, in part due to cultural traditions and in part due to practical factors. Youth in lower socio-economic classes are more inclined to spend time with their families than their peers due to differing ideologies in rural and urban parenting.

Arranged marriage

For centuries, arranged marriages have been the tradition in Indian society. Even today, the majority of Indians have their marriages planned by their parents and other respected family-members. In the past, the age of marriage was young. The average age of marriage for women in India has increased to 21 years, according to 2011 Census of India. In 2009, about 7% of women got married before the age of 18.

In some marriages the bride's family provide a dowry to the bridegroom. Traditionally, the dowry was considered a woman's share of the family wealth, since a daughter had no legal claim on her natal family's real estate. It also typically included portable valuables such as jewelery and household goods that a bride could control throughout her life. Historically, in most families the inheritance of family estates passed down the male line. Since 1956, Indian laws treat males and females as equal in matters of inheritance without a legal will. Indians are increasingly using a legal will for inheritance and property succession, with about 20 percent using a legal will by 2004.

In India, the divorce rate is low 1% compared with about 40% in the United States. These statistics do not reflect a complete picture, though. There is a dearth of scientific surveys or studies on Indian marriages where the perspectives of both husbands and wives were solicited in-depth. Sample surveys suggest the issues with marriages in India are similar to trends observed elsewhere in the world. The divorce rates are rising in India. Urban divorce rates are much higher. Women initiate about 80 percent of divorces in India.

"Opinion is divided over what the phenomenon means: for traditionalists the rising numbers portend the breakdown of society while, for some modernists, they speak of a healthy new empowerment for women."

Recent studies suggest that Indian culture is trending away from traditional arranged marriages. Banerjee et al. surveyed 41,554 households across 33 states and union territories in India in 2005. They find that the marriage trends in India are similar to trends observed over last 40 years in China, Japan and other nations. The study found that fewer marriages are purely arranged without consent and that the majority of surveyed Indian marriages are arranged with consent. The percentage of self-arranged marriages (called **love marriages** in India) were also increasing, particularly in the urban parts of India.

Wedding rituals

Weddings are festive occasions in India with extensive decorations, colors, music, dance, costumes and rituals that depend on the religion of the bride and the groom, as well as their preferences. The nation celebrates about 10 million weddings per year, of which over 80% are Hindu weddings.

While there are many festival-related rituals in Hinduism, *vivaha* (wedding) is the most extensive personal ritual an adult Hindu undertakes in his or her life. Typical Hindu families spend significant effort and financial resources to prepare and celebrate weddings. The rituals and process of a Hindu wedding vary depending on region of India, local adaptations, resources of the family and preferences of the bride and the groom. Nevertheless, there are a few key rituals common in Hindu weddings - *Kanyadaan*, *Panigrahana*, and *Saptapadi*; these are respectively, gifting away of daughter by the father, voluntarily holding hand near the fire to signify impending union, and taking seven steps before fire with each step including a set of mutual vows. After the seventh step and vows of *Saptapadi*, the couple is legally husband and wife. Sikhs get married through a ceremony called Anand Karaj. The couple walk around the holy book, the Guru Granth Sahib four times. Indian Muslims celebrate a traditional Islamic wedding following customs similar to those practiced in the Middle East. The rituals include *Nikah*, payment of financial dower called *Mahr* by the groom to the bride, signing of marriage contract, and a reception. Indian Christian weddings follow customs similar to those practiced in the Christian countries in the West in states like Goa but have more Indian customs in other states.

Greetings

Pressing hands together with a smile to greet Namaste - a common cultural practice in India. *Asalamalekum* is the Muslim greeting. Other greetings include *Namaste* (Hindi and Sanskrit), *Namaskar* (Hindi), *Juhar* / *Namaskar* in Odia, *Namaskar Swagatam* (Marathi), *Namaskara* (Kannada), *Namaskaram* (Telugu, Malayalam), *Vanakkam* (Tamil), *Nomoshaakar* (Bengali), *Nomoskar* (Assamese). All these are common spoken greetings or salutations

when people meet, and are forms of farewell when they depart. Namaskar is considered slightly more formal than Namaste but both express deep respect. Namaskar is commonly used in India and Nepal by Hindus, Jains and Buddhists, and many continue to use this outside the Indian subcontinent. In Indian and Nepali culture, the word is spoken at the beginning of written or verbal communication. However, the same hands folded gesture may be made wordlessly, or said without the folded hand gesture. The word is derived from *Sanskrit* (namah): to bow, reverential salutation, and respect, and (te): "to you". Taken literally, it means "I bow to you".^[60] In Hinduism it means "I bow to the divine in you."^{[61][62]} In most Indian families, younger men and women are taught to seek the blessing of their elders by reverentially bowing to their elders. This custom is known as Pranāma.

Other greetings include "*Jai Jagannath*" in Odia Language, "*Ami Aschi*" (in Bengali), "*Jai Shri Krishna*" (in Gujarati), "*Ram Ram*", and *Sat Sri Akal* (Punjabi, used by followers of Sikhism), *Jai Jinendra*, a common greeting used across the Jain community, "Jai Bhim" used by Buddhist Converts in Maharashtra after B. R. Ambedkar and "*Nama Shivaya*", "Jai ambe", "Jai Sri Ram" etc.

These traditional forms of greeting may be absent in the world of business and in India's urban environment, where the handshake is a common form of greeting.

Festivals

With India's cultural diversity, the country has more festivals than there are days in a year. With little lamps and lot of care, Karthigai festival celebrates the bond between sisters and brothers in south India. In other parts of India, Bhaiya-Dhuj and Raakhi is celebrated. Sisters wish their brothers happiness and feed them sweets, while brothers give gifts and promise to protect their sisters.

Above children enjoying Holi, the "festival of colours". It is a major Indian festival celebrated every spring. In autumn, one of the major festivals is Diwali, the festival of lights.

India, being a multi-cultural and multi-religious society, celebrates holidays and festivals of various religions. The three national holidays in India, the Independence Day, the Republic Day and the Gandhi Jayanti, are celebrated with zeal and enthusiasm across India. In addition, many Indian states and regions have local festivals depending on prevalent religious and linguistic demographics. Popular religious festivals include the Hindu festivals of *Navratri*, *Diwali*, *Maha Shivratri*, *Ganesh Chaturthi*, *Durga Puja*, *Holi*, *Ratha-Yatra*, *Ugadi*, *Rakshabandhan*, and *Dussehra*. Several harvest festivals such as *Sankranti*, *Pongal* and *Raja sankranti swinging festival* "Nuakhai" are also fairly popular.

Indian New year festival are celebrated in different part of India with unique style in different times. Ugadi, Bihu, Gudhi Padwa, Puthandu, Vishu and Vishuva Sankranti are the New year festival of different part of India.

Certain festivals in India are celebrated by multiple religions. Notable examples include Diwali, which is celebrated by Hindus, Sikhs and Jains, and *Buddh Purnima*, celebrated by Buddhists. Sikh Festivals, such as *Guru Nanak Jayanti*, *Baisakhi* are celebrated with full fanfare by Sikhs and Hindu. Adding colours to the culture of India, the Dree Festival is one of the tribal festivals of India celebrated by the A patan is of the Ziro valley of Arunachal Pradesh, which is the easternmost state of India.

Islam in India is the second largest religion with over 172 million Muslims, according to India's 2011 census. The Islamic festivals which are observed and are declared public holiday in India are; Eid ul Fitr, Eid ul Adha-(Bakr Eid), Milad un Nabi, Muharram and Shab-e-Barat. Some of the Indian states have declared regional holiday's for the particular regional popular festivals; such as Arba'een, Jumu'ah-tul-Wida and Shab-e-Qadar.

Christianity is India's third largest religion. With over 23 million Christians, of which 17 million are Roman Catholics, India is home to many Christian festivals. The country celebrates Christmas and Good Friday as public holidays.

Regional and community fairs are also common and festive in India. For example, Pushkar fair is one of the world's largest markets and Sonepur mela is the largest livestock fair in Asia.

4.2.5. Animals

The varied and rich wildlife of India has had a profound impact on the region's popular culture. Common name for wilderness in India is Jungle which was adopted by the British colonialists to the English language. The word has been also made famous in *The Jungle Book* by Rudyard Kipling. India's wildlife has been the subject of numerous other tales and fables such as the *Panchatantra* and the *Jataka tales*.

In Hinduism, the cow is regarded as a symbol of *ahimsa* (non-violence), mother goddess and bringer of good fortune and wealth. For this reason, cows are revered in Hindu culture and feeding a cow is seen as an act of worship. As of January 2012, cow remains a divisive topic in India. Several states of India have passed laws to protect cows, while many states have no restrictions on the production and consumption of beef. Some groups oppose the butchering of cows, while other Indian groups are vehement that what kind of meat one eats ought to be a matter of personal choice in a democracy. Madhya Pradesh enacted a law in January 2012, namely the Gau-Vansh Vadh Pratishedh (Sanshodhan) Act, which makes cow slaughter a serious offence.

Gujarat, a western state of India, has the Animal Preservation Act, enacted in October 2011, that prohibits killing of cows along with buying, selling and transport of beef. In contrast, Odisha and Andhra Pradesh allow butchering of cattle with a fit-for-slaughter certificate. In the states of West Bengal and Kerala, consumption of beef is not deemed an offence.

Contrary to stereotypes, a sizeable number of Hindus eat beef, and many argue that their scriptures, such as vedic texts, do not prohibit its consumption. In southern Indian state Kerala, for instance, beef accounts for nearly half of all meat consumed by all communities, including Hindus. Sociologists theories that the widespread consumption of cow meat in India is because it is a far cheaper source of animal protein for the poor than lamb or chicken, which retail at double the price. For these reasons, India's beef consumption post-independence in 1947 has witnessed a much faster growth than any other kind of meat; currently, India is one of the five largest producer and consumer of cattle livestock meat in the world. A beef ban has been made in Maharashtra and other states as of 2015. While states such as Madhya Pradesh are passing local laws to prevent cruelty to cows, other Indians are arguing "If the real objective is to prevent cruelty to animals, then why single out the cow when hundreds of other animals are maltreated?"

4.2.6. Cuisine

Indian cuisine

Indian cuisine is diverse, ranging from very spicy to very mild, varying with seasons in each region. These reflect the local agriculture, regional climate, culinary innovations and cultural diversity. Food in India is sometimes served in thali - a plate with rice, bread and a selection of sides. Above are thali samples.

Nimmatnama-i Nasiruddin-Shahi (Book of Recipes), written about 1500 C.E, documents the fine art of making *Kheer*, a milk based dessert of India. Kheer is a traditional Indian sweet dish. Food is an integral part of every human culture. Chang notes that the importance of food in understanding human culture lies in its infinite variability - a variability that is not essential for species survival. For survival needs, people everywhere could eat the same and some simple food. But human cultures, over the ages, experiment, innovate and develop sophisticated cuisines. Cuisines become more than a source of nutrients, they reflect human knowledge, culture, art and expression of love.

Indian food is as diverse as India. Indian cuisines use numerous ingredients, deploy a wide range of food preparation styles, cooking techniques and culinary presentation. From salads to sauces, from vegetarian to meat, from spices to sensuous, from breads to desserts, Indian cuisine is invariably complex. Harold McGee, a favourite of many Michelin-starred chefs, writes "for sheer inventiveness with milk itself as the primary ingredient, no country on earth can match India."

"I travel to India at least three to four times a year. It's always inspirational. There is so much to learn from India because each and every state is a country by itself and each has its own cuisine. There are lots of things to learn about the different cuisines - it just amazes me. I keep my mind open and like to explore different places and pick up different influences as I go along. I don't actually think that there is a single state in India that I haven't visited. Indian food is a cosmopolitan cuisine that has so many ingredients. I don't think any cuisine in the world has got so many influences the way that Indian food has. It is a very rich cuisine and is very varied. Every region in the world has their own sense of how Indian food should be perceived. "

4.2.7. Clothing in India

Traditional clothing in India greatly varies across different parts of the country and is influenced by local culture, geography, climate and rural/urban settings. Popular styles of dress include draped garments such as sari for women and dhoti or lungi or panche (in Kannada) for men. Stitched clothes are also popular such as churidar or *salwar-kameez* for women, with *dupatta* (long scarf) thrown over shoulder completing the outfit. Salwar is often loose fitting, while churidar is a tighter cut. For men, stitched versions include kurta-pyjama and European-style trousers and shirts for men. In urban centres, people can often be seen in jeans, trousers, shirts, suits, kurtas and variety of other fashions.

In public and religious places, Indian dress etiquette discourages exposure of skin and wearing transparent or tight clothes. Most Indian clothes are made from cotton which is ideal for the region's hot weather. Since India's weather is mostly hot and rainy, majority of Indians wear sandals.

Indian women perfect their sense of charm and fashion with makeup and ornaments. Bindi, Mehendi, earrings, bangles and other jewelry are common. On special occasions, such as marriage ceremonies and festivals, women may wear cheerful colours with various ornaments made with gold, silver or other regional stones and gems.

Bindi is often an essential part of a Hindu woman's make up. Worn on their forehead, some consider the *bindi* as an auspicious mark. Traditionally, the red bindi was worn only by married Hindu women, and coloured bindi was worn by single women, but now all colours and glitter has become a part of women's fashion. Some women wear sindoor - a traditional red or orange-red powder (vermilion) in the parting of their hair (locally called *mang*). Sindoor is the traditional mark of a married woman for Hindus. Single Hindu women do not wear *sindoor*; neither do over 1 million Indian women from religions other than Hindu and agnostics/atheists who may be married.

India's clothing styles have continuously evolved over the course of the country's history. The 11th-century BCE *Rig-veda* mentions dyed and embroidered garments (known as *asparidhan* and *pesas* respectively) and thus highlights the development of sophisticated garment manufacturing techniques during this period. In 5th century BCE, Greek historian Herodotus describes the richness of the quality of Indian cotton clothes. By the 2nd century AD, muslins manufactured in southern India were imported by the Roman Empire and silk cloth was one of the major exports of ancient India along with Indian spices. Stitched clothing in India was developed before the 10th century CE and was further popularised in the 15th century by Muslim empires in India. Draped clothing styles remained popular with India's Hindu population while the Muslims increasingly adopted tailored garments.

During the British Raj, India's large clothing and handicrafts industry was left paralysed so as to make place for British industrial cloth. Consequently, Indian independence movement leader Mahatma Gandhi successfully advocated for what he termed as *khadi clothing* — light coloured hand-woven clothes — so as to decrease the reliance of the Indian people on British industrial goods. The 1980s were marked by a widespread modification to Indian clothing fashions which was characterised by a large-scale growth of fashion schools in India, increasing involvement of women in the fashion industry and changing Indian attitudes towards multiculturalism. These developments played a pivotal role in the fusion of Indian and Western clothing styles.

4.2.8. Indian literature

History

Language families in India and its neighbouring countries: India has 22 official languages – 15 of which are Indo-European. The 2001 census of India found 122 first languages in active use.

Rigveda (padapatha) manuscript in Devanagari, early 19th century. After a scribal benediction ("*śrīgaṇeśāyanamaḥ ; ; Aum(3) ; ;*"), the first line has the opening words of RV.1.1.1 (*agnim ; iḷe ; puraḥ-hitam ; yajñasya ; devam ; ṛtvijam*). The Vedic accents marked by underscores and vertical overscores in red.

Literary records suggest India had interacted in languages of other ancient civilisations. This inscription is from Indian emperor Ashoka, carved in stone about 250 BCE, found in Afghanistan. Inscriptions are in Greek and Aramaic, with ideas of non-violence against men and all living beings, as the doctrine of Eusebeia - spiritual maturity.

The Sanskrit language, whatever be its antiquity, is of a wonderful structure; more perfect than the Greek, more copious than the Latin, and more exquisitely refined than either, yet bearing to both of them a stronger affinity, both in the roots of verbs and the forms of grammar, than could possibly have been produced by accident; so strong indeed, that no philologist could examine them all three, without believing them to have sprung from *some common source*, which, perhaps, no longer exists; there is a similar reason, though not quite so forcible, for supposing that both the Gothic and the Celtic, though blended with a very different idiom, had the same origin with the Sanskrit ...

— *Sir William Jones, 1786*

The Rigvedic Sanskrit is one of the oldest attestations of any Indo-Aryan language, and one of the earliest attested members of the Indo-European language family. The discovery of Sanskrit by early European explorers of India led to the development of comparative Philology. The scholars of the 18th century were struck by the far reaching similarity of Sanskrit, both in grammar and vocabulary, to the classical languages of Europe. Intensive scientific studies that followed have established that Sanskrit and many Indian derivative languages belong to the family which includes English, German, French, Italian, Spanish, Celtic, Greek, Baltic, Armenian, Persian, Tocharian and other Indo-European languages.

The evolution of language within India may be distinguished over three periods: old, middle and modern Indo-Aryan. The classical form of old Indo-Aryan was *sanskrit* meaning polished, cultivated and correct, in distinction to *Prakrit* - the practical language of the migrating masses evolving without concern to proper pronunciation or grammar, the structure of language changing as those masses mingled, settled new lands and adopted words from people of other native languages. *Prakrita* became middle Indo-Aryan leading to *Pali* (the language of early Buddhists and Ashoka era in 200-300 BCE), *Prakrit* (the language of Jain philosophers) and *Apabhramsa* (the language blend at the final stage of middle Indo-Aryan).

It is *Apabhramsa*, scholars claim, that flowered into Hindi, Gujarati, Bengali, Marathi, Punjabi and many other languages now in use in India's north, east and west. All of these Indian languages have roots and structure similar to Sanskrit, to each other and to other Indo-European languages. Thus we have in India three thousand years of continuous linguistic history recorded and preserved in literary documents. This enables scholars to follow language evolution and observe how, by changes hardly noticeable from generation to generation, an original language alters into descendant languages that are now barely recognisable as the same.

Sanskrit has had a profound impact on the languages and literature of India. Hindi, India's most spoken language, is a "Sanskritised register" of the Khariboli dialect. In addition, all modern Indo-Aryan languages, Munda languages and Dravidian languages, have borrowed many words either directly from Sanskrit (*tatsama* words), or indirectly via middle Indo-Aryan languages (*tadbhava* words). Words originating in Sanskrit are estimated to constitute roughly fifty percent of the vocabulary of modern Indo-Aryan languages, and the literary forms of (Dravidian) Telugu, Malayalam and Kannada. Tamil, although to a slightly

smaller extent, has also been significantly influenced by Sanskrit. Part of the Eastern Indo-Aryan languages, the Bengali language arose from the eastern Middle Indic languages and its roots are traced to the 5th-century BCE Ardhamagadhi language.

Hindi is mutually intelligible with Urdu, both languages being standardised registers of Hindustani. Urdu is generally associated with South Asian Muslims. The main difference between the two is that Hindi is generally written in the Devanagari script, whilst Urdu is written in Nastaliq, but, when spoken colloquially, both are mutually intelligible. Mutual intelligibility decreases, however, in specialised contexts where Urdu has borrowed words from Persian and Arabic, whilst Hindi has done so from Sanskrit and English.

Tamil, one of India's major classical language, descends from Proto-Dravidian languages spoken around the third millennium BCE in peninsular India. The earliest inscriptions of Tamil have been found on pottery dating back to 500 BC. Tamil literature has existed for over two thousand years and the earliest epigraphic records found date from around the 3rd century BCE.

Telugu, one of India's major classical language, descends from South-Central Dravidian language spoken around the third millennium BCE in all over south India. Early inscriptions date from 620 AD and literary texts from the 11th century, written in a Telugu script adapted from the Bhattiprolu script of the early inscriptions.

Another major Classical Dravidian language, Kannada is attested epigraphically from the mid-1st millennium AD, and literary Old Kannada flourished in the 9th- to 10th-century Rashtrakuta Dynasty. As a spoken language, some believe it to be even older than Tamil due to the existence of words which have more primitive forms than in Tamil. Pre-old Kannada (or *Purava Hazhe Gannada*) was the language of Banavasi in the early Common Era, the Satavahana and Kadamba periods and hence has a history of over 2000 years. The Ashoka rock edict found at Brahmagiri (dated 230 BCE) has been suggested to contain a word in identifiable Kannada.

Odia is India's 6th classical language in addition to Sanskrit, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam. It is also one of the 22 official languages in the 8th schedule of Indian constitution. Oriya's importance to Indian culture, from ancient times, is evidenced by its presence in Ashoka's Rock Edict X at Kalsi palitiditu (Dhauri, Jaugada palitiditu), dated to be from 2nd century BC.

In addition to Indo-European and Dravidian languages, Austro-Asiatic and Tibeto-Burman languages are in use in India. Genomic studies of ethnic groups in India suggests the Austro-Asiatic tribals were likely the earliest settlers in India. India's language and cultural fusion is not only because of large migrations of Indo-Aryans from central Asia and west Eurasia through the northwest, the genome studies suggest a major wave of humans possibly entered India, long ago, through the northeast, along with tribal populations of Tibeto-Burman origins. Genome studies of Fst distances suggest the northeastern Himalayas acted as a barrier, in the last 5000 years, to human migration as well as to admixing. Languages spoken in this part of India include Austro-Asiatic (e.g. *Khasi*) and Tibeto-Burman (e.g. *Nishi*).

4.2.9. Epics & Music

The Rāmāyaṇa and the Mahābhārata are the oldest preserved and well-known epics of India. Versions have been adopted as the epics of Southeast Asian countries like Philippines, Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia. The Ramayana consists of 24,000 verses in seven books (*kāṇḍas*) and 500 cantos (*sargas*), and tells the story of Rama (an incarnation or Avatar of the Hindu preserver-god Vishnu), whose wife Sita is abducted by the demon king of Lanka, Ravana. This epic played a pivotal role in establishing the role of dhārma as a principal ideal guiding force for Hindu way of life. The earliest parts of the Mahabharata text date to 400 BC¹ and is estimated to have reached its final form by the early Gupta period (c. 4th century AD). Other regional variations of these, as well as unrelated epics include the Tamil Ramavataram, Kannada *Pampa Bharata*, Hindi *Ramacharitamanasa*, and Malayalam *Adhyathma ramayanam*. In addition to these two great Indian epics, there are five major epics in the classical Tamil language — *Silappatikaram*, *Manimekalai*, *Civakacintamani* and *Valayapathi-kundalakesi*.

Dance in India

Let drama and dance (Nāṭya, □□□□□) be the fifth vedic scripture. Combined with an epic story, tending to virtue, wealth, joy and spiritual freedom, it must contain the significance of every scripture, and forward every art.

— *First chapter of Nāṭyaśāstra, sometime between 200BC - 200AD*

Sattriya dancer Krishnakshi Kashyap in a traditional *Sattriya* dance costume made of Assam Pat silk and traditional Assamese jewellery: *Kopalion* the forehead, *Muthi Kharu* (bracelets), *Thuka Suna* (earrings) and *Galpata*, *Dhulbiri*, *Jethipata* and *Bena* (necklaces). Traditional *Kingkhap* motif is used in the main costume with *Kesh* pattern on the border. The *Kanchi* or the waist cloth has the traditional *Mirimotif*.

India has had a long romance with the art of dance. *Nāṭyaśāstra* (Science of Dance) and *Abhinaya Darpana* (Mirror of Gesture) are two surviving Sanskrit documents, both estimated to be between 1700 and 2200 years old.

The Indian art of dance as taught in these ancient books, according to Ragini Devi, is the expression of inner beauty and the divine in man. It is a deliberate art, nothing is left to chance, each gesture seeks to communicate the ideas, each facial expression the emotions.

Indian dance includes eight classical dance forms, many in narrative forms with mythological elements. The eight classical forms accorded classical dance status by

India's National Academy of Music, Dance, and Drama are:

bharatanatyam of the state of Tamil Nadu,
kathak of Uttar pradesh ,
kathakali and *mohiniattam* of Kerala,
kuchipudi of Andhra Pradesh,
yakshagana of Karnataka,
manipuri of Manipur,
odissi (orissi) of the state of Odisha

sattriya of Assam.

In addition to the formal arts of dance, Indian regions have a strong free form, folksy dance tradition. Some of the folk dances include the *bhangra* of Punjab; the *bihu* of Assam; the *zeliang* of Nagaland; the *chhau* of Jharkhand and Bengal; the Ghumura Dance, Gotipua, Mahari dance and Dalkhai of Odisha; the *qauwwalis*, *birhas* and *charkulas* of Uttar Pradesh; the *jat-jatin*, *nat-natin* and *saturi* of Bihar; the *ghoomar* of Rajasthan; the *dandiya* and *garba* of Gujarat; the *kolattam* of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana ; the *yakshagana* of Karnataka ; *lavani* of Maharashtra; *Dekhnni* of Goa. Recent developments include adoption of international dance forms particularly in the urban centres of India, and the extension of Indian classical dance arts by the Kerala Christian community, to tell stories from the Bible.

Theatre in India

Indian drama and theatre has a long history alongside its music and dance. Kalidasa's plays like *Shakuntala* and *Meghadoota* are some of the older dramas, following those of Bhasa. One of the oldest surviving theatre traditions of the world is the 2,000-year-old *Kutiyattam* of Kerala. It strictly follows the *Natyashastra*. *Nātyāchārya Māni Mādhava Chākyār* is credited for reviving the age old drama tradition from extinction. He was known for mastery of *Rasa Abhinaya*. He started to perform the Kalidasa plays like *Abhijñānaśākuntala*, *Vikramorvaśīya* and *Mālavikāgnimitra*; Bhasa's *Swapnavāsavadatta* and *Pancharātra*; Harsha's *Nagananda*.

Music

Music of India

Music is an integral part of India's culture. *Natyasastra*, a 2000-year-old Sanskrit text, describes five systems of taxonomy to classify musical instruments. One of these ancient Indian systems classifies musical instruments into four groups according to four primary sources of vibration: strings, membranes, cymbals, and air. According to Reis Flora, this is similar to the Western theory of organology. Archeologists have also reported the discovery of a 3000-year-old, 20-key, carefully shaped polished basalt lithophone in the highlands of Odisha.

The oldest preserved examples of Indian music are the melodies of the *Samaveda* (1000 BC) that are still sung in certain Vedic Śrauta sacrifices; this is the earliest account of Indian musical hymns. It proposed a tonal structure consisting of seven notes, which were named, in descending as order, as *Krusht*, *Pratham*, *Dwitiya*, *Tritiya*, *Chaturth*, *Mandra* and *Atiswār*. These refer to the notes of a flute, which was the only fixed frequency instrument. The *Samaveda*, and other Hindu texts, heavily influenced India's classical music tradition, which is known today in two distinct styles: *Canatic* and *Hindustani* music. Both the *Canatic* music and *Hindustani* music systems are based on the melodic base (known as *Rāga*), sung to a rhythmic cycle (known as *Tāla*); these principles were refined in the *nātyaśāstra* (200 BC) and the *dattilam* (300 AD).

The current music of India includes multiple varieties of religious, classical, folk, popular and pop music.

Prominent contemporary Indian musical forms included filmi and Indipop. Filmi refers to the wide range of music written and performed for mainstream Indian cinema, primarily Bollywood, and accounts for more than 70 percent of all music sales in the country. Indipop is one of the most popular contemporary styles of Indian music which is either a fusion of Indian folk, classical or Sufi music with Western musical traditions.

4.2.10. Indian art

Indian painting

Cave paintings from Ajanta, Bagh, Ellora and Sittanavasal and temple paintings testify to a love of naturalism. Most early and medieval art in India is Hindu, Buddhist or Jain. A freshly made coloured floor design (Rangoli) is still a common sight outside the doorstep of many (mostly South Indian) Indian homes. Raja Ravi Varma is one of the classical painters from medieval India.

Pattachitra, Madhubani painting, Mysore painting, Rajput painting, Tanjore painting, Mughal painting are some notable Genres of Indian Art; while Nandalal Bose, M. F. Husain, S. H. Raza, Geeta Vadhera, Jamini Roy and B. Venkatappa are some modern painters. Among the present day artists, Atul Dodiya, Bose Krishnamacnahri, Devajyoti Ray and Shibu Natesan represent a new era of Indian art where global art shows direct amalgamation with Indian classical styles. These recent artists have acquired international recognition. Jehangir Art Gallery, Mumbai, Mysore Palace has on display a few good Indian paintings.

4.2.11. Sculpture

Sculpture in India

The first sculptures in India date back to the Indus Valley civilisation, where stone and bronze figures have been discovered. Later, as Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism developed further, India produced some extremely intricate bronzes as well as temple carvings. Some huge shrines, such as the one at Ellora were not constructed by using blocks but carved out of solid rock.

Sculptures produced in the northwest, in stucco, schist, or clay, display a very strong blend of Indian and Classical Hellenistic or possibly even Greco-Roman influence. The pink sandstone sculptures of Mathura evolved almost simultaneously. During the Gupta period (4th to 6th centuries) sculpture reached a very high standard in execution and delicacy in modeling. These styles and others elsewhere in India evolved leading to classical Indian art that contributed to Buddhist and Hindu sculpture throughout Southeast Central and East Asia.

4.2.12. Architecture of India

Considered to be an "unrivaled architectural wonder", the Taj Mahal in Agra is a prime example of Indo-Islamic architecture, One of the world's seven wonders.

Indian architecture encompasses a multitude of expressions over space and time, constantly absorbing new ideas. The result is an evolving range of architectural production that nonetheless retains a certain amount of continuity across history. Some of its earliest

production are found in the *Indus Valley Civilisation* (2600–1900 BC) which is characterised by well planned cities and houses. Religion and kingship do not seem to have played an important role in the planning and layout of these towns.

The Konark Sun Temple in Odisha, is one of many World Heritage Sites in India. During the period of the Mauryan and Gupta empires and their successors, several Buddhist architectural complexes, such as the caves of Ajanta and Ellora and the monumental Sanchi Stupa were built. Later on, South India produced several Hindu temples like Chennakesava Temple at Belur, the Hoysaleswara Temple at Halebidu, and the Kesava Temple at Somanathapura, Brihadeeswara Temple, Thanjavur built by Raja Raja Chola, the Sun Temple, Konark, Sri Ranganathaswamy Temple at Srirangam, and the Buddha stupa (Chinna Lanja dibba and Vikramarka kota dibba) at Bhattiprolu. Angkor Wat, Borobudur and other Buddhist and Hindu temples indicate strong Indian influence on South East Asian architecture, as they are built in styles almost identical to traditional Indian religious buildings.

The traditional system of Vaastu Shastra serves as India's version of Feng Shui, influencing town planning, architecture, and ergonomics. It is unclear which system is older, but they contain certain similarities. Feng Shui is more commonly used throughout the world. Though Vastu is conceptually similar to Feng Shui in that it also tries to harmonise the flow of energy, (also called life-force or Prana in Sanskrit and Chi/Ki in Chinese/Japanese), through the house, it differs in the details, such as the exact directions in which various objects, rooms, materials, etc. are to be placed..

With the advent of Islamic influence from the west, Indian architecture was adapted to allow the traditions of the new religion. Fatehpur Sikri, Taj Mahal, Gol Gumbaz, Qutub Minar, Red Fort of Delhi are creations of this era, and are often used as the stereotypical symbols of India. The colonial rule of the British Empire saw the development of Indo-Saracenic style, and mixing of several other styles, such as European Gothic. The Victoria Memorial or the Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus are notable examples.

Indian architecture has influenced eastern and southeastern Asia, due to the spread of Buddhism. A number of Indian architectural features such as the temple mound or stupa, temple spire or shikhara, temple tower or pagoda and temple gate or torana, have become famous symbols of Asian culture, used extensively in East Asia and South East Asia. The central spire is also sometimes called a vimanam. The southern temple gate, or gopuram is noted for its intricacy and majesty.

Contemporary Indian architecture is more cosmopolitan. Cities are extremely compact and densely populated. Mumbai's Nariman Point is famous for its Art Deco buildings. Recent creations such as the Lotus Temple, and the various modern urban developments of India like Bhubaneswar and Chandigarh, are notable.

Sports and Martial Arts

4.2.13. Sports

Cricket was introduced to India by the British. Now it is the country's most popular sport.

The annual Snake boat race is performed during Onam Celebrations on the Pamba River at Aranmula near Pathanamthitta.

Yoga originated in India. Patañjali, in India's ancient books, suggests yoga's goal is to help one focus, reflect upon, know and express one's highest self. India's cultural journey with yoga is now popular in many parts of the world.

Sports in India

Field hockey is the official national sport in India. At a time when it was especially popular, the India national field hockey team won the 1975 Men's Hockey World Cup, and 8 gold, 1 silver, and 2 bronze medals at the Olympic Games. However, field hockey in India no longer has the following that it once did.

Cricket is considered the most popular sport in India. The India national cricket team won the 1983 Cricket World Cup, the 2011 Cricket World Cup, the 2007 ICC World Twenty20, the 2013 ICC Champions Trophy and shared the 2002 ICC Champions Trophy with Sri Lanka. Domestic competitions include the Ranji Trophy, the Duleep Trophy, the Deodhar Trophy, the Irani Trophy and the Challenger Series. In addition, BCCI conducts the Indian Premier League, a Twenty20 competition.

Football is popular in the Indian state of West Bengal. The city of Kolkata is the home to the largest stadium in India, and the second largest stadium in the world by capacity, Salt Lake Stadium. The city of joy is a centre of football activity in India and is home to top national clubs such as Mohun Bagan A.C., Kingfisher East Bengal F.C., Prayag United S.C., and the Mohammedan Sporting Club.

Chess is commonly believed to have originated in northwestern India during the Gupta empire, where its early form in the 6th century was known as *chaturanga*. Other games which originated in India and continue to remain popular in wide parts of northern India include Kabaddi, Gilli-danda, and Kho kho. Traditional southern Indian games include Snake boat race and Kuttiyum kolum.

In 2011, India inaugurated a privately built Buddh International Circuit, its first motor racing circuit. The 5.14-kilometre circuit is in Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh, near Delhi. The first Formula One Indian Grand Prix event was hosted here in October 2011.

4.3 CONCLUSION

After observing the numerous sociological studies done on Indian family, cultural trend in most parts of India has been an accelerated change from joint family to nuclear families, much like population trends in other parts of the world. The traditional large joint family in India, in the 1990s, accounted for a small percent of Indian households, and on average had lower per capita household income. We find that joint family still persists in some areas and in certain conditions, in part due to cultural traditions and in part due to practical factors. Youth in lower socio-economic classes are more inclined to spend time with their families than their peers due to differing ideologies in rural and urban parenting. This unit gives a comprehensive idea on social, geological and cultural conditions of India.

4.4 COMPREHENSION CHECK QUESTIONS

1. Write a note on social forms of India, illustrating your answer with reference to the topic prescribed for your study.
2. What is your assessment of India and its place among other Asian countries? Illustrate your answer.
3. Discuss in detail the rise of different religions in India.
4. Write a critical analysis on "Marriage and family" system in India.
5. Discuss "India is a miniature world." with reference to your prescribed works.

4.5 REFERENCES

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Dr. Inturi Keshavarao

LESSON 5

BACKGROUND STUDIES: SOCIAL REFORMS, INDIAN DRAMA, DRAMA FOR SOCIAL PURPOSE

OBJECTIVES

This unit enables the learner to understand

- Different social reforms and their impact on literary history.
- The Nationalist sentiment and social reforms.
- The rise Indian Drama.
- How does the form of Drama help to reform society.

STRUCTURE

- 5.1 Social Reform
- 5.2 Drama for social purpose
- 5.3 Protest Literature & Drama for Social Purpose
- 5.4 Conclusion
- 5.5 Comprehensive Check Questions
- 5.6 References

5.1 SOCIAL REFORM

India has a rich history of social reformers who have helped to establish the foundations of modern India, and, in some cases, have affected a worldwide impact through political action and philosophic teachings. Especially given India's leaning towards oral and mythical rather than a written tradition throughout much of its history it is almost impossible to put together an exhaustive list of social reformers who have lived through the ages. Below are some of them.

Annie Besant is one who started social reforms in India even after her election as president of the India National Congress in 1917. She continued to campaign for Indian independence until her death in 1933.

Baba Amte (26 December 1914 – 9 November 2008) was a worker and social activist. He spent some time at Sevagram ashram of Mahatma Gandhi, and became a follower of Gandhism for the rest of his life. He believed in Gandhi's concept of a self-sufficient village industry that empowers seemingly helpless people, and successfully brought his ideas into practice at Anandwan. He practised various aspects of Gandhism, including yarn spinning using a charkha and wearing khadi. Amte founded three ashrams for treatment and rehabilitation for leprosy's patients, disabled people, and people from marginalised sections of the society in Maharashtra, India. Died on November 9.

B. R. Ambedkar (14 April 1891 – 6 December 1956) was an Indian jurist, political leader, Buddhist activist, philosopher, thinker, anthropologist, historian, orator, prolific writer, economist, scholar, editor, revolutionary and the revivalist of Buddhism in India. Ambedkar was born in Madhya Pradesh. He was also the chief architect of the Indian Constitution. He formed the "Independent Labour Party". His struggle for the untouchables

/Dalits was a remarkable event in his life. Ambedkar spent his whole life fighting against social discrimination, the system of Chaturvarna – the Hindu categorisation of human society into four varnas – and the Hindu caste system. He is also credited with having sparked the bloodless revolution with his most remarkable and innovative Buddhist movement. Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar has been honoured with the Bharat Ratna, India's highest civilian award.

Dhondo Keshav Karve (18 April 1858 – 9 November 1962) was a social reformer of his time in India in the field of women's welfare. Karve was one of the pioneers of promoting women's education and the right for widows to remarry in India. The Government of India recognised his reform work by awarding him its highest civilian award, Bhārat Ratna, in 1958 (Incidentally his centennial year). The appellation Maharshi, which the Indian public often assigned to Karve, means "a great sage". Those who knew Karve affectionately called him as Annā Karve. (In Marāthi-speaking community, to which Karve belonged, the appellation Annā is often used to address either one's father or an elder brother.)

Gopalakrishnan (1823–1892) was a social reformer in Maharashtra. Deshmukh started writing articles aimed at social reform in Maharashtra in the weekly Prabhakar under the pen name Lokhitwadi. In the first two years, he penned 108 articles on social reform. That group of articles has come to be known in Marathi literature as Lokhitwadinchi Shatapatre.

Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar (1820–1891) was a philosopher, academic, educator, writer, translator, printer, publisher, entrepreneur, reformer, and philanthropist. His efforts to simplify and modernise Bangla prose were significant. He was a Bengali polymath and a key figure of the Bengal Renaissance. Vidyasagar championed the uplift of the status of women in India, particularly in his native Bengal. Unlike some other reformers who sought to set up alternative societies or A EDUC systems, he sought, however, to transform orthodox Hindu society from within. Vidyasagar introduced the practice of widow remarriages to mainstream Hindu society. In earlier times, remarriages of widows would occur sporadically only among progressive members of the Brahmo Samāj.

Jamnalal Bajaj (4 November 1884 – 11 February 1942) was an industrialist, a philanthropist, and Indian independence fighter. Gandhi is known to have adopted him as his son. He is known for his efforts of promoting Khadi and village Industries in India. With the intent of eradicating untouchability, he fought the non-admission of Harijans into Hindu temples. He began a campaign by eating a meal with Harijans and opening public wells to them. He opened several wells in his fields and gardens. Jamanalal dedicated much of his wealth to the poor. He felt this inherited wealth was a sacred trust to be used for the benefit of the people. In honour of his social initiatives a well known national and international award called Jamnalal Bajaj Award which has been instituted by the Jamnalal Bajaj Foundation.

Jawaharlal Nehru was an Indian prime-minister and was born on 14 November 1889 and died in 27 May 1964 was an Indian statesman who was the first (and to date the longest-serving) prime minister of India, from 1947 until 1964. One of the leading figures in the Indian independence movement, Nehru was elected by the Congress Party to assume office as independent India's first Prime Minister, and re-elected when the Congress Party won India's first general election in 1952. As one of the founders of the Non-aligned Movement, he was also an important figure in the international politics of the post-war era. He is frequently referred to as Pandit Nehru ("pandit" being a Sanskrit and Hindi honorific meaning "scholar"

or "teacher") and, specifically in India, as Panditji (with "-ji" being an honorific suffix). His birthday is celebrated as children's day in India.

Kabir was a mystic poet and sant of India, whose writings have greatly influenced the Bhakti movement. The name Kabir comes from Arabic *al-Kabir* which means 'The Great' – the 37th name of God in Islam.

Kabir was influenced by the prevailing religious mood of his times, such as old Brahmanic Hinduism, Tantrism, the teachings of Nath yogis and the personal devotionalism of South India mixed with the imageless God of Islam. The influence of these various doctrines is clearly evident in Kabir's verses. Eminent historians like R.C. Majumdar, P.N. Chopra, B.N. Puri and M.N. Das have held that Kabir is the first Indian saint to have harmonised Hinduism and Islam by preaching a universal path which both Hindus and Muslims could tread together.

Kandukuri Veeresalingam was born on 16 April 1848. He was a social reformer who first brought about a renaissance in Telugu people and Telugu literature. He was influenced by the ideals of Brahma Samaj particularly those of Keshub Chunder Sen. He got involved in the cause of social reforms. In 1876 he started a journal and wrote the first prose for women. He encouraged education for women, and started a school in Dowlaishwaram in 1874. He started a social organisation called Hitakarini (Benefactor). He died on 27 May 1919.

Pandurang Vajjnath Shastri Athavale (Marathi:) (19 October 1920 – 25 October 2003), also known as *Dada-ji* which literally translates as elder brother in Marathi, was an Indian philosopher, spiritual leader, social reformer and Hinduism reformist, who founded the Swadhyay Movement and the Swadhyay Parivarorganisation (Swadhyay Family) in 1954, a self-knowledge movement based on the Bhagavad Gita, which has spread across nearly 100,000 villages in India, with over 5 million members. He was also noted for his discourses or "pravachans" on Srimad Bhagavad Gita and Upanishads.

He was born in the Konkan village of Roha in Maharashtra, India. He was one of five children of Sanskrit teacher Vajjanath Athavale and Parvati Athavale.

When Athavale was twelve years old, his grandfather set up an independent course of study for the young boy with individual tuition. Thus, Athavale was taught in a system very similar to that of the Tapovan system of ancient India. In 1942, he started to give discourses at the Srimad Bhagavad Gita Pathshala, a centre set up by his father in 1926.

Athavale read diligently in the Royal Asiatic Library for 14 years, reading and digesting every non-fiction literature (ranging from Marx's philosophy to Whitehead's writings to ancient Indian philosophy). In 1954, he attended the Second World Philosophers Conference, held in Japan. There, Athavale presented the concepts of Vedic ideals and the teachings of the Bhagavad Gita. All the participants deeply impressed by his ideas and wanted evidence of such ideals being put into practice in towns across India. A Dr. Wilson Compton was impressed with Athavale's ideas and offered him a post in the US, where he could spread his ideas. Athavale politely declined, saying that he had work to accomplish if he wanted to show the world a model community peacefully practising and spreading the divine Vedic thoughts and the message of the Bhagavad Gita.

Periyar E. V. Ramasamy Thanthai Periyar or E. V. R., was a businessman, politician, Indian independence and social activist, who started the Self-Respect Movement or the Dravidian Movement and proposed the creation of *an independent state called Dravidasthan comprising South India. He is also the founder of the socio-cultural organization Dravidar Kazhagam.*

Rao Bahadur Hari Raoji Chiplunkar (born 1830) Honorary Magistrate, and President of the Landlord's Association in Pune, was a prominent reformer, activist and close friend of Jyotirao Phule. He donated land and funds, enabling Savitri and Jyotirao Phule to start one of the first girls schools in India in 1851 on Chiplunkar's estate.

Shriram Sharma Acharya (20 September 1911 – 2 June 1990) was an Indian seer, Great Sage, Writer, Indian social worker, a philanthropist, a visionary of the New Golden Era and the Founder of the All World Gayatri Pariwar. He devoted his life to the welfare of people and the refinement of the moral and cultural environment. He has written more than 3000 books on all aspects of life. Govt. of India issued a Postal Stamp on Acharya Jee. He pioneered the revival of spirituality, creative integration of the modern and ancient sciences and religion relevant in the challenging circumstances of the present times. To help people, his aim was to diagnose the root cause of the ailing state of the world today and enable the upliftment of society. Acharyaji recognised the crisis of faith, people's ignorance of the powers of the inner self, and the lack of righteous attitude and conduct. During 1984–1986, he carried out the unique spiritual experiment of sukshmikaraña, meaning sublimation of vital force and physical, mental and spiritual energies.

Vijaypal Baghel (20 February 1967) is an environmental activist. He is known for his efforts in protecting environment at grass root level through traditional methods. He is a prominent campaigner on behalf of mission as Jhola Movement for fighting against polythene across India, researcher of GROSS CLIMATE PRODUCT as GCP, first planter of divine tree Kalpavriksha's (*Adansonia digitata*) at all famous pilgrims of around the world, worshiper of nature & lead promoter of spiritual/religious/herbal/medicinal/environmental values having species of flora. He devoted his life to conserve nature, save water, green revolution, reduce pollution and stop global warming with the theme of 'Think globally-Act locally', He is a noted Indian environmental philosopher, promoter of vegetarianism & renowned nature conservationist, peoples called him Green Man. His great contribution in the social sector for promotion in the field of ecology, nature and environment have contributed a lot.

2) He was an Indian advocate of Nonviolence and human rights. He is considered as the spiritual successor of amanyas (Marathi, Hindi, Urdu, English, Sanskrit), and a social reformer. He wrote brief introductions to, and criticisms of, several religious and philosophical works Bible and Quran.m of Dnyaneshwar's poetry as also the output by other Marathi saints is quite brilliant and a testimony to the breadth of his intellect. A university named after him Vinoba Bhave University is still there in the state of Jharkhand spreading knowledge even after his death. many people gave him land and this land he severed for poor.He is well known for "BHOODAANYAGN" movement which means colleting of land from landlords and serving it to the poor and landless. Pochampalli is a place which was given by Acharya Vinoba Bhave.

Virchand Gandhi {25 August 1864 -7 August 1901} was from Mahuva. He advocated female education. He is a 19th-century Indian patriot who was a friend of Mahatma Gandhi and contemporary to Swami Vivekanand. He and swami vivekananda drew

equal attention at the first World Parliament of Religions in Chicago in 1893. He won a silver medal in same. His statue still stands at the Jain temple in Jaipur. He was a key member of Indian National Congress and as a reformer established:

1. Society for the Education of Women in India (SEWI). Under the banner of SEWI, several Indian women came to USA for higher studies.
2. Gandhi Philosophical Society,
3. School of Oriental Philosophy,
4. Jain Literature Society in London. And he delivered 535 lectures in USA and Europe.

He also died at the age of 39 like Swami Vivekananda. Today, the Government of India has recognized his service by issuing postal stamp in his memory.

Vitthal Ramji Shinde (23 April 1873 – 2 January 1944) He was a prominent campaigner on behalf of the Dalit movement in Maharashtra and established the Depressed Classes Mission to provide education to the Dalits in Maharashtra.

After we have examined the prominent modern Indian Social reformers, let us examine the rise of Indian Drama and its role in reforming the Indian society.

5.2 INDIAN DRAMA

Drama is a composite art in which the written word of the playwright is concretized when it becomes the spoken word of the actor on the stage. It involves the playwright, the actor, the audience, plot construction, characterization, dialogues, music, dance, posture, stage setting etc. The genesis of Indian drama is traced to Sanskrit literature. Bharatmuni's 'Natvasastra', Ramchandra Gunchandra's 'Abhinaya Darpanat' and Abinav Gupta's 'Abhinaya Bharti' are the ancient treatises which describe the essentials of stage craft like plot construction, characterization, dialogues, music, dance, postures, stage-setting. The golden age of Sanskrit drama could give equal impetus to social comedies like the Mricchakatika and melodramas like the Malathimadhava, romantic tragi-comedies like Shakuntala and the heroic plays like Venisamhara, historical plays like Mudrarakshasa and romantic comedies like Ratnavali, allegorical plays like Prabodhachandrodaya and satirical farces like Mattavilasaprahasana. Bhasa is the oldest known dramatist. His masterpieces - Urubhanga and Dutavakya and Karna — are known for their tragic intensity and dramatic style.

The supreme achievement of Indian drama is undoubtedly Kalidasa, who is often called Shakespeare of India. He has given the world profound spiritual vision of life. His magnum opus, Abhinaya Shakuntala, is said to be the richest and most completely satisfying romantic drama. After the Sanskrit drama ceased to be acted and was read only as literature, the theatre of the people flourished for many centuries and catered to the Indian masses. The old splendour and fullness of drama was gone, but people still needed relaxation and entertainment. Thus arose folkforms like Jatra and Navtangi in Bengal, Bhand Jashn in Kashmir, Rasadhari plays in Mathura, Ramlila in Northern India, Bhavai in Gujarat; Lalita, Khele, Dashavtar and Tamasha in Maharashtra; Yakshagana, Bayalata, Attadata, Daddata and Sonnata in Karnataka; Veedhi-natakam in Andhra Pradesh; and the Kutiyattam, Mohiniattam and Kathakali dance dramas in Kerala.

These variegated forms of entertainment had but little merit as literature, but they conveyed to the people the essentials of Indian culture. It was only after the British set up

their regime in India that the crippled Indian drama received new strength and witnessed a revival. Indian-English Drama made a humble beginning with the publication of Krishna Mohan Banerji's 'The Persecuted' in 1831. However, the real journey of Indian English Drama began with Michael Madhusudan Dutt's 'Is This Called Civilization' which appeared on the literary horizon in 1871, though it was not followed by a sustainable creative effort for decades together. Among the various forms of Indian writing in English, drama seems to lag far-behind poetry and fiction. After a long hiatus of few decades it was only by the early 20th century that Indian English Drama gathered momentum under the influence of British Drama.

There are plausible reasons for the arrested growth of Indian English drama. The continued lack of the living theatre and a live audience has been the chief cause of this plight of Indian drama in English. Language is another hurdle that hampers the development of Indian drama in English. The pre-independence era saw some stalwarts like Rabindranath Tagore, Sir Aurobindo, T.P. Kailasam, A.S.P. Ayyar, Loba-Prabhu, Harindranath Chattopadhyaya and Bharathi Sarabhai who contributed substantially to the growth and development of Indian English drama. Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) has been called the father of modern Indian stagecraft. His dramatic achievements include *Sanyasi* or the *Ascetic* (1884), *The King and the Queen* (1889), *Chitra* (1892), *Malini* (1895), *Sacrifice* (1895), *Gandhari's Prayer* and *Karna and Kunti* (1897), *The King of the Dark Chamber* (1910), *The Post Office* (1912), *The Cycle of Spring* (1916), *Mukta Dhara* (1922), *Red Oleanders* (1924), *Natir Pula* (1926) and *Chandalika* (1933). In these plays Tagore has dealt with philosophical, religious, political, social issues; and in some of them presented Indian myths and legends.

Sri Aurobindo (1872-1950) is an uncontested outstanding figure in Indo-Anglian literature. To his credit he has eleven verse dramas, five of them — *Pereus the Deliverer* (1955), *Vasavadutta* (1957), *Rodogune* (1958), *The Viziers of Bassora* (1959) and *Eric* (1960) — are complete five act plays. *The Witch of Ilni*, *Achab* and *Esarhaddon*, *The Maid in the Mill*, *The House of Brut*, *The Birth of Sin* and *Prince of Edur* are incomplete. Most of Sri Aurobindo's plays are mythological or legendary. As regards the theme and its setting, *Perseus the Deliverer* has a theme drawn from Greek mythology, *The Viziers of Bassora* from the stories of the *Arabian Nights*. Only *Vasavadutta* has a genuinely Indian theme and setting. According to Sri Aurobindo the superiority of Indian Drama lies in its civilized approach to the main issues of life and in its equally civilized way of presenting characters.

This is the view of one who has mastered the Western as well as Indian drama. Tyagraja Parmasiva Kailasam (1885-1946), popularly known as T.P. Kailasam was both a great playwright and a talented actor. T.P. Kailasam has very intelligently taken up his themes and characters from the *Ramavana* and the *Mahabharata*, two great epics of ancient India.

Kailasam's English plays include *The Burden* (1933), *Fulfilment* (1933), *The Purpose* (1944), *The Curse or Karna* (1946), *Kechaka* (1949). Although all his themes and characters are mythological yet their treatment and delineation are strictly according to his vision, mission and imagination. Harindranath Chattopadhyaya added a new dimension to Indian English drama with its leftist leanings and revolutionary zeal. He has written plays on social and hagiological themes. His social plays — *The Window*, *The Parrot*, *The Coffin*, *Evening Lamps* and *The Sentry's Lantern* abound in seeds of social protest and thought of revolution. His devotional plays *Raidas*, *Chokha Mela*, *Pundalik*, *Saku Bai*, *Javadeva* and *Tuka Ram* deal with the lives of saints in his own characteristic way. Bharati Sarabhai is the first, most distinguished woman dramatist, who gave a Gandhian touch to Indian English drama. Her

first play, *The Well of the People* (1949) upholds Gandhi's well-known doctrine 'Daridra Narayana' (worship of the poor as God). The plot of the play is based on a real story published in the journal *Harijan*. Sarabhai's *Two Women* is in prose. It highlights the conflict and tension caused by East-West encounter, by the conflict between tradition and modernity.

A.S. Panchapakesa Ayyar is another playwright of distinction whose contribution to Indian drama cannot be ignored. The very titles of Ayyar's plays — *In the Clutch of the Devil*, *Sita's Choice*, *The Slave of Ideas*, *A Mother's Sacrifice* and *The Trial of Science for the Murder of Humanity*, shows that they are written with reformist zeal. J.N. Lobo-Prabhu is a prolific playwright. He has written over a dozen plays. *Mother of New India* (1944), a play in three acts and *Death Abdicates* (1945) appeared before Independence and *Collected Plays* (1955) contains six plays — *Apes in the Parlour*, *The Family Cage*, *Flags of the Heart*, *Winding Ways*, *Loves Becomes light* and *Dog's Ghost*, *Apes in the Parlour* is a trenchant critique of sophisticated life. Very few Indian dramatists so far had shown great interest in producing drama for the stage. One singular exception to this phenomenon was Asif Currimbhoy who is rightly hailed as "India's first authentic voice in the theatre." His plays are essentially pieces of theatre. In his plays, one can discern a definite philosophical basis that can be recognized in the very titles of his plays — *The Hungry Ones*, *The Captives*, *The Doldrummers*, *An Experiment with Truth*, *Goa This Alien Native Land*, and *Om Mane Padma Hun!* Quite a few contemporary playwrights have made a significant contribution to the development of Indian English drama. The foremost among them is Nissim Ezekiel, who enriched Indian English drama in his own characteristic way. His *Three Plays* (1969) consists of *Nalini A Marriage Poem* and *The Sleep-Walkers*, and another play, *Song of Deprivation*.

They expose the hollowness of the urban middle-class life, fickleness of modern lovers, greedy fascination for American life and the hypocrisy and inhibitive nature of contemporary Indian society.

Besides the plays confessing on the social structure, prevalent system and the emergent problems, some historical plays were also written by playwrights like Lakhan Deb and Gurucharan Das. Lakhan Deb's *Tiger's Claw* (1967) and *Murder At The Prayer Meeting* (1976) are remarkable contribution to historical play. Deb deftly uses blank verse in these plays. *Tiger's Claw* is a verse play in three acts, which dramatises vividly the killing of Afzal Khan by Shivaji. Deb's *Murder At The Prayer Meeting* deals with the murder of Mahatma Gandhi and is full of the echoes of T.S. Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral*.

Gurucharan Das's *Larins Sahib* (1970) is a historical play in which the playwright succeeds admirably in evoking the nineteenth century colonial Indian background. Gieve Patel is another contemporary dramatist who has distinguished himself. *His Princes* (1970) is the first Parsi play, set in the semi-urban Parsi sub-culture of the Sanjan-Nargol area of the South Gujarat, focusing on two Parsi families and their savage conflict for the possession of a sole male child. Pratap Sharma has carved out a niche for himself among contemporary playwrights by handling the theme of sex in his two plays *The Professor Has a Warcry* (1970) and *A Touch of Brightness* (1973). Contemporary Indian drama in English translation has made bold innovations and fruitful experiments in terms of both thematic concerns and technical virtuositities. It has been increasingly turning to history, legend, myth and folklore, tapping their springs of vitality and vocal cords of popularity with splendid results. Mohan Rakesh, Badal Sircar, Vijay Tendulkar and Girish Karnad have remained the most representative of contemporary Indian dramatists not only in Hindi, Bengali, Marathi and Kannada respectively but also at the pan-Indian level.

Greatly influenced by Marxism, Mohan Rakesh waged a relentless fight against the traditional stranglehold of Hindi drama, and always endeavoured to project something new and challenging. His plays dramatize the sufferings of men and women who fall victims to socio-economic hierarchy and cultural hegemony. Particularly in plays like *One day in Ashadha* and *The Great Swans of Waves*. While Rakesh uses historical characters to project the breakdown of communication in contemporary life, Badal Sircar, a great Bengali playwright, uses contemporary situations to project the existential attitude of modern life.

Evam Indraiit (1965), is a milestone in the history of modern Indian drama. *Evam Indraiit* is about the residue that consists of those who have failed to adjust, align and ceased to aspire and also those who are enmeshed in the day-to-day struggle for survival. Vijay Tendulkar is a significant name among the contemporary Marathi playwrights. In all his plays, he harps upon the theme of isolation of the individual and his confrontation with the hostile surroundings. The plays '*Shantana Court Chalho Aahe*' (*Silence ! The Court is in Session*), '*Giddh*' (*Vultures*), '*Sakharam Binder*' and '*Ghasiram Kotwal*', which made Tendulkar a popular playwright, are experiments of an intense and deeper impulse and not just a matter of superficial innovation.

Ghasiram Kotwal is based on a historical incident taken from the life of Balaji Janardan Banu Peshwas Phadnavis of Pune. The abiding popularity of *Ghasiram Kotwal* is for two reasons. First it deals with politics as a game of power. Secondly it deals with the evils related to power politics, the play has attracted a large number of spectators the world over. Unlike Badal Sircar and Vijay Tendulkar who delve into the problems of middle-class society, Girish Kamad, the well-known Kannada playwright, goes back to myths and legends with a view to making them a vehicle of a new vision. In his plays, *Yayati*, *Tughlaq*, *Hayavadana*, *Tale Danda*, *Fire and the Rain* and *Naga Mandala*, he tries to evolve a symbolic form out of a tension between the archetypal and mythic experience and to a living response to life and its values in his attempt to give new meaning to the past from the vantage point of the present.

Very recently Indian English drama has shot into prominence. Younger writers like Mahesh Dattani and Manjula Padmanabhan have infused new life into this branch of writing. He has published forceful plays like *Where There is a Will*, *Final Solutions* and *Tara*. He writes about mean, ugly, unhappy things of life. Padmanabhan projects a dehumanized, terrifying world in which mothers sell their sons for the price of rice. Drama in various languages has shown a marked development — it has not done so in Indian English.

A study of Vijay Tendulkar, Badal Sircar and Girish Karnad clearly shows that they are the symbols of the new resurgence in their own areas and have made bold innovations, fruitful experiments and given new directions, which go in the history of Indian drama as significant marks of achievement.

Dramatic Techniques: Now let us learn How to study a play and why play is called as the genre of the illiterates and common people:

Plays differ slightly from prose and poetry, in their construction, their reading and their interpretation. You must consider a play in performance, which you do not need to consider when studying a novel or poem – most importantly, how it will be presented on stage and what techniques the playwright has used to create effect, drama and suspense. The key aspect of this is dramatic techniques, which are outlined below. You should be aware of the effect of these techniques and be prepared to comment on them.

Dramatic techniques

Dramatic techniques are used by the playwright to enhance meaning and understanding amongst the audience. Dramatic techniques include:

Stage directions

They tell us what should be happening on stage and will often include clues, e.g. the darkening of the stage may suggest something bad approaching. They can be used for a whole spectrum of things - instructions to directors about set, costume, props etc and instructions to actors about movement, gesture, facial expression, tone of voice etc. They are very revealing, as they often show us mood, link scenes, aspects of characterization and theme. It is crucially important that you read them carefully and consider their significance, in the same way that you consider the dialogue itself.

Asides

When a character temporarily turns away from another character and speaks directly to the audience.

Entrance and exits

It is important to notice when characters exit and enter a scene. Pay particular attention to what is being said as they enter or what they say as they leave.

Scenes and Acts

It is important to pay attention to when a playwright chooses to end a scene and an Act (a number of scenes). It is usually significant in building audience expectations of what is to come. This is sometimes a cliff hanger. Or sometimes they will link a scene with lighting, a prop or with a character remaining on stage.

Symbolism

When an object is used to represent something else, e.g. a broken vase may symbolise a broken relationship.

Off-stage

Noises off-stage may indicate the coming of conflict, of something bad likely to happen.

Recurring imagery

Look out for repeated words, phrases and images. Together, these create a sense of mood or a key theme.

Style of writing - Prose & verse

In older plays (Shakespeare, for example), it is possible to tell the status of a character or the mood of the scene by whether it is written as poetry or in everyday speech, e.g. characters of low status do not speak in verse and comic scenes are often written in prose.

Style of writing - dialect & language

In more modern plays, playwrights will often use dialect (a way of speaking particular to an area) and colloquialisms (words or phrases common to that particular area) to demonstrate the differences in social status or origin of a character. In Singaporean plays, Singlish is often used to show diversity of tongues (different languages - e.g. Tamil, Mandarin, Hokkien, Cantonese, Malay) and it is often contrasted with the use of Standard

English, as is encouraged by the government. The use of a local dialect can add authenticity to a play, as it more effectively captures the voices of the local people in the play. In some plays, this may even mean that whole section of the play will be spoken in another language (such as Haresh Sharma's plays) and the audience will have subtitles (on a screen on the side of the stage) to help them interpret.

Soliloquy/Monologue

When a character is alone on stage and speaks out his or her thoughts aloud. Language that invites action. A character can say something that requires others to act or react.

Language and length

Look out for how much or little is said by characters. Playwrights will often change the pace (slowing down or speeding up) by how the characters speak.

Dramatic Irony

This is when the audience knows something that the characters on stage don't - perhaps it might be a detail that we have seen in another scene or something that we know not to be the case.

Satire/Parody

This is when a playwright will 'play' on a popular trend (e.g. estate agent speak at the start of Boom) and make fun of it by showing how ridiculous it is.

Microcosm

A small representation of a whole. For example, in Boom you could argue that Mother is representative of a whole generation of older Singaporeans, Boon is representative of a whole generation of young Singaporeans, Jeremiah represents civil servants and the whole play Boom is a microcosm of Singaporean society as a whole.

Irony

When the reality is the opposite of what is being said/shown is called Irony.

Novel as a Satire

Satire is a genre of literature, and sometimes graphic and performing arts, in which vices, follies, abuses, and shortcomings are held up to ridicule, ideally with the intent of shaming individuals, corporations, government or society itself, into improvement. Although satire is usually meant to be humorous, its greater purpose is often constructive social criticism, using wit to draw attention to both particular and wider issues in society.

A feature of satire is strong irony or sarcasm "in satire, irony is militant "but parody, burlesque, exaggeration, juxtaposition, comparison, analogy, and double entendre are all frequently used in satirical speech and writing. This "militant" irony or sarcasm often professes to approve of (or at least accept as natural) the very things the satirist wishes to attack.

Satire is nowadays found in many artistic forms of expression, including literature, plays, commentary, television shows, and media such as lyrics.

Etymology and roots

The word satire comes from the Latin word *satur* and the subsequent phrase *lanx satura*. *Satur* meant "full" but the juxtaposition with *lanx* shifted the meaning to "miscellany or medley": the expression *lanx satura* literally means "a full dish of various kinds of fruits."

The word *satura* as used by Quintilian, however, was used to denote only Roman verse satire, a strict genre that imposed hexameter form, a narrower genre than what would be later intended as *satire*. Quintilian famously said that *satura*, that is a satire in hexameter verses, was a literary genre of wholly Roman origin (*satura tota nostra est*). He was aware of and commented on Greek satire, but at the time did not label it as such, although today the origin of satire is considered to be Aristophanes' *Old Comedy*. The first critic to use satire in the modern broader sense was Apuleius.

To Quintilian, the satire was a strict literary form, but the term soon escaped from the original narrow definition. Robert Elliott writes:

As soon as a noun enters the domain of metaphor, as one modern scholar has pointed out, it clamours for extension; and *satura* (which had had no verbal, adverbial, or adjectival forms) was immediately broadened by appropriation from the Greek word for "satyr" (*satyros*) and its derivatives. The odd result is that the English "satire" comes from the Latin *satura*; but "satirize", "satiric", etc., are of Greek origin. By about the 4th century AD the writer of satires came to be known as *satyricus*; St. Jerome, for example, was called by one of his enemies 'a satirist in prose' (*satyricus scriptor in prosa*). Subsequent orthographic modifications obscured the Latin origin of the word satire: *satura* becomes *satyra*, and in England, by the 16th century, it was written 'satyre.'

The word *satire* derives from *satura*, and its origin was not influenced by the Greek mythological figure of the *satyr*. In the 17th century, philologist Isaac Casaubon was the first to dispute the etymology of satire from satyr, contrary to the belief up to that time.

5.3 PROTEST LITERATURE & DRAMA FOR SOCIAL PURPOSE

Social protest literature of the nineteenth century was a product of the rapid urbanization and industrialization of Western countries, along with the rise of socialist thought. It may be divided into two broad categories: literature that focuses on revealing society's ills and literature that either advocates or opposes certain types of social or political reform. These broad categories encompass a wide variety of works that treat a range of subjects, including slavery, women's rights, minority rights, poverty, aristocracy, racism, ethnocentrism, and the immigrant experience. German writer Ludolf Wienbarg perhaps best encapsulated how nineteenth-century protest writers envisioned their role and the purpose of their works when he declared, "Prose is a weapon, and we have to sharpen it."

While England is widely recognized as the center of nineteenth-century social protest literature, with such well-known writers as Charles Dickens, George Eliot, and Elizabeth Gaskell infusing social criticism into their writings, writers from other countries also produced literary works that actively reflected the political and social controversies of the day. In France, Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables* (1862) remains one of the most powerful depictions of corruption and depravity in literature. Hugo had attained such prominence over his lengthy literary career that the novel was released in nine languages upon its initial

publication. Hugo's popularity and influence eventually came under ridicule by the French Realists, however, who spurned what they perceived as Hugo's tendency to romanticize life, and sought in their own works to portray an objective and "scientific" view of society's ills.

The best known of the Realists, Émile Zola, published numerous protest works, most notably *Germinal* (1885), an indictment of industrialism and the political structures that foster social inequality. Gustave Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* (1857) and Guy de Maupassant's *Une Vie* (1883) were other important contributions to the Realist movement.

Just as the Realists in France rebelled against writers such as Hugo, the writers of Young Germany also defined themselves by reacting against established literary figures. This revolutionary literary movement, headed by Karl Börne and Heinrich Heine, strove to move away from literary Romanticism and to inject political debate into literature, an effort that led to the banning of their works and the polemicization of criticism. The German form of Realism is exemplified by the influential social novels of Theodor Fontane, many of which portray the withering aristocracy and rising proletariat. The "ideals" of society were satirized by E. T. A. Hoffman in his *Lebensansichten des Katers Murr* (1820-22), a novel that contrasts artistic creativity to the stifling social norms of the bourgeoisie and nobility.

Hoffman viewed such norms as stultifying, producing an inevitable inhibition of originality and independence.

In Russia, where the repressive tsarist state tolerated little or no open dissent, a tradition of progressive liberalism nevertheless survived. In the nineteenth century a new, highly radicalized group, the *raznochintsy*, emerged. Among the older generation of liberals Fyodor Dostoevsky and Ivan Turgenev produced novels of social protest.

Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment* (1866) and Turgenev's *Fathers and Sons* (1862) both critique Russian society while depicting members of the radicalized younger generation.

While Dostoevsky, in his depiction of the character Raskolnikov, showed radicalism to be misguided as well as dangerous, Turgenev presented a much more sympathetic portrait of a radical in his central figure Bazarov. Turgenev's use of the term "nihilist" to characterize Bazarov brought it into wide use in political discourse throughout Europe and America to describe revolutionaries who advocate the complete destruction of the status quo. In what is sometimes viewed as a direct response to *Fathers and Sons*, the radical journalist and member of the *raznochintsy*, Nikolay Gavrilovich Chernyshevsky wrote *What Is to Be Done?* (1863). This novel portrays a nihilist, Kirsanov, in heroic terms and posits an idyllic society that will emerge after the destruction of the present one.

While European protest writers often focused on philosophical questions of individuality and the dynamics of social structures, American reformist literature commonly emphasized political issues. The most prominent of these issues were slavery, women's equality, corruption within the government, and the distribution of wealth. Mark Twain is considered one of the key American promulgators of literary social protest, largely due to his novel *Huckleberry Finn* (1885). In it he achieves a skillful blend of protest and literary craftsmanship by highlighting the flaws and hypocrisies of American society. Edward Bellamy used a different technique to advocate social change in *Looking Backward* (1888), a utopian novel metaphorically portraying a socialistic form of government. While scorning the competitive social and economic system developing in America, the novel depicts a society

in which citizens are equal on all levels. In his works, George Washington Cable encouraged equality through civil rights, a view most powerfully stated in his novel *The Grandissimes* (1880), in which he portrays a South still suffering from the legacy of slavery.

At the opposite end of the spectrum, Edgar Allan Poe argued that social reform was not the answer to the problems facing society. Perhaps one of the most vehement literary opponents of feminism, the anti-slavery movement, and democracy, Poe maintained that social reform would destroy the individual in a futile hope to aid the masses. He contended that “in efforts to soar above our nature, we invariably fall below it. Your reformist demigods are merely devils turned inside out.” Dickens for his part provided an outsider's critical observations on nineteenth-century American society. After a five-month tour of the United States, he published *American Notes* (1842), a comparison of British and American societies that alleges that the United States was rife with faulty social constructs and prejudice, which stifled the country's high ideals of liberty and freedom for all. Arguing that only Boston—a center of higher education—was well-civilized and respectable, Dickens inferred that education was the key to an effective, orderly society.

5.4 CONCLUSION

In this unit we learn what is social reform, prominent Indian social reformers, the rise Indian Drama and its social purpose. Literature all the time reflects the contemporary society.

Like in Europe, America and other African countries, in India also literature is used as weapon against social atrocities and social problems. The prescribed texts in this paper like *Godaan*, *Evam Indrajit*, *Samskara*, *Indulekha*, *Puppets*, ranging from major regional languages of India, reflect social realism and present the social problems in a satirical vein.

5.5 COMPREHENSION CHECK QUESTIONS

1. Write a note on Indian reformers and their contribution to India, illustrating your answer with reference to the topic prescribed for your study.
2. What is your assessment of Indian Drama and its place among other literary genres of India when it is compared to Novel form? Illustrate your answer.
3. Discuss in detail the different dramatic techniques and their common features.
4. Write a critical analysis on “Drama/Novel for Social purpose”.
5. Discuss the statement “India as land of Multilanguage literatures with pan India characteristics.” with reference to your prescribed works.

5.6 REFERENCES

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- 2) **Romilla Thaper**, *The Penguin History of Early India: From the Origins to Ad 1300: Volume 1* (Paperback) ,Penguin, New Delhi: 1999.
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LESSON 6

BACKGROUND STUDIES: LITERARY THEORIES

OBJECTIVES

This unit enables the learner to understand

- Different literary theories and their impact on literary history.
- Social Realism.
- Protest literature.
- Modernism
- Reinterpretation of Myths
- Role of Myths in literature
- Theatre of Absurd.

STRUCTURE

6.1 Themes

6.1.1 Social Realism

6.1.2 Modernism

6.2 Absurd Drama

6.3 Myths

6.4 Comprehensive Check Questions

6.5 References

6.1 THEMES

6.1.1 Social Realism

Socialist realism is a style of realistic art that was developed in the Soviet Union and became a dominant style in various other socialist countries. Socialist realism is characterized by the glorified depiction of communist values, such as the emancipation of the proletariat, in a realistic manner. Although related, it should not be confused with social realism, a broader type of art that realistically depicts subjects of social concern.

Socialist realism was the predominant form of art in the Soviet Union from its development in the early 1920s to its eventual fall from popularity in the late 1960s. While other countries have employed a prescribed canon of art, socialist realism in Russia persisted longer and was more restricted than elsewhere in Europe.

Development

Socialist realism was developed by many thousands of artists, across a diverse empire, over several decades. Early examples of realism in Russian art include the work of the Peredvizhnikis and Ilya Yefimovich Repin. While these works do not have the same political connotation, they exhibit the techniques exercised by their successors. After the Bolsheviks took control of Russia on October 25, 1917, there was a marked shift in artistic styles. There had been a short period of artistic exploration in the time between the

fall of the Tsar and the rise of the Bolsheviks. In 1917, Russian artists began to return to more traditional forms of art and painting.

Shortly after the Bolsheviks took control, Anatoly Lunacharsky was appointed as head of Narkompros, the People's Commissariat for Enlightenment. This put Lunacharsky in the position of deciding the direction of art in the newly created Soviet state. Lunacharsky created a system of aesthetics based on the human body that would become the main component of socialist realism for decades to come. He believed that "the sight of a healthy body, intelligent face or friendly smile was essentially life-enhancing." He concluded that art had a direct effect on the human organism and under the right circumstances that effect could be positive. By depicting "the perfect person" (New Soviet man), Lunacharsky believed art could educate citizens on how to be the perfect Soviets.

Debate within Soviet Russia

There were two main groups debating the fate of Soviet art: futurists and traditionalists. Russian Futurists, many of whom had been creating abstract or leftist art before the Bolsheviks, believed communism required a complete rupture from the past and, therefore, so did Soviet art. Traditionalists believed in the importance of realistic representations of everyday life. Under Lenin's rule and the New Economic Policy, there was a certain amount of private commercial enterprise, allowing both the futurist and the traditionalist to produce their art for individuals with capital. By 1928, the Soviet government had enough strength and authority to end private enterprises, thus ending support for fringe groups such as the futurists. At this point, although the term "socialist realism" was not being used, its defining characteristics became the norm.

The first time the term "socialist realism" was officially used was in 1932. The term was settled upon in meetings that included politicians of the highest level, including Stalin himself. Maxim Gorky, a proponent of literary socialist realism, published a famous article titled "Socialist Realism" in 1933 and by 1934 the term's etymology was traced back to Stalin. During the Congress of 1934 four guidelines were laid out for socialist realism. The work must be:

1. Proletarian: art relevant to the workers and understandable to them.
2. Typical: scenes of everyday life of the people.
3. Realistic: in the representational sense.
4. Partisan: supportive of the aims of the State and the Party.

Characteristics

Socialist-Realist sculpture in Vilnius, removed in 2015. The purpose of socialist realism was to limit popular culture to a specific, highly regulated faction of creative expression that promoted Soviet ideals.^[11] The party was of the utmost importance and was always to be favorably featured. The key concepts that developed assured loyalty to the party, "partiinnost" (party-mindedness), "ideinnost" (idea- or ideological-content), "klassovost" (class content), "pravdivost" (truthfulness). There was a prevailing sense of optimism, socialist realism's function was to show the ideal Soviet society. Not only was the present gloried, but the future was also supposed to be depicted in an agreeable fashion. Because the present and the future were constantly idolized, socialist realism had a sense of forced optimism. Tragedy and negativity were not permitted, unless they were shown in a different time or place. This

sentiment created what would later be dubbed "revolutionary romanticism." Revolutionary romanticism elevated the common worker, whether factory or agricultural, by presenting his life, work, and recreation as admirable. Its purpose was to show how much the standard of living had improved thanks to the revolution. Art was used as educational information. By illustrating the party's success, artists were showing their viewers that sovietism was the best political system. Art was also used to show how Soviet citizens should be acting. The ultimate aim was to create what Lenin called "an entirely new type of human being": The *New Soviet Man*. Art (especially posters and murals) was a way to instill party values on a massive scale. Stalin described the socialist realist artists as "engineers of souls." Common images used in socialist realism were flowers, sunlight, the body, youth, flight, industry, and new technology. These poetic images were used to show the utopianism of communism and the Soviet state. Art became more than an aesthetic pleasure; instead it served a very specific function. Soviet ideals placed functionality and work above all else; therefore, for art to be admired, it must serve a purpose. Georgi Plekhanov, a Marxist theoretician, states that art is only useful if it serves society:

"There can be no doubt that art acquired a social significance only in so far as it depicts, evokes, or conveys actions, emotions and events that are of significance to society."

The artist could not, however, portray life just as they saw it because anything that reflected poorly on Communism had to be omitted. People who could not be shown as either wholly good or wholly evil could not be used as characters. This was reflective of the Soviet idea that morality is simple: things are either right or wrong. This view on morality called for idealism over realism. Art was filled with health and happiness: paintings showed busy industrial and agricultural scenes; sculptures depicted workers, sentries, and schoolchildren.

Creativity was not an important part of socialist realism: it was actually rejected. The styles used in creating art during this period were those that would produce the most realistic results. Painters would depict happy, muscular peasants and workers in factories and collective farms. During the Stalin period, they produced numerous heroic portraits of the dictator to serve his cult of personality all in the most realistic fashion possible. The most important thing for a socialist realist artist was not artistic integrity but adherence to party doctrine.

Notable works and artists

Maxim Gorky's novel *Mother* is usually considered to have been the first socialist-realist novel. Gorky was also a major factor in the school's rapid rise, and his pamphlet, *On Socialist Realism*, essentially lays out the needs of Soviet art. Other important works of literature include Fyodor Gladkov's *Cement* (1925), Nikolai Ostrovsky's *How the Steel Was Tempered* and Mikhail Sholokhov's two volume epic, *Quiet Flows the Don* (1934) and *The Don Flows Home to the Sea* (1940). Yury Krymov's novel *Tanker "Derbent"* (1938) portrays Soviet merchant seafarers being transformed by the Stakhanovite movement. Our prescribed Novel Premchand's *Godan* is also one of the best examples for social realistic works.

6.1.2 Modernism

Literary modernism, or modernist literature, has its origins in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, mainly in Europe and North America. Some philosophers, like Georg Lukacs,

theorized that literary modernism had its origins in the philosophy of Walter Benjamin. Modernism is characterized by a self-conscious break with traditional styles of poetry and verse. Modernists experimented with literary form and expression, adhering to Ezra Pound's maxim to "Make it new". The modernist literary movement was driven by a conscious desire to overturn traditional modes of representation and express the new sensibilities of their time. The horrors of the First World War saw the prevailing assumptions about society reassessed. Thinkers such as Sigmund Freud and Karl Marx questioned the rationality of mankind.

In the 1880s increased attention was given to the idea that it was necessary to push aside previous norms entirely, instead of merely revising past knowledge in light of contemporary techniques. The theories of Sigmund Freud (1856–1939), and Ernst Mach (1838–1916) influenced early Modernist literature. Mach argued that the mind had a fundamental structure, and that subjective experience was based on the interplay of parts of the mind in *The Science of Mechanics* (1883). Freud's first major work was *Studies on Hysteria* (with Josef Breuer) (1895). According to Freud, all subjective reality was based on the play of basic drives and instincts, through which the outside world was perceived. As a philosopher of science, Ernst Mach was a major influence on logical positivism, and through his criticism of Isaac Newton, a forerunner of Einstein's theory of relativity.

Many prior theories about epistemology argued that external and absolute reality could impress itself, as it were, on an individual, as, for example, John Locke's (1632–1704) empiricism, which saw the mind beginning as a *tabula rasa*, a blank slate (*An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, 1690). Freud's description of subjective states, involving an unconscious mind full of primal impulses and counterbalancing self-imposed restrictions, was combined by Carl Jung (1875–1961) with the idea of the collective unconscious, which the conscious mind either fought or embraced. While Charles Darwin's work remade the Aristotelian concept of "man, the animal" in the public mind, Jung suggested that human impulses toward breaking social norms were not the product of childishness, or ignorance, but rather derived from the essential nature of the human animal.

Another major precursor of modernism was Friedrich Nietzsche, especially his idea that psychological drives, specifically the "will to power", were more important than facts, or things. Henri Bergson (1859–1941), on the other hand, emphasized the difference between scientific clock time and the direct, subjective, human experience of time. His work on time and consciousness "had a great influence on twentieth-century novelists," especially those modernists who used the stream of consciousness technique, such as Dorothy Richardson for the book *Pointed Roofs* (1915), James Joyce for *Ulysses* (1922) and Virginia Woolf (1882–1941) for *Mrs Dalloway* (1925) and *To the Lighthouse* (1927). Also important in Bergson's philosophy was the idea of *élan vital*, the life force, which "brings about the creative evolution of everything" His philosophy also placed a high value on intuition, though without rejecting the importance of the intellect. These various thinkers were united by a distrust of Victorian positivism and certainty¹ Modernism as a literary movement can be seen also, as a reaction to industrialization, urbanization and new technologies.

Important literary precursors of Modernism were

Fyodor Dostoyevsky (1821–81) (*Crime and Punishment* (1866), *The Brothers Karamazov* (1880)); Walt Whitman (1819–92) (*Leaves of Grass*) (1855–91); Charles Baudelaire (1821–67) (*Les Fleurs du mal*), Rimbaud (1854–91) (*Illuminations*,

1874); August Strindberg (1849–1912), especially his later plays, including, the trilogy *To Damascus* 1898–1901, *A Dream Play* (1902), *The Ghost Sonata* (1907).

Modernist literature scholar David Thorburn saw connections between literary style and impressionist painters such as Claude Monet. Modernist writers, like Monet's paintings of water lilies, suggested an awareness of art as art, rejected realistic interpretations of the world and dramatized "a drive towards the abstract". Initially, some modernists fostered a utopian spirit, stimulated by innovations in anthropology, psychology, philosophy, political theory, physics and psychoanalysis. The poets of the Imagist movement, founded by Ezra Pound in 1912 as a new poetic style, gave Modernism its early start in the 20th century, and were characterized by a poetry that favoured a precision of imagery, brevity and Free verse.

This idealism, however, ended, with the outbreak of World War I, and writers created more cynical works that reflected a prevailing sense of disillusionment. Many modernist writers also shared a mistrust of institutions of power such as government and religion, and rejected the notion of absolute truths. Modernist works such as T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* (1922), were increasingly self-aware, introspective, and explored the darker aspects of human nature.

The term modernism covers a number of related, and overlapping, artistic and literary movements, including Imagism, Symbolism, Futurism, Vorticism, Cubism, Surrealism, Expressionism, and Dada.

Early modernist writers

Early modernist writers, especially those writing after World War I and the disillusionment that followed, broke the implicit contract with the general public that artists were the reliable interpreters and representatives of mainstream ("bourgeois") culture and ideas, and, instead, developed unreliable narrators, exposing the irrationality at the roots of a supposedly rational world.

They also attempted to take into account changing ideas about reality developed by Darwin, Mach, Freud, Einstein, Nietzsche, Bergson and others. From this developed innovative literary techniques such as stream-of-consciousness, interior monologue, as well as the use of multiple points-of-view. This can reflect doubts about the philosophical basis of realism, or alternatively an expansion of our understanding of what is meant by realism. So that, for example the use of stream-of-consciousness, or interior monologue reflects the need for greater psychological realism.

It is debatable when the modernist literary movement began, though some have chosen 1910 as roughly marking the beginning and quote novelist Virginia Woolf, who declared that human nature underwent a fundamental change "on or about December 1910." But modernism was already stirring by 1902, with works such as Joseph Conrad's (1857–1924) *Heart of Darkness*, while Alfred Jarry's (1873–1907) absurdist play, *Ubu Roi* appeared even earlier, in 1896.

Among early modernist non-literary landmarks is the atonal ending of Arnold Schoenberg's Second String Quartet in 1908, the Expressionist paintings of Wassily Kandinsky starting in 1903 and culminating with his first abstract painting and the founding of the Expressionist Blue Rider group in Munich in 1911, the rise of fauvism, and the

introduction of cubism from the studios of Henri Matisse, Pablo Picasso, Georges Braque and others between 1900 and 1910.

Sherwood Anderson's *Winesburg, Ohio* is known as an early work of modernism for its plain-spoken prose style and emphasis on psychological insight into characters. Other early modernist writers and selected works include:

- Virginia Woolf (1882–1940): *Mrs Dalloway* (1925) *To the Lighthouse* (1927) *The Waves* (1931) *The Years* (1937)
- Luigi Pirandello (1867–1936): *The Late Mattia Pascal* (1904), *Six Characters in Search of an Author* (1921);
- Rainer Maria Rilke (1875–1926): *The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge* (1910), *Sonnets to Orpheus* (1922), *Duino Elegies* (1922);
- W. B. Yeats (1865–1939): *The Green Helmet* (1910), *Wild Swans at Coole* (1917);
- Gottfried Benn (1886–1956): *Morgue and other Poems* (1912);
- Ezra Pound (1885–1972): *Ripostes* (1912), *The Cantos*, published variously over the period 1917–64, *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley* (1920);
- Guillaume Apollinaire (1880–1918): *Alcools* (1913);
- Andrei Bely (1880–1934): *Petersburg* (1913);
- D. H. Lawrence (1885–1930): *Sons and Lovers* (1913), *The Rainbow* (1915);
- Marcel Proust (1871–1922): *Du côté de chez Swann* (1913), the first volume of *Remembrance of Things Past* (1913–27);
- Georg Trakl (1887–1914): *Poems* (1913);
- Franz Kafka (1883–1924): *The Metamorphosis* (1915), *The Trial* (1925), *The Castle* (1926);
- Konstantine Gamsakhurdia (1893–1975): *The Smile of Dionysus* (1925), *Kidnapping the Moon* (1935—1936), *The Right Hand of the Grand Master* (1939);
- Grigol Robakidze (1880–1962): *The Snake's Skin* (1926);
- Dorothy Richardson (1873–1957): *Pointed Roofs* (1915), the first volume of *Pilgrimage* (1915–38; post. 1967);
- T. S. Eliot (1888–1965): *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock* (1916), *The Waste Land* (1922), *Four Quartets* (1935–42);
- James Joyce (1882–1941), *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916), *Ulysses* (1922), *Finnegans Wake* (1939);
- Miroslav Krleža (1893–1981), *Kristofor Kolumbo* (1918), *Michelangelo Buonarroti* (1919), *Povratak Filipa Latinovicza* (1932);
- Wyndham Lewis (1882–1957): *Tarr* (1918);
- Eugene O'Neill (1888–1953): *Anna Christie* (1920), *The Emperor Jones* (1920);
- Karel Čapek (1890–1938): *R.U.R.* (1920);
- Italo Svevo (1861–1928): *Zeno's Conscience* (1923);

James Joyce was a major modernist writer whose strategies employed in his novel *Ulysses* (1922) for depicting the events during a twenty-four hour period in the life of his protagonist, Leopold Bloom, have come to epitomize modernism's approach to fiction.

The poet T.S. Eliot described these qualities in 1923, noting that Joyce's technique is "a way of controlling, of ordering, of giving a shape and a significance to the immense

panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history.... Instead of narrative method, we may now use the mythical method. It is, I seriously believe, a step toward making the modern world possible for art." Eliot's own modernist poem *The Waste Land* (1922) mirrors "the futility and anarchy" in its own way, in its fragmented structure, and the absence of an obvious central, unifying narrative. This is in fact a rhetorical technique to convey the poem's theme: "The decay and fragmentation of Western Culture. The poem, despite the absence of a linear narrative, does have a structure: this is provided by both fertility symbolism derived from anthropology, and other elements such as the use of quotations and juxtaposition.

Modernist literature addressed similar aesthetic problems as contemporary modernist art. Gertrude Stein's abstract writings, for example, have been compared to the fragmentary and multi-perspective Cubist paintings of her friend Pablo Picasso. The questioning spirit of modernism, as part of a necessary search for ways to make sense of a broken world, can also be seen in a different form in the Scottish poet Hugh MacDiarmid's *A Drunk Man Looks at the Thistle* (1928). In this poem, MacDiarmid applies Eliot's techniques to respond to the question of nationalism, using comedic parody, in an optimistic (though no less hopeless) form of modernism in which the artist as "hero" seeks to embrace complexity and locate new meanings.

Continuation: 1920s and 1930s

Significant modernist works continued to be created in the 1920s and 1930s, including further novels by Marcel Proust, Virginia Woolf, Robert Musil, and Dorothy Richardson.

The American modernist dramatist Eugene O'Neill's career began in 1914, but his major works appeared in the 1920s and 1930s and early 1940s. Two other significant modernist dramatists writing in the 1920s and 1930s were Bertolt Brecht and Federico García Lorca. D. H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover* was published in 1928, while another important landmark for the history of the modern novel came with the publication of William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* in 1929. In the 1930s, in addition to further major works by Faulkner, Samuel Beckett published his first major work, the novel *Murphy* (1938), while in 1932 John Cowper Powys published *A Glastonbury Romance*, the same year as Hermann Broch's *The Sleepwalker*. One of greatest achievement in modernist poetry is then followed by Miroslav Krleža's *Ballads of Petrica Kerempuh* in 1936. Then in 1939 James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* appeared. It was in this year that another Irish modernist, W. B. Yeats, died. In poetry T. S. Eliot, E. E. Cummings, and Wallace Stevens continued writing from the 1920s until the 1950s. While modernist poetry in English is often viewed as an American phenomenon, with leading exponents including Ezra Pound, T. S. Eliot, Hart Crane, Marianne Moore, William Carlos Williams, H.D., and Louis Zukofsky, there were important British modernist poets, including David Jones, Hugh MacDiarmid, Basil Bunting, and W. H. Auden. European modernist poets include Federico García Lorca, Anna Akhmatova, Constantine Cavafy, and Paul Valéry.

Modernist literature after 1939:

Though *The Oxford Encyclopedia of British Literature* sees Modernism ending by c.1939, with regard to British and American literature, "When (if) Modernism petered out and postmodernism began has been contested almost as hotly as when the transition from

Victorianism to Modernism occurred". Clement Greenberg sees Modernism ending in the 1930s, with the exception of the visual and performing arts. In fact, many literary modernists lived into the 1950s and 1960s, though generally speaking they were no longer producing major works.

Late Modernism

The term late modernism is sometimes applied to modernist works published after 1930. Among modernists (or late modernists) still publishing after 1945 were Wallace Stevens, Gottfried Benn, T. S. Eliot, Anna Akhmatova, William Faulkner, Dorothy Richardson, John Cowper Powys, and Ezra Pound. Basil Bunting, born in 1901, published his most important modernist poem *Briggflatts* in 1965. In addition Hermann Broch's *The Death of Virgil* was published in 1945 and Thomas Mann's *Doctor Faustus* in 1947. Samuel Beckett, who died in 1989, has been described as a "later modernist". Beckett is a writer with roots in the expressionist tradition of modernism, who produced works from the 1930s until the 1980s, including *Molloy* (1951), *En attendant Godot* (1953), *Happy Days* (1961) and *Rockaby* (1981). The terms minimalist and post-modernist have also been applied to his later works. The poets Charles Olson (1910–1970) and J. H. Prynne (b. 1936) have been described as late modernists.

More recently the term late modernism has been redefined by at least one critic and used to refer to works written after 1945, rather than 1930. With this usage goes the idea that the ideology of modernism was significantly re-shaped by the events of World War II, especially the Holocaust and the dropping of the atom bomb.

6.2. THEATRE OF THE ABSURD

The term Theatre of the Absurd is applied to plays written by primarily European playwrights, that express the belief that human existence has no meaning or purpose and therefore all communication breaks down. Logical construction and argument gives way to irrational and illogical speech and to its ultimate conclusion, silence. While there are significant precursors, including Alfred Jarry (1873–1907), the Theatre of the Absurd is generally seen as beginning in the 1950s with the plays of Samuel Beckett.

Critic Martin Esslin coined the term in his 1960 essay, "Theatre of the Absurd." He related these plays based on a broad theme of the Absurd, similar to the way Albert Camus uses the term in his 1942 essay, "The Myth of Sisyphus". The Absurd in these plays takes the form of man's reaction to a world apparently without meaning, and/or man as a puppet controlled or menaced by invisible outside forces. Though the term is applied to a wide range of plays, some characteristics coincide in many of the plays: broad comedy, often similar to Vaudeville, mixed with horrific or tragic images; characters caught in hopeless situations forced to do repetitive or meaningless actions; dialogue full of clichés, wordplay, and nonsense; plots that are cyclical or absurdly expansive; either a parody or dismissal of realism and the concept of the "well-made play".

Playwrights commonly associated with the Theatre of the Absurd include Samuel Beckett (1906–1989), Eugène Ionesco (1909–1994), Jean Genet (1910–1986), Harold Pinter (1930–2008), Tom Stoppard (b. 1937), Friedrich Dürrenmatt (1921–1990), Alejandro Jodorowsky (b. 1929), Fernando Arrabal (b. 1932), Václav Havel (1936–2011) and Edward Albee (b. 1928).

6.3 Myths

The genesis of **modern understanding of Greek mythology** is regarded by some scholars as a double reaction at the end of the 18th century against "the traditional attitude of Christian animosity mixed with disdain, which had prevailed for centuries", in which the Christian reinterpretation of myth as a "lie" or fable had been retained.^[1] In Germany, by about 1795, there was a growing interest in Homer and Greek mythology.

In Göttingen Johann Matthias Gesner began to revive Greek studies and a new humanistic spirit. His successor, Christian Gottlob Heyne, worked with Johann Joachim Winckelmann, and laid the foundations for mythological research both in Germany and elsewhere. Heyne approached the myth as a philologist and shaped the educated Germans' conception of antiquity for nearly half a century, during which ancient Greece exerted an intense influence on intellectual life in Germany. Comparative approaches Max Müller is regarded as one of the founders of comparative mythology. In his *Comparative Mythology* (1867) Müller analysed the "disturbing" similarity between the mythologies of "savage" races with those of the early European races.

For more details on this topic, see Comparative mythology.

The development of comparative philology in the 19th century, together with ethnological discoveries in the 20th century, established the science of myth. Since the Romantics, all study of myth has been comparative. Wilhelm Mannhardt, Sir James Frazer, and Stith Thompson employed the comparative approach to collect and classify the themes of folklore and mythology.^[3] In 1871 Edward Burnett Tylor published his *Primitive Culture*, in which he applied the comparative method and tried to explain the origin and evolution of religion. Tylor's procedure of drawing together material culture, ritual and myth of widely separated cultures influenced both Carl Jung and Joseph Campbell. According to Robert Segal, however, Campbell's "romantic view of myth is the opposite of a rationalist view, one epitomized by the Victorian anthropologists Edward Tylor and James Frazer". J.F. del Giorgio has added a new turn to the comparative approach, insisting in *The Oldest Europeans* about present Greek myths being generated by the clash between a Paleolithic European population and the incoming Indo-European tribes.

Max Müller applied the new science of comparative mythology to the study of myth, in which he detected the distorted remains of Aryan nature worship. Bronisław Malinowski emphasized the ways myth fulfills common social functions. Claude Lévi-Strauss and other structuralists have compared the formal relations and patterns in myths throughout the world. Evans himself, while studying the Minoan world, drew regularly on Egyptian and Near Eastern evidence for comparison, and the discovery of the Hittite and Ugaritic civilizations has uncovered texts as well as monuments which offer comparative material for ritual and mythology.

Psychoanalytic Interpretations

For Karl Kerényi mythology is "a body of material contained in tales about gods and god-like beings, heroic battles and journeys to the Underworld—*mythologem* is the best Greek word for them—tales already well-known but not amenable to further re-shaping".

Sigmund Freud put forward the idea that symbolic communication does not depend on cultural history alone but also on the workings of the psyche. Thus Freud introduced a transhistorical and biological conception of man and a view of myth as an expression of repressed ideas. Dream interpretation is the basis of Freudian myth interpretation and Freud's concept of dream work recognizes the importance of contextual relationships for the interpretation of any individual element in a dream. This suggestion would find an important point of rapprochement between the structuralist and psychoanalytic approaches to myth in Freud's thought.

Carl Jung extended the transhistorical, psychological approach with his theory of the "collective unconscious" and the archetypes (inherited "archaic" patterns), often encoded in myth, that arise out of it. According to Jung, "myth-forming structural elements must be present in the unconscious psyche". Comparing Jung's methodology with Campbell's theory, Segal concludes that "to interpret a myth Campbell simply identifies the archetypes in it. An interpretation of the *Odyssey*, for example, would show how Odysseus's life conforms to a heroic pattern. Jung, by contrast, considers the identification of archetypes merely the first step in the interpretation of a myth".^[5] For Jung, myth is no more about gods than about the physical world; it is about the human mind and must be read symbolically. Karl Kerényi, one of the founders of modern studies in Greek mythology, gave up his early views of myth, in order to apply Jung's theories of archetypes to Greek myth.

The origins of Greek mythology are an open question. In antiquity, historians such as Herodotus theorized that the Greek gods had been stolen directly from the Egyptians. Later on, Christian writers tried to explain Hellenic paganism through degeneration of Biblical religion. According to the Scriptural theory, all mythological legends (including Greek mythology) are derived from the narratives of the Scriptures, though the real facts have been disguised and altered. Thus Deucalion is another name for Noah, Hercules for Samson, Arion for Jonah etc.

According to the Historical Theory all the persons mentioned in mythology were once real human beings, and the legends relating to them are merely the additions of later times.

Thus the story of Aeolus is supposed to have arisen from the fact that Aeolus was the ruler of some islands in the Tyrrhenian Sea. The Allegorical theory supposes that all the ancient myths were allegorical and symbolical. According to the Physical theory the elements of air, fire, and water were originally the objects of religious adoration, and the principal deities were personifications of the powers of nature.

The sciences of archaeology and linguistics have been applied to the origins of Greek mythology with some interesting results. Historical linguistics indicates that particular aspects of the Greek pantheon were inherited from Indo-European society (or perhaps both cultures borrowed from another earlier source), as were the roots of the Greek language.

Prominent Sanskritist Max Müller attempted to understand an Indo-European religious form by tracing it back to its Aryan, Vedic, "original" manifestation. In 1891, he claimed that "the most important discovery which has been made during the nineteenth century with respect to the ancient history of mankind was this simple equation: Sanskrit Dyaus-pitar = Greek Zeus = Latin Jupiter = Old Norse Tyr". Philologist Georges Dumézil draws a comparison between the Greek Uranus and the Sanskrit Varuna, although there is no hint that he believes them to be originally connected. In other cases, close parallels

in character and function suggest a common heritage, yet lack of linguistic evidence makes it difficult to prove, as in the case of the Greek Moirai and the Norns of Norse mythology.

Archaeology and mythography, on the other hand, has revealed that the Greeks were inspired by some of the civilizations of Asia Minor and the Near East. Adonis seems to be the Greek counterpart — more clearly in cult than in myth — of a Near Eastern dying god. His name is related to the Semitic invocation "adon" (Lord) and appears in other cultures as Dumuzi, Tammuz or Attis.

Hindu Myths and Epics

The roots of mythology that evolved from classical Hinduism come from the times of the Vedic civilization, from the ancient Vedic religion. The four Vedas, notably the hymns of the Rigveda, contain allusions to many themes.

The characters, philosophy and stories that make up ancient Vedic myths are indelibly linked with Hindu beliefs. The Vedas are four in number, namely RigVeda, YajurVeda, SamaVeda,



and the AtharvaVeda. Rama (right) seated on the shoulders of Hanuman, battles the demon-king Ravana, scene from Ramayana.

In the period of Classical Sanskrit, much material is preserved in the Sanskrit epics. Besides mythology proper, the voluminous epics also provide a wide range of information about ancient Nepali and Indian society, philosophy, culture, religion, and ways of life. The two great Hindu Epics, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* tell the story of two specific incarnations of Vishnu (Rama and Krishna). These two works are known as *Itihasa* (History).

The epics *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* serve as both religious scriptures and a rich source of philosophy and morality. The epics are divided into chapters and contain various short stories and moral situations, where the character takes a certain course of action in accordance with Hindu laws and codes of righteousness. The most famous of these chapters is the Bhagavad Gita (Sanskrit: *The Celestial Song*) in the Mahabharata, in which Lord Krishna explains the concepts of duty and righteousness to the hero Arjuna before the Battle of Kurukshetra. These stories are deeply embedded in Hindu philosophy and serve

as parables and sources of devotion for Hindus. The Mahabharata is the world's longest epic in verse, running to more than 2,000,000 lines.

The epics themselves are set in different Yugas, or periods of time. The Ramayana, written by the Maharshi Valmiki, describes the life and times of Lord Rama (the seventh avatar of Lord Vishnu) and occurs in the Treta Yuga. The Mahabharata, describing the life and times of the Pandavas, occurs in the Dvapara Yuga, a period associated with Lord Krishna (the eighth avatar of Lord Vishnu). In total, there are 4 Yugas. These are the Satya or Krita Yuga, the Treta Yuga, the Dvapara Yuga, and the Kali Yuga. The *avatara* concept, however, belongs to the Puranic times, well after the two great epics, though they often refer to pre-epic *Yugas*.

The Puranas deal with stories that are old and do not appear (or fleetingly appear) in the epics. They contain legends and stories about the origins of the world, and the lives and adventures of a wide variety of gods, goddesses, heroes, heroines, and mythological creatures (asuras, danavas, daityas, yakshas, rakshasas, gandharvas, apsaras, kinnaras, kimpurusas etc.). They contain traditions related to ancient kings, seers, incarnations of God (*avatara*) and legends about holy places and rivers. The *Bhagavata Purana* is probably the most read and popular of the Puranas. It chronicles the legends of the god Vishnu and his avatars on earth.

The act of creation was thought of in more than one manner. One of the oldest cosmogonic myth in the Rigveda (RV 10.121) had being come into existence as a cosmic egg, *hiranyagarbha* (a golden egg). The Purusha Sukta (RV 10.90) narrates that all things were made out of the mangled limbs of Purusha, a magnified non-natural man, who was sacrificed by the gods. In the Puranas, Vishnu, in the shape of a boar, plunged into the cosmic waters and brought forth the earth (Bhumi or Prithivi).

The Shatapatha Brahmana says that in the beginning, Prajapati, the first creator or father of all, was alone in the world. He differentiated himself into two beings, husband and wife. The wife, regarding union with her producer as incest, fled from his embraces assuming various animal disguises. The husband pursued in the form of the male of each animal, and from these unions sprang the various species of beasts (Shatapatha Brahmana, xiv. 4, 2). Prajapati was soon replaced with Brahma in the Puranas.

In the Puranas, Brahma the creator was joined in a divine triad with Vishnu and Maheshvara (Shiva), who were the preserver and destroyer, respectively. The universe was created by Brahma, preserved by Vishnu, and destroyed for the next creation by Shiva.

However, the birth of Brahma was attributed to Vishnu in some myths. Brahma was often depicted as sitting on a lotus arising from the navel of Vishnu, who was resting on the cosmic serpent, Ananta (Shesha). In the very beginning Vishnu alone was there. When Vishnu thought about creation, Brahma was created from a lotus that came from his navel.

Hinduism defines fourteen worlds (not to be confused with planets) – seven higher worlds (heavens) and seven lower ones (underworlds). (The earth is considered the lowest of the seven higher worlds.) The higher worlds are the seven *vyahrtis*, viz. *bhu* (meaning Land/Earth), *bhuvas* (meaning Air/atmosphere), *sva* (meaning the Sun, Heaven, World of Gods, The sky, The region of the planets and constellations, Radiance, Epithet of Shiva, Sound, Voice, Tone, Tune, A primary musical sound), "mahas, janas, tapas, and satya (*the*

world that is ruled by Brahma); and the lower ones (the "seven underworlds" or paatalas) are atala, vitala, sutala, rasaataala, talatala, mahaatala, paatala.

All the worlds except the earth are used as temporary places of stay as follows: upon one's death on earth, the god of death (officially called 'Yama Dharma Raajaa' – Yama, the lord of justice) tallies the person's good/bad deeds while on earth and decides if the soul goes to a heaven and/or a hell, for how long, and in what capacity. Some versions of the religion state that good and bad deeds neutralize each other and the soul therefore is born in either a heaven or a hell, but not both, whereas according to another school of thought, the good and bad deeds don't cancel out each other. In either case, the soul acquires a body as appropriate to the worlds it enters. At the end of the soul's time in those worlds, it returns to the earth (is reborn as a life form on the earth). It is considered that only from the earth, and only after a human life, can the soul reach supreme salvation, the state free from the cycle of birth and death, a state of absolute and eternal bliss.

The nature of time

According to Hindu system, the cosmos passes through cycles within cycles for all eternity. The basic cycle is the *kalpa*, a "day of Brahma", or 4,320 Billion earthly years. His night is of equal length. 360 such days and nights constitute a "year of Brahma" and his life is 100 such years long. The largest cycle is therefore 311, 040,000 Billion years long, after which the whole universe returns to the ineffable world-spirit, until another creator god is evolved .

In each cosmic day the god creates the universe and again absorbs it. During the cosmic night he sleeps, and the whole universe is gathered up into his body, where it remains as a potentiality. Within each kalpa are fourteen manvantaras, or secondary cycles, each lasting 306,720,000 years, with long intervals between them. In these periods the world is recreated, and a new Manu appears, as the progenitor of the human race. We are now in the seventh manvantara of the kalpa, of which the Manu is known as Manu Vaivasvata.

Each manvantara contains 71 Mahayugas, or aeons, of which a thousand form the kalpa. Each mahayuga is in turn divided into four yugas or ages, called Krita , Treta, Dvapara and Kali. Their lengths are respectively 4800, 3600, 2400 and 1200 "years of the gods," each of which equals 360 human years. Each yuga represents a progressive decline in piety, morality, strength, stature, longevity and happiness. We are at present in the Kali-yuga, which began, according to tradition, in 3102 BCE, believed to be the year of the Mahabharata War. The end of the Kali-yuga is marked by confusion of classes, the overthrow of the established standards, the cessation of all religious rites, and the rule of cruel and alien kings.

Soon after this the world is destroyed by flood and fire. Most medieval texts state that the cosmic dissolution occurs only after the last cycle of the kalpa, and that the transition from one aeon to the next takes place rapidly and calmly.

Conclusion: In this unit we understand different literary theories like Modernism, Use of Myth, Social Realism, Realism and Absurd Drama and their relevance in understanding literary texts. This unit help you to understand in a better manner the prescribed texts in your study.

6.4 COMPREHENSION CHECK QUESTIONS

1. Write a note on Modernism and its impact on literature, illustrating your answer with reference to the topic prescribed for your study.
2. What is your assessment of Myth and its use in Indian literature? Illustrate your answer.
3. Discuss in detail the different literary theories and their common features.
4. Write a critical analysis on “Drama/Novel for Social purpose”.
5. Discuss the statement “India as land of Multi-language literatures with pan India characteristics.” with reference to your prescribed works.

6.5. REFERENCES

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Dr.P.V.N.D Mahesh

LESSON 7

GURRAM JOSHUA: THE GRAVEYARD

OBJECTIVES

After going through the poem, you will be able to:

- Understand about the life and works of Gurram Joshua in Indian Writing in English translation
- Understand the bad effects of social evils practiced in the society.
- Understand the universal leveler “Death” and its impact.

STRUCTURE

- 7.1. Introduction
- 7.2 . Poem – The Graveyard
- 7.3. Life and important works of Joshua
- 7.4. Summary
- 7.5. Conclusion
- 7.6. Comprehension Check Questions
- 7.7. References

The principal objective of the Poem is to enable the students to comprehend the idea that Indian Writing in English translation is a separate entity under English Literature; and that English language though Western in origin, is indigenous in usage in India and one can understand that significant work is done in Indian English translations by reading the works of Gurram Joshua in translation.

7.1 INTRODUCTION

Gurram Joshuva (Joshua, 1895 – 1917) a well known modern Telugu poet was born in Guntur district. He worked as Telugu Pundit in numerous high schools in Andhra Pradesh. He had an outlook transcending the barriers of caste and creed. His works *Piradousi*, *Gabbilam*, *Muntaj Mahal* and *Musaphirulu* are famous. Andhra University awarded him the title ‘Kalaprapurna’ (1969). He got the Padma Bhushan in 1970. *Smasanavati* (The Graveyard) is an elegy highlighting the temporary nature of human glory brought home to the poet by the special situation of the graveyard.

7.2 THE GRAVEYARD (AN ELEGY) TEXT

- GURRAM JOSHUA

*Years 've passed; yet of those helpless myriad
None has risen from this funeral ground.
Alas! Is this stupor an everlasting one?
Many a woe – beg one mother had bemoaned her loss
And made the marble hot with her tears.*

Dark clouds are gathering menacingly,

*Hooting owls are fighting with ghosts.
The night-birds close in from around
But not a leaf stirs what a secluded spot!*

*The bard's sweet pen to ashes was reduced
Scepter and crown have gone beyond recall.
Into the waters of the Ganges was thrown
The sacred string of a woman new-wed.
Here was lost, once and for ever,
The swift moving brush of a renowned artist.*

*This is the dreaded stage where presides
The god of death with his awful spirits,
This is the thrown of ashes wherein sit
Death's minions frowning furiously on the earth.*

*Like a glowing firefly flickers a lamp
From that new grave amidst the gathering gloom;
It burns on though the oil ran out.
Is it an earthen cresset?
No, it's the flutter of some bereaved mother's bosom
Lingering there in anguish still.*

*Pens of poets and voices of singers
Can hardly help visiting these green regions;
Mortal remains of mighty poets
Of the line of Kalidas and Bharavi
Have mingled with the clay of potter's wheel.*

*Our hearts melt away
When we look on those little graves.
What tender cheeks are consumed by dust,
What darling kisses lost in sleep eternal?
What flames of grief rage in the mother's heart,
What great arts and promising lore
Lie here languishing nipped in the bud?*

*Here is no place for distinctions, no high and low,
No room for touch-me-nots;
Here's the leveller annulling all differences
That thrive in the masquerade of life.*

*Here are rocked alike in a single cradle
Both the wild tiger and the mild lamb*

*Here beside the glistening marble mausoleum
Reigns supreme the Spirit of one
Who rolled in untold wealth;
There lies the neglected corpse in rags
Of someone swallowed by the scorching flames – Translated by Malli priya.*

7.3 LIFE AND IMPORTANT WORKS OF JOSHUA

Joshua was born on Sep 28th 1895 on a Saturday, was born in Vinukonda, to Veeraiah and Lingamamba. He was influenced by the intensity in his poetry, even as a child. He was deeply disturbed by the pangs of suffering discrimination and grim poverty then when he was a child. As a small child, he was pained by discrimination due to caste in the Indian society.

He resisted this irrational caste practices. He declared that life itself is a great teacher. Poverty and caste discrimination are the two lessons he taught. If poverty taught him patience and endurance to survive, discrimination due to caste made him to revolt against it. He decided to go beyond these depilating forces to establish the dignity of the human self through the medium of poetry. Without hatred or ill-will for him poetry is a form of 'reforming' and creating a mode just and humane society. He revolted against obscurantism.

His poetic journey combined with Sri. Late Deepala Pichalasastry, to write poetry. His poetry journey is not without difficulties. His imagination is broadly divided into three categories. They are i. Poems ii. Prose iii. Plays. His poems include *The Bate*, *The Refugee*, *The Traveler* and most famously the poems like: "*Firadousi*", "*Tajmahal*", his prose works include (*Kusalavo Pakyanamu*) while plays include, "*Rukmini Kalyanam*", "*Meerabai*" among others.

His poetic excellence was widely rewarded with many honors and titles. They include Kavikokila in 1936; Kavita visarada in 1933; Kalaprapoora in 1970; Padmabhushan in 1970. he is also given the title, "Kavi Diggaja – Navayuga Chakravathi (in 1947) and Viswakavi Samrat (in 1969) and Madhura Srinath (in 1952). His other significant achievements include the central Sahitya Akademi award. He was honored by the Guntur Municipality on elephant *Ambaree* in 1969. He was a member of the legislative council in 1964.

His popular poem called, *The Bat* received widespread acclaimed for its emotional intensity and profound universal outlook. According to the poet himself, he wrote this poem keeping in mind the famous of Kalidasa called, "*Meghasandesam*". Unlike in Kalidasa's the poem marbles in sending message to God, describing injustice and exploitation, due to perpetuation of the irrational caste system in our society. Out of the 117 poems, first 40 poems reflect the angst and anger of the poet towards the social injustice, because of the problem of untouchability; these poems describe the tragedy of oppressed people and the remaining poems provide a kind of telescopic view of the society, economic, geographical and other aspects of India, through the process of journey. Perhaps, the two main themes of this poem are patriotism and revolt against all forms of discrimination in society. "*Firadausi*" affirms that faith of Joshua in the creativity as a sublime form of human activity. In this

poem, the plight of Firadausi, a Parsee poet in the royal court of Ghazni Mohammed is described.

Firadausi, is not being suitably rewarded by the Mughal emperor become unhappy and was made to flee the country for saving life. This moving poem describes how brutal and insensitive regal authority does not realize the greatness and sublimity of art.

Joshua's other famous poem called "*Mumtaz Mahal*". This poem reflects the poet's ecstasy and devotion to the cause of love. Modeled on an imaginary picture of a supposedly insane person, of a construction in memory of his wife, the Moghal Emperor Shahjahan built this monumental symbol of love. Here, Joshua, through this symbolic replica of Mumtaz Mahal, evokes the finer sentiments of true and devoted companionship becomes wife and husband. Joshua's other important work called, "History of Christ" (Kreesthu Charitra) is based on many stories on the life and messages of Jesus Christ, the Savior. Thus, in these important and representative works, of high quality besides other forms of imaginative craftsmanship has excelled in his vision of a just tolerant and egalitarian society. His ideal is humanism, without discrimination of any kind or form or means.

7.4 SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS OF THE POEM *THE GRAVEYARD* – GURRAM JOSHUA

In this poem compassion is very important, deep love of humanity pervades in his poetry. This poem is an Elegy describing the temporary nature of human existence. All forms of glory and triumphs as well as sorrows are only transitory moments in the passage of time.

This poem, with possible echoes of the poem "An Elegy Written in Country Churchyard" by Thomas Gray, is elegiac in its tone and mood. The poem in its somber quality is meditative, without being sentimental about the "history" of man and his "glorious" civilization.

The poem, broad in its scope and range, describes all forms of human existence, the poor and the rich, the saint and the sinner, the knowledgeable and the ignorant, the poets and the ordinary. Within these contrasting images of human life and desire for excellence, Time is eternal and unfaltering. If everything that is born in this world is bound to die, only Time as an invisible overseer forever exists for its own sake. All our agonizing subjective moments disappear into the world of eternal objective reality that is "Time". Here, Joshua is neither apologetic nor sorrowful about this inevitable passage of Time from the "Temporal" to the "Eternal". His images are natural, even as the symbols are rendered with a restrained order.

Deeply interested in the pleasure and in fulfillment of life moments one may be subjective, yet the poet is objective and well orchestrated in his classical restraint. There is enough grandeur in his portrayal of human life, as his vision is not "nihilistic". Life is grand and sublime, though it is made temporary due to the fatal action of death. Death may become the ultimate destiny of life: yet, life, with all its hopes and aspirations and triumphs is a grand memory, never to be destroyed by the fatal action of Death. Thus, here, Joshua is not glorifying the destructive nature of Death, as he is only suggesting that the spirit of human endeavor and triumphs and adventure live beyond the destructive action of Death.

With its close similarities in its setting and mood to Gray's Elegy, Joshua's poem provides the ambience for the meditation of the nature and consequences of Death in human

life. The theme of the poem, as mentioned earlier, is how the glorious qualities of human life are sought to be destroyed by the fatalistic action of Death. Death is not the destroyer of human spirit of adventure, as it is only a phase or a stage, where this life as a phenomenon ends.

Here, Joshua, employing a series of sublime images, describes life in all its plurality of purposes and diversity of situations. As the human contexts are vary, so also the evocative images show a richness and variety. Obviously, it is the author's bemoaning voice that provides the controlling medium. The first two stanzas evoke this world of eerie silence and the cold emotions of Death. Death is the everlasting stupor-it is a mysterious and unknown dark world. Engulfed in this world of cold Death, limitless humanity, such as a "woe be gone mother, tears of sorrow have filled this atmosphere". In this world of Death, frozen silence and dark clouds of loss and misery and separation and longing for the lost, the atmosphere betrays a world of emptiness and vacant feelings. Here, the supernatural and the dark, with a mixture of fear and apprehension are evoked through "hooting owls and ghosts". The loneliness is grim and fearful. It is "a secluded spot", severed from an unknown birth and the prospective life beyond. It is a thoughtless condition, where nature and human self, alike, are united in a moment of isolation. It is a moment of the unknown. It is a state of mind considering of a mixture of emotions-fear, loss, mystery and sorrow of separation.

Here, the mind's emotions are drained leading to a kind of thoughtless silence. After thus evoking the world of the dark and the mysterious, Joshua ekes out wonderful pictures of denied human glory. The poet's imagination as well as the regal authority is reduced to its ephemeral significance- "into the waters of the Ganges was thrown". In a tragic juxtaposition, the poem evokes images of a tragedy of a window as well as the futility of the artist's life; here the words "once and forever" and "swift" define the decisive irrevocable nature of Death. In a more somber mood, as the poem gravitates in its tragic intensity, Death is dramatized, with all its stark images of ashes. In this graveyard, Death's presence is universal with its "minion's frowning furiously on the Earth". In a gripping image, the poem evokes the sorrow of "flutter of some bereaved mother's bosom". Perhaps, similar to Gray, Joshua also evokes the images of the superior destiny of Death as it remorselessly destroys all that is glorious and sublime- "mortal remains of mighty poets" like Kalidasa and Bharavi have "mingled with the clay of potter's wheel", as Death is a universal leveler.

The poet as a sort of an involved outsider touches upon the cords of separated love in humanity in this "eternal sleep" called Death. Here, we have empathy between the poet and the universal humanity in their moments of Death. All glories or all distinctions, the "high" and the "low" are subsumed in this experience of Death, the tyrant and meek are subsumed- in this cradle of Death- "both the wild tiger and the mild lamb" die similarly. Finally, it is an irony of life that Death not only destroys all forms of existences as the world also "ignores that departed soul" once a human being passes away. Joshua tells us, "Even the Grave ignores that departed soul".

Thus, this poem shows the poet's use of irony at every level and in every aspect of the poem. Thematically, it is ironic that we as human beings believe that we live forever and show attachment to life, even as we know that this life is temporary. Perhaps, greater irony is that in the court of justice of Death, contraries of rich and poor, the rich "with untold wealth and "the neglected corpse in rags of penurious pangs of hunger" co-exist in a simultaneous moment. What is great, after all, finally, is Death the greater leveler, which hides the bodies of the deceased "beside the glistening marble mausoleum".

The atmosphere at the graveyard is dishearteningly gloomy. Dark clouds are hovering threateningly. The hooting owls create a ruckus with the haunting spirits. The shrieks of the night birds, ravens are piercing the silence all over. No other movement is there; not even the stir of leaf! No wonder, if heart shudders in that secluded spot!

In the third stanza, the poet expresses his dismay: however great a person may be he meets his doom in the graveyard; he may be a renowned poet or a singer; he may be a formidable sovereign; he may be famous painter; whoever he is, whatever his status is, he is destined to be reduced to ashes in the graveyard. It is the place where the auspicious thread of a newly married woman is thrown down the drain.

The poet says that graveyard is the ‘stage’ for the *Destroyer Rudra* (who views with the third eye on his forehead) to play with His awesome minions. (In the acronym GOD, D-for destroyer; G-for generator; O-for ordainer) graveyard is the platform for the presiding Deity where He adores the throne of ashes, casting His fiery looks.

It is a deep dark gloomy night. Like a glowing fire fly, on a fresh grave there flickers a lamp though oil is exhausted. It is only suspicion. The poet rules it out; he identifies it as the flutter of the burning heart of a bereaved mother.

Graveyard is the place where pens of poets have gone dry and voices of singers mute. Mortal remains of the unparalleled poets like *Kalidasa and Bharavi* have been reduced to minute particles to mingle in the clay of the potter’s wheel. The poet bemoans the untimely laws of the tender lives lost in dust. He wonders what spark of life exists in whose womb. He bewails what arts yet to flourish are nipped in the bud.

The poet in the last two stanzas refers to one of the then social evils *untouchability*. Graveyard offers consolation in this regard. *Untouchability* has no room in the graveyard. There is no place for distinctions of any kind; the high and low, the tyrant and the meek – all are subsumed in the same way. Graveyard is the leveler that annuls all differences. It rocks the dreadful (wild) tiger and the docile (mild) lamb in the same cradle and lulls them to sleep relieving them of their mundane existence. The soul departed body once rolled in untold wealth, now lies in the grave yard in a marble mausoleum. Nevertheless, after the departure of the soul, another body swallowed by scorching flames of penurious pangs of hunger too lies there in rags next to the mausoleum. None is there to shed tears for him.

7.5 CONCLUSION

Thus, the poet, balancing the elements of pathos, silence, and empathy, evokes ‘Death’. There is a consummate finesse in the last stanza when he says, “Even the grave ignores that departed soul”! Thus, in this poem, elegiac in nature, Joshua, in a perfect balance of the elements of pathos, silence and empathy evokes the meaning of Death in human life, in any case, without missing the ironic and self-preserving detachment. He is an involved outsider to all the processes of life. There is a consummate finesse in the last stanza, when he says, “even the grave ignores the departed soul”---This is life. We, too, continue to live as if there is no death and all our vanities and glories are forever. This is ironic meaning of the poem.

7.6 COMPREHENSION CHECK QUESTIONS

1. Write a note on Gurrām Joshua a social reformer, illustrating your answer with reference to the poem prescribed for your study.
2. What is your assessment of Gurrām Joshua place among Indian poets? Illustrate your answer.
3. Discuss in detail the theme of “Loss” in *The Graveyard*.
4. Write a critical appreciation of the poem *The Graveyard*.
5. Discuss Gurrām Joshua as a social reformer with reference to his works.

7.7 REFERENCES

- 1) Joshua, Gurrām. *Contemporary Indian Poetry*. Sahitya Akademy, New Delhi: 1997.
- 2) Mallipriya, M. *Indian Poetry: A Critical Perspective*. Creative Books, New Delhi, 2009.

Dr. M.Suresh Kumar

LESSON 8
MY POESY & THE NIGHT THAT SHOWERED AMBROSIA
- DEVARAKONDA BALAGANGADHARA TILAK

OBJECTIVES

After going through the poem, you will be able to:

- Understand about the life and works of Balagangadhar Tilak in Indian Writing in English translation
- Understand the bad effects of social evils practiced in the society.
- Understand the colonialism and its impact.
- Understand the poet's humanism and belief in the capacity of humans.

STRUCTURE

- 8.1. Learning objectives
- 8.2. Life and important works of Devarakonda Balagangadhara Tilak
- 8.3. Text of the poems
- 8.4. Summary and Interpretations
- 8.5. Conclusion
- 8.6. Comprehension questions
- 8.7. References

8.1. OBJECTIVE OF THE LESSON

The principal objective of the Poems is to enable the students to comprehend the idea that Indian Writing in English translation is a separate entity under English Literature; and that English language though Western in origin, is indigenous in usage in India and one can understand that significant work is done in Indian English translations by reading the works of Gurram Joshua in translation.

8.2. INTRODUCTION OF THE POET

Devarakonda Balagangadhara Tilak (21 August 1921 – 1966) was an influential Telugu poet, novelist and short story writer. Initially his poetry, as in his first anthology, *Prabhatamu-Sandhya* (1945), was written in the romantic vein popular in Indian poetry of the early and mid-20th century. He is best known for his posthumous collection of poems *Amrutham Kurisina ratri*, ("The Night that showered Ambrosia") published in 1969.

This book won the Andhra Pradesh state Sahitaya Academy Award and Central Government Sahitaya Akademy Award in 1970. The volume has been called a "milestone in modern Telugu" by Sisir Kumar Das, who added, "But for him, 'verse libre' or 'prose poetry' could not have gained so much of popularity."

8.3 MY POESY (TEXT OF THE POEM)

My poesy's not philosophy
Nor Psychology as you say

Nor capitalism nor socialism
 Nor confusion nor autumnation
 My Poesy's
 The moon – lit seas of glassy waves
 The jasmine flavoured scented lamps
 The gem-studded pillars of magic worlds
 The beautiful strange wonders of my sandal verse-abode
 The kites fallen deep into the pit out of utter agony
 The steel nerves of just warriors
 The power of sacrifice, harmony of love, word of peace
 The scintillating sounds of my poetic-sword
 My letters're the doves of mercy drenched
 in shadows of tears
 My letters're the victorious Iravatams
 that peoples' powers possess
 My letters're the beautiful belles playing
 under the moon – lit sky.

Original text in Telugu.

నా కవిత్యం కాదొక తత్వం
 మరికాదు మీరనే మనస్తత్వం
 కాదు ధనికవాదం, సామ్యవాదం
 కాదయ్యా అయోమయం, జరామయం.

గాజు కెరటాల వెన్నెల సముద్రాలూ
 జాజిపువ్వుల అత్తరు దీపాలూ
 మంత్ర లోకపు మణి స్తంభాలూ
 నా కవితా చందనశాలా సుందర చిత్ర విచిత్రాలు.

అగాధ బాధా పాథః పతంగాలూ
 ధర్మవీరుల కృత రక్తనాళాలూ
 త్యాగశక్తి ప్రేమరక్తి శాంతిసూక్తి
 నా కళా కరవాల ధగద్ధగ రవాలు

నా అక్షరాలు కన్నీటి జడులలో తడిసే దయాపారావతాలు
 నా అక్షరాలు ప్రజాశక్తుల వహించే విజయఐరావతాలు
 నా అక్షరాలు వెన్నెలలో ఆడుకునే అందమైన ఆడపిల్లలు.

- బాల గంగాధర తిలక్.

The Night that Showered Ambrosia (Text of the poem)

During the night that showered ambrosia
All're sleeping
But I
Opening the door, leaving the house
Went somewhere far off
Crossing the hill and dale
On to the moon – lit plains
And stood there

Up above the sky the angelic beauties're
Running in full array
With the tingling of star-studded anklets
With the dangling of parijatams in bunches
From the tufts of hair
Like bows of youth they're bending down to earth
Wearing the crown of Laden with their breasts and bums

Seeing me again and again
With the peals of laughter
They said
“Look at him
A handsome fellow
A delight – incarnate
dreamy silken frills

Composing a musical poem of brightness at the side long looks
Harping the strings of glazing smiles on the red rosy lips
Conquering the mysteries of Nature unfolded to anybody
A lover of life, a knowledgeable guy of living
Is now like the rising sun from the sea of newly fancied colours.

He's our only lover, our man, and our groom".
At that ecstatic moment
Rained pitter patter
Flowed Ambrosia – drizzle slowly by
With cupped hands I drank fully
And returned.

I bade adieu to sorrow and death
Covered with the sweet ambitious drapes of Kashmir
Bore life like the garland of smiling mandarams
And stepped my first foot on the path of victorious journey

The night that showered ambrosia
All're sleeping in oblivion

Fully tired and wearied by day to day activities
Embraced habituality and deprived freedom
By withdrawing their inner-shelves out of disappointment
Unable to listen to the invitation of infinite consciousness
Alas!
Nobody knows till today
That I'm immortal.

8.4. SUMMARY AND INTERPRETATIONS

Tilak was awarded the "Sahitya Academy award" in 1970 for his posthumously published collection of poems *Amrutham Kurisina Ratri*, published in 1969. The volume was called a "milestone in modern Telugu" by Sisir Kumar Das, who added, "But for him, 'verse libre' or 'prose poetry' could not have gained so much of popularity." His short stories include "Sundari-SubbaRavu", "Vuri Chivara Illu" and "Tilak Kadhalu". His stories were influenced by Maxim Gorky and Rabindranath Tagore.

He was the one who popularized the genre of "prose poetry" which is very simple to understand even by a layman. He is the one who inspired hundreds of poets to follow his way of expression. In these poems, he desired that Man should be in connection with the Nature and enjoy the Nature and should appreciate the beauty of Nature and be a lover of Life. He must be a positive man. He must wear the garland of smiling. He need not bother about sorrow and death which are unavoidable things in life. He should not be wearied and tired by the routine activities of life. He should come out of the shelf of disappointment and be a member of bliss and Happiness incarnated. If he has these qualities everyone greet him with bunch of flowers. He must be a lover of Music and music of life. He is always on the path of victory if he believes on humanity.

8.5 CONCLUSION

Thus, the poet, balancing the elements of pathos, silence, and empathy, evokes 'Life'. There is a consummate finesse in the last stanza when he says, "Nobody knows till today That I'm immortal"! Thus, in this poem, joy in nature, Tilak, in a perfect balance of the elements of romance, silence and happiness evokes the "meaning of Life" in human life, in any case, without missing the ironic and self-preserving detachment. He is an involved outsider to all the processes of life. There is a consummate finesse in the last stanza, when he says, "

By withdrawing their inner-shelves out of disappointment
Unable to listen to the invitation of infinite consciousness

"---This is life. We, too, continue to live as if there is no death and all our vanities and glories are forever. One can achieve victory in life only shedding one's disappointments. This is ironic meaning of the poem.

8.6 COMPREHENSION CHECK QUESTIONS

1. Write a note on Balagangadhara Tilak as a social reformer, illustrating your answer with reference to the poem prescribed for your study.
2. What is your assessment of Balagangadhara Tilak place among Indian poets? Illustrate your answer.
3. Discuss in detail the theme of “Life and its bliss” in the poem **The night that showered Ambrosia**
4. Write a critical appreciation of the poem *My poesy*
5. Discuss Balagangadhara Tilak as a patriot with reference to his works.

8.7 REFERENCES

- 1) Devarakonda Balgangadhara Tilak, *Amrutam kurisina Ratri*, Visalandhra publishers, Vijayawada:2011
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Dr. M.Suresh Kumar

LESSON 9

SUBRAMANYA BHARATHI: (A) DECEPTION? TRUTH & (B) PHOENIX (BHARAT DYING, AND RESURGENT BHARAT)

OBJECTIVES

After going through the poem, you will be able to:

- Understand about the life and works of Subramanya Bharati in Indian Writing in English translation
- Understand the bad effects of social evils practiced in the society.
- Understand the colonialism and its impact.
- Understand the poet's Patriotism and belief in the capacity of Indians.

STRUCTURE

- 9.1. Introduction
- 9.2. Poems – Deception? Truth & Phoenix.
- 9.3 Life and important works of Subramanya Bharathi
- 9.4 Summary
- 9.5. Conclusion
- 9.6 Comprehension Check Questions
- 9.7 References

The principal objective of the Poems is to enable the students to comprehend the idea that Indian Writing in English translation is a separate entity under English Literature; and that English language though Western in origin, is indigenous in usage in India and one can understand that significant work is done in Indian English translations by reading the works of Gurrām Joshua in translation.

9.1. INTRODUCTION OF THE POET

Chinnaswami Subramania Bharatiyar (11 December 1882 – 11 September 1921) was an Indian writer, poet, journalist, Indian independent activist and social reformer from Tamil Nadu, India. Popularly known as "Mahakavi Bharatiyar", he is a pioneer of modern Tamil poetry and is considered one among the greatest of Tamil literary figures of all time. His numerous works were fiery songs kindling patriotism and nationalism during Indian independence movement.

Born in Ettayapuram of the then Tirunelveli district (presently Tuticorin district) in 1882, Subramania Bharati had his early education in Tirunelveli and Benares and worked as a journalist with many newspapers, notable among them being the *Swadesamitran* and *India*.

Bharati was also an active member of the Indian National Congress. Bharathi's works were on varied themes covering religious, political and social aspects. Songs penned by Bharati are widely used in Tamil films and Carnatic Music concerts. Subramanya Bharathi was born of humble parents in 1882. The precocity of Subhramanya was evident in his boyhood days. When at the age of 11 years he composed a poem in Tamil and recited it

before an assembly of scholars at the Ettayapuram palace. The Maharaja was immensely pleased and conferred on him the title BHARATHI.

Subhramanya Bharathi passed his matriculation examination at Banaras Hindu University where he learnt Sanskrit and Hindi. He has the fiery spirit of a reformist whose poetry shock even the most lethargic and the indifferent. He has the divine mission of bringing about a new order in the society. His blazing words of anger, his words of soothing coolness, his words of pity and his words of sagacity are his weapons with which he tames the wicked, melts the stony hearts of the merciless, and consoles the hapless. He edited *India and Bala Bharatham* through which he propagated the ideals of patriotism. Bharati is considered as one of the pioneers of modern Tamil literature. Bharati used simple words and rhythms, unlike his previous century works in Tamil, which had complex vocabulary. He also employed novel ideas and techniques in his devotional poems. He used a metre called *Nondi Chindu* in most of his works, which was earlier used by Gopalakrishna Bharathiyar.

He who forgets not God and fails not in his duty, no matter whatever befalls him and however much he suffers, will at the end attain honour and happiness.

Bharati's poetry expressed a progressive, reformist ideal. His imagery and the vigour of his verse were a forerunner to modern Tamil poetry in different aspects. He was the forerunner of a forceful kind of poetry that combined classical and contemporary elements.

He had a prodigious output penning thousands of verses on diverse topics like Indian Nationalism, love songs, children's songs, songs of nature, glory of the Tamil language, and odes to prominent freedom fighters of India like Tilak, Gandhi and Lajpat Rai. He even penned an ode to New Russia and Belgium. His poetry not only includes works on Hindu deities like Shakti, Kali, Vinayagar, Murugan, Sivan, Kannan (Krishna), but also on other religious gods like Allah and Jesus. His insightful similies have been read by millions of Tamil readers. He was well-versed in various languages and translated speeches of Indian National reform leaders like Aurabindo, Bala Gangadar Tilak and Swami Vivekananda.

He was badly affected by the imprisonments and by 1920, when a General Amnesty Order finally removed restrictions on his movements, Bharati was already struggling. He was struck by an elephant named Lavanya at Parthasarathy temple, Triplicane, Chennai, whom he used to feed regularly. Although he survived the incident, a few months later his health deteriorated and he died on 12 September 1921 early morning around 1 am. Though Bharati was considered a people's poet, a great nationalist, outstanding freedom fighter and social visionary, it was recorded that there were only 14 people to attend his funeral. He delivered his last speech at Karungalpalayam Library in Erode, which was about the topic *Man is Immortal*. The last years of his life were spent in a house in Triplicane, Chennai. The house was bought and renovated by the Government of Tamil Nadu in 1993 and named Bharati Illam (Home of Bharati)

9.2. TEXT OF THE PRESCRIBED POEMS

(a) DECEPTION? TRUTH - Subramanya Bharathi

What stands, walks, flies –
are such phenomena
only dreams,

illusions?
What we hear, learn, think –
must we dismiss them
as vain fancies,
airy nothings?
Skies, sunlight, trees –
are they all
a mirage, or
a falsehood?

Since the past is past,
as dead reverie,
am I a dream too
and the world a lie?

Time's unending flow,
and scenic memories,
the beauty – all false?
and nature itself!

Since the mighty forest tree
grows out of a seed,
are gardens
not real?

If what's seen vanishes,
What's unseen reappears.
It is no idle lie
Decreed by fate.
What we see is reality
What's unseen is unsure.
What's seen is shakti.
World – Existence is deathless.

(b) PHOENIX (Bharat dying, and resurgent Bharat)

I
Thou weak shouldered manikin, away, away,
Thou with the shrunken heart, away, away,
Thou of expressionless face, away, away,
Thou with lack-lustre eyes, away, away,

Thou whose voice has lost its ring, away, away,
Thou whose skin has lost its shine, away, away,
Thou frightened chicken-heart, away, away,
Thou slave forever, away, away,

Wouldst thou live degraded here,
A dog's life? away, away!
Afraid of auspicious speech? Away, away!

Shameless beggar, away, away!

Wouldst thou deem us truth, and extol
All yesterdays' lies? Away, away!
Wouldst thou deludedly brand as a lie
The triumphant truth? Away, away!
You'd learn, not the mother's speech,
But divers languages strange: away, away!
You'd talk of a hundred works, not
Profit from one true book! Away, away.

Debatest thou, advancing the casuist's
Five hundred arguments? Away, away.
Buildest thou mire-sunk toy-houses,
Reeking of filth? Away, away.

Dost thou prate of a hundred castes,
Yet fail in the duties of any? Away, away.
Dost thou quote a hundred laws,
Yet bow your hams for a pie? Away, away.

Thou purveyor of evil who recoilest
When the blow returns, Away, away.
Thou the gathered filth that obscures
Our rarest gem, away, away.

II

Come, come thou with the shining eyes,
Come, come thou with the steely heart;
Come, come thou with the honeyed speech,
Come, broad-shoulder Titan, come!

Come, come with a crystalline mind,
Come, come to purge meanness here;
Come, come to commiserate the poor,
Come, thou with the plough-gate, come.

Come, come to honour writings pure,
As the only scriptures true;
Come, thou hater of lies
To checkmate to falsehoods wiles.

Come, come with auspicious thoughts ,
Come, come with blameless limbs;
Come, come to inhabit our land
And end the ancient curse.

Come, thou of Bharat resurgent, come,
Come, thou unequalled in prowess, come;
Come, come as the Sun that rises

Over a darkened land.
Come, come thou with victory in your grasp
Come, come thou modest in speech;
Come, thou full-grown to manhood, come,
Come, thou of immaculate face, come.

Come, come thou and translate thought into deed,
Come, come thou whose will is equal to desire;
Come, come take up the Herculean task
Of forging the unity of our land.

9.3. LIFE AND IMPORTANT WORKS OF SUBRAMANYA BHARATHI

Subhramanya Bharathi was a fervent patriotic poet. His patriotism drew him to politics and national leaders. It was during the days of his intense political activity that his patriotic poems like Phoenix torrentially flowed out. He strove with his poetry to pave way for the emergence of a united India. Like *Swamy Vivekananda*, he pins his hopes on the youth who are ultimately responsible for the re-emergence of India to its past glory. Like a Phoenix a legendary magic from its ashes, India leading a dog's life like a shameless beggar under the foreign yoke should die only to emerge like a broad shouldered Titan with the lion-gait, unequalled in prowess to checkmate false hook's wiles and to witness the restoration of the lost glories. It needs a defiance and I find that very inspirational, to look at one's own life from afar. The poem written and composed by him, which is presented below, express about his character and personality:

"Did you think I too will
Spend my days in mundane search of food,
Telling petty tales and gossips,
Worrying myself with unwanted thoughts,
Hurting others by my selfish acts,
Turn senile old man with grey hair
To end up as fodder to the
relentless march of timeless Death,
As yet another faceless man???"

He is perturbed about the meanness and perversity of man. He denounces the savage attitude of the staunch traditionalists who discriminate man from man on the basis of his birth and up-bringing; He thunders;

Do you prate a hundred castes,
Yet fail in the duties of any? Away, away.

Bharathi dreams of an India without any social evils that inhibit the growth of the country. He dreams of a condition of absolute righteousness and prosperity. Throughout his life he dreamed of his countrymen's welfare. Let us observe one of his poems on mother India.

Mother (Mother India)
I surrender at thy feet, mother. I surrender at thy feet.

This self that desires gold and status and fame,
to stop it from being consumed by worries,
I surrender at thy feet, mother. I surrender at thy feet.

Pettiness and fear are engulfing my heart.
Pleading with you to slay them,
I surrender at thy feet, mother. I surrender at they feet.

Not grieving anymore thinking about my tasks,
To be content with doing your tasks,
I surrender at thy feet, mother. I surrender at they feet.

(There shall be)
No more Sorrow. No exhaustion.
No exhaustion. No defeat.
The distinction of good and evil,
is not known to us (It is for you to tell us)
Cultivating ethics by way of love,
(you should) establish good and chase away evil.

I surrender at thy feet, mother. I surrender at thy feet.

His devotion to God transcends the symbolic rituals which are but an external showy manifestation. He literally drinks of the bliss arising out of an inward communion with God. He bursts out in soulful rapture.

‘O thou, white river of bliss,
Soul of being and its only light ...

He takes truth as his pole star to guide him in darkness of ignorance. Truth is his goddess of light, *Sarasvathi* the presiding deity of all knowledge and learning. She is the concert of the four faced *Lord Brahma* the Generator. He calls her the mother of Liberty; he believes that she is his strength, with which we can fight evil spirits and spiteful persons.

Subhramanya Bharathi’s songs on *Sakti* have a special charm and are loaded with his devotion and dedication. He has a fascination for *Mahakali*.

9.4. SUMMARY OF THE POEMS

(a) PHOENIX

Subhramanya Bharathi in this poem, “Phoenix” describes the reascent Bharat. For him, India is not an idea, as for him Bharat symbolizes the spirit and mood of the people of this country. It is a poem, full of poetic energy. He describes the march of reascent India in series of brilliant images. In the first part, he describes Bharat in a negative connotation: it is weak – shouldered, it has a weak heart with expressionless face. It has a frightened chicken-heart. It has the mind of a slave. It is a degraded, dog’s life, afraid of auspicious speech. It is a shameless beggar. It denies all forms and means of truth. It accepts yesterday’s lies. It brands a lie as the triumphant truth. It is guilty of “human castes”. It is a “purveyor of evil”; which obscures the rarest gems.

In opposition to these stark images of deficiency and dearth, the second part evokes the glorious images of the renaissance India. It has “shining eyes” and steely heart, “with the honeyed speech”. It has strength as it is like the broad shouldered Titan. It has a shining crystalline mind without meanness. It has purity and brightness. It honours all the good writings. It hates lies. It does not uphold falsehood. It is unequalled in its process. It is like a bright sun drives away all the darkness. It shines with an immaculate face. It translates thoughts into deeds. It has the strength of will to reach its desired goal. Its ultimate goal is unity of our land.

Thus in this poem, Bharathi, in translucent images evokes the wonderful image of Bharath. It has the qualities of Shelley’s radiant images and Sri Aurobindo’s quality of using language with an entropic power.

(b) DECEPTION? TRUTH?

In this poem, Subhramanya Bharathi, in the manner of a devotional poem, describes the qualities of the ultimate spirit, Sakti, which is deathless. Everything in this world may be altering and an illusion. All the phenomena are only “dreams and illusions”. All our thoughts and fancies are empty nothings, without any substance. All the altering natural phenomena like skies, sun light and trees are all “a mirage or falsehood”, which means that they are our illusions. Past is a dream; it’s a part of our memory. Time’s manifestations like ephemeral beauties and “scenic memories” are all false. Only the seed is real; its out growth, the seed may be unreal. What we see is unreal; everything vanishes. Everything is decreed by fate.

Thus, what we see is reality. What we see is Sakti. It is world-existence. It is deathless. It is an immortal spirit.

Finally, what is real and unchanging? Only what is seen is Sakti. It is “world existence which is deathless”. “Sakti” is the invisible spirit guiding the universe. It is a supreme example of creativity and power.

9.5. CONCLUSION

Bharathi was a versatile poet, who during his lifetime was never celebrated. Only after his works were nationalised long after his death, people realized what a great man and visionary he was. His poetry is usually known to express progressive and reformist ideals.

Mahakavi Bharathi had been one of the best poets and Inspiration that Tamil language and India has seen. Bravery is one thing, but staying defiant till the end is another. We know that Bharathi lived a life of poverty and misery. He did not have a steady job and was pushed around wherever he went. His financial condition was in tatters for the most part of his life.

What is less known about him is his addiction to narcotics (ganja in his case). People refrain from talking this habit of his. Bharathi is believed to have acquired this habit when he was working for Raja of Ettayapuram. He was not able to escape its clutches till death. And many agree that it was this addiction that caused his untimely death at the age of 39. So for sometime before his death, Bharathi must have known what was coming and to face it without cringing needs more than just bravery.

9.6 COMPREHENSION CHECK QUESTIONS

1. Write a note on Subramanya Bharathi as a patriot mahakavi, illustrating your answer with reference to the poems prescribed for your study.
2. What is your assessment of Subramanya Bharathi place among Indian poets? Illustrate your answer.
3. Discuss in detail the themes of the poems “*Deception/Truth.*”
4. Write a critical appreciation of the poem “*Phoenix*”.
5. Discuss Subramanya Bharathi as a “Poet of Excellence” with reference to his works.

9.7 REFERENCES

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Dr. M.Suresh Kumar

LESSON 10

BADAL SARKAR : EVAM INDRAJIT

OBJECTIVES

After going through the play, you will be able to:

- Understand about the life and works of Badal Sarkar in Indian Writing in English translation
- Understand the bad effects of social evils practiced in the society.
- Understand the features an Absurd drama
- *Evam Indrajit* as an Absurd Drama

STRUCTURE

- 10.1. Introduction of the Writer
 - 10.1.1 Early life and education
 - 10.1.2 Career
 - 10.1.3 Awards and Recognition
- 10.2. Important works of Badal Sarkar
- 10.3. Summary of the play
- 10.4. Parts of the Text – *Evam Indrajit*
- 10.5. *Evam Indrajit – an Absurd play*
- 10.6. Comprehension Check Questions
- 10.7. References

10.1. INTRODUCTION OF THE WRITER

The history of the Indian drama shows that it has always been dependant on the stage for its development. There is a great endeavor hidden behind the outcome of such good and effective drama. The most fortunate instance that could happen in the history of Indian drama is the enthusiasm and enterprise of the regional writers to translate their plays into English and by way of doing so they have paved way for a trend called ‘The National Theatre Movement’. The main proponents of this particular consciousness are Bengali, Kannada, and Marathi writers. Girish Karnad came out with his *Tughlaq* in Kannada, Badal Sircar with his *Evam Indrajit* in Bengali, and Vijay Tendulkar with his *Silence! The court is in Session* in Marathi.

Badal Sircar is an influential Bengali dramatist and theater director in India, mostly known as the modernizer of contemporary Indian theatre. Badal Sircar, Girish Karnad, and Vijay Tendulkar form the trio that contributed enormously to the development of Indian drama in regional languages and in English. He is proponent of the ‘The Theatre’ movement.

Describing his Thira Theatre, Sircar says that first theatre refers to ‘popular folk art’ forms such as Yakshagana; second theatre is ‘Victorian’ basically western theatre; and his own theatre unifies some elements of the other two, besides humanizing its own individual feel.

Sircar frequently throws up the perpetual debate, questioning which is more important-form or content. According to him, 'content is primitive whereas 'form' always follows content. His plays reflect the violence that prevails in the society. They are part of a counter-culture, intending to depict media deception and government untruths. Uncovering patent lies and myths through powerful research, Sircar's plays are proposed to catalyze social change. Natesan Sharda Iyer says: Badal Sircar is against the theatre being a commodity for sale to the audience resulting in the detachment between the player and the spectators being an integral part of the theatre... to him theatre is a live wire and its strength lies in direct communications.

Badal Sircar: (15 July 1925 – 13 May 2011), also known as **Badal Sarkar**, was an influential Indian dramatist and theatre director, most known for his anti-establishment plays during the Naxalite movement in the 1970s and taking theatre out of the proscenium and into public arena, when he founded his own theatre company, *Shatabdi* in 1976. He wrote more than fifty plays of which *Ebong Indrajit*, *Basi Khabar*, and *Saari Raat* are well known literary pieces, a pioneering figure in street theatre as well as in experimental and contemporary Bengali theatre with his egalitarian "Third Theatre", he prolifically wrote scripts for his *Aanganmanch* (courtyard stage) performances, and remains one of the most translated Indian playwrights. Though his early comedies were popular, it was his angst-ridden *Ebong Indrajit (And Indrajit)* that became a landmark play in Indian theatre. His rise as a prominent playwright in 1960s is seen as the coming of age of Modern Indian playwriting in Bengali, just as Vijay Tendulkar did it in Marathi, Mohan Rakesh in Hindi, and Girish Karnad in Kannada. He was awarded the Padma Shri in 1972, Sangeet Natak Akademi Award in 1968 and the Sangeet Natak Akademi Fellowship – Ratna Sadsya, the highest honour in the performing arts by Govt. of India, in 1997.

10.1.1 Early life and education

Badal Sarkar, whose real name was 'Sudhindra Sarkar', was born in Calcutta, India. After transferring from the Scottish Church College, where his father was a history professor, he studied civil engineering at the Bengal Engineering College (now IEST), Shibpur, then affiliated with the University of Calcutta. In 1992, he finished his Master of Arts degree in comparative literature from the Jadavpur University in Calcutta.

10.1.2 Career

While working as a town planner in India, England and Nigeria, he entered theatre as an actor, moved to direction, but soon started writing plays, starting with comedies. Badal Sarkar did experiments with theatrical environments such as, stage, costumes and presentation and established a new generation of theatre called "Third Theatre". In Third Theatre approach, he created a direct communication with audience and emphasized on expressionist acting along with realism. He started his acting career in 1951, when acted in his own play, *Bara Trishna*, performed by *Chakra*, a theatre group.

Eventually still employed in Nigeria, he wrote his landmark play *Ebong Indrajit (And Indrajit)* in 1963, which was first, published and performed in 1965 and catapulted him into instant fame, as it captured "the loneliness of post-Independence urban youth with dismaying accuracy". He followed them with plays like *Baaki Itihaash* (Remaining History) (1965), *Pralap* (Delirium) (1966), *Tringsha Shatabdi* (Thirtieth Century) (1966), *Pagla*

Ghoda (Mad Horse) (1967), *Shesh Naai* (There's No End) (1969), all performed by Sombhu Mitra's Bohurupee group.

In 1967, he formed the "Shatabdi" theatre group, and the first production he directed was *Ebang Indrajit* in 1967, a play about three people – Amal, Bimal, Kamal and a loner Indrajit. In the next five years of its existence the troupe performed several of his plays and had a profound impact on contemporary theatre, especially after 1969 when it started performing plays both indoors and outside amidst people, and evolved the *angan manch* (courtyard stage) and inspired by the direct communication techniques of Jatra rural theatre form, to eventually become his "Third Theatre", a protest against prevalent commercial theatre establishment. Often performed in "found" spaces rather than rented theatre halls, without elaborate lighting, costumes or make-up, where audience was no longer a passive, rather became participatory, it added a new realism to contemporary dramaturgy, retaining thematic sophistication of social committed theatre all the while, and thus started a new wave of experimental theatre in Indian theatre. In 1976, his group "Satabdi", started performing at Surendranath Park (then Curzon Park) Kolkata on weekends, these open-air and free performances lead to his troupe travelling to nearby villages on other weekends, where it employed minimal props and improvised dialogues to involve audience further into the performance.

Though he continued to hold his job till 1975, as a playwright he rose to prominence in the 1970s and was one of the leading figures in the revival of street theatre in Bengal. He revolutionized Bengali theatre with his wrath-ridden, anti-establishment plays during the Naxalite movement.

His plays reflected the atrocities that prevailed in the society, the decayed hierarchical system and were socially enlightening. He is a proponent of the "Third theatre" movement that stood ideologically against the state. Third theatre involved street plays, with actors being attired no differently than the audience. Also the formal bindings of the proscenium theatre was given up. Sarkar's "Bhoma" is an example of a third theatre play, set as always, in an urban background. Starting with *Sagina Mahato*, which marked his advent into arena stage, his subsequent plays, *Michhil* (Juloos), *Bhoma*, *Basi Khobor*, *Spartacus* based on Howard Fast's historical novel by the same name, were performed in parks, street corners and remote villages with the audience sitting all around.

Sircar directed his last play in 2003, and after that his movements were restricted after a road accident, but even many years in 2011, he continued performing at play readings and writing new works like adapting, William Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, two stories by Graham Greene and a novel, *History of Love*.

Kerala Sangeet Natak Akademi awarded the prestigious 'Amana Puraksaram'in 2010 for his lifetime achievements in Indian Theatre. The award was presented to him by Girish Karnad during the inaugural function of 3rd edition of International Theatre Festival of Kerala. Sarkar was diagnosed with colon cancer in April 2011. He died on 13 May at Kolkata at the age of 85.

10.1.3 Awards and Recognition

Sarkar was awarded the Padma Shri by the Government of India in 1972, Sangeet Natak Akademi Award in 1968 and the Sangeet Natak Akademi Fellowship – Ratna Sadsya,

the highest honour in the performing arts by Govt. of India, in 1997, given by Sangeet Natak Akademi, India's National Academy for Music, Dance and Drama.

The "Tendulkar Mahotsav" held at the National Film Archive of India (NFAI), Pune in October 2005, organised by director Amol Palekar to honour playwright Vijay Tendulkar, was inaugurated with the release of a DVD and a book on the life of Badal Sircar.

In July 2009, to mark his 85th birthday, a five-day-long festival titled *Badal Utsava* as tribute to him was organised by several noted theatre directors. He was offered the Padma Bhushan by the Government of India in 2010, which he declined, stating that he is already a Sahitya Akademi Fellow, which is the biggest recognition for a writer. Sarkar is the subject of two documentaries, one directed by filmmaker and critic, Amshan Kumar, and another *A Face in the Procession* by Sudeb Sinha, which was shot over two years.

10.2. IMPORTANT WORKS OF BADAL SARKAR

Badal Sircar influenced a number of film directors, theatre directors as well as writers of his time. Film director Mira Nair in an interview mentioned, "For me, Kolkata was a formative city while growing up.... I learned to play cricket in Kolkata, but more than anything, I learned to read Badal Sircar and watch plays written by him for street theatre." To Kannada director and playwright, Girish Karnad, Sircar's play *Ebang Indrajit* taught him fluidity between scenes, while as per theatre director-playwright Saryadev Dubey, "In every play I've written and in every situation created, *Indrajit* dominates." To Actor-director Amol Palekar, "Badal opened up new ways of expression." Recently (2013), a newly established cultural group, Maniktala Kolpokatha has started their theatrical career paying homage to the great play writer, staging "Ballavpurer Roopkatha". To the group, it is one of the plays that is not often staged in the Kolkata Theatre Circuit, and has all the spices of love, laughter and fear.

List of plays written by Badal Sarkar

- *Ebang Indrajit* (And Indrajit) (1963)
- *Basi Khabar*
- *Baaki Itihaash* (Remaining History) (1965)
- *Pralap* (Delirium) (1966)
- *Tringsha Shatabdi* (Thirtieth Century) (1966)
- *Pagla Ghoda* (Mad Horse) (1967)
- *Shesh Naai* (There's No End) (1969)
- *Spartacus*
- *Prastava*
- *Juloos* (Procession)
- *Bhoma*
- *Solution X*
- *Baropishima*
- *Saari Raat*
- *Badi buaji*
- *Kavi Kahini*

- *Manushe Manushe*
- *Michhil*
- *Hottomalar oparey*
- *Bollovpurer rupkatha*
- *Sukhpathya bharoter itihash* (Indian History Made Easy)

Collected Works:-

- *The Third Theatre*. Pub. Sircar, 1978
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Plays in translation:

- *Evam Indrajit: Three-act Play*. tr. by Girish Karnad. Oxford University Press. 1975.
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- *Beyond the Land of Hattamala & Scandal in Fairyland*. tr. by Suchanda Sarkar. Seagull Books, 2003.
- *Two Plays: Indian History Made Easy, Life of Bagala*, tr. by Subhendu Sarkar. OUP, 2009.
- *Pagala Ghoda:tr.in marathi by Amol Palekar*

10.3. SUMMARY OF THE PLAY BADAL SIRCAR'S "EVAM INDRAJIT"

Evam Indrajit (and *Indrajit*) is a Bengali play written in 1960s by Badal Sircar and translated into English by Girish Karnad in 1970. It is actually a theatrical outcrop of all the rampart approaches, trends, feelings, and undefined annoyances troubling the heart of the learned urban middle class. The rationally alive urban middle class considers itself as the backbone of the country. Their so-called middle class values have always been assaulted by those who swear by trendy Marxist canons. The middle classes have been made to feel culpable for opting for stability, aspiring for customs and believing in a national identity.

Evam Indrajit is in some ways about the remnants; the remnants are those who have failed to regulate, line up. And stopped to aspire, and also those who are entangled in the day to day struggle for existence.

When Badal Sircar was asked in an interview whether he considered *Evam Indrajit* as a political play or an existential play; he said that he never considered the play a political play, and he did not know the philosophy of existentialism. Therefore the play can be supposed as an absurd play as it demonstrates the emptiness and ineffectiveness of a pseudo-modern existence. The play keeps on rumbling that our survival is futile speck of dust. The theme of identity crisis is developed through the dreams, anguish, and disappointment of the central character *Indrajit* in the play.

The play opens with writer's (a character in the play) predicament who painfully struggles to write a play in vain. Not having witnessed life at the principal basic realities, he is motivated to write only about those who belong to the middle class society. He goes on writing with no contentment to himself and tears off whatever he writes. At last he gets motivation from the girl named *Manasi* (literally, the creation of the mind). *Manasi* is the

Indian complement of Jung's anima, an individual serving as a baton to the communal consciousness. Following the advice of Manasi he suddenly turns towards the audience and calls out to four latecomers and asks them to come on to the stage. On his asking they give their names as Amal Kumar Bose, Vimal Kumar Ghosh, Kamal Kumar Sen, and Nirmal Kumar. Writers does not admit the name of the fourth as he feels that the fourth is hiding his identity. He shouts suddenly and asks the fourth to tell his original name. on the Writers persistence, Nirmal Kumar finally reveals his identity as Indrajit Ray and his age is thirty-five.

WRITER: ... What's your name?

FOURTH: Indrajit Ray

WRITER: Then why did you call yourself Nirmal?

INDRAJIT: I was scared

WRITER: Scared? Of what?

INDRAJIT: scared of unrest. One invites unrest by breaking the norm.

WRITER: have you always called yourself Nirmal?

Indrajit: No, but I do now

Writer: why?

INDRAJIT: I am older now. Age is afraid of joy, of happiness. It only wants comfort and peace. Now INDRAJIT only wants the comfort of dark, cloudy sky.

Writer: How old are you?

Indrajit: A hundred. May be two hundred. I don't know. According to the Matriculation certificate, Thirty five.

Indrajit is a mythical rebel better known as Meghnad in Ramayana. Indrajit finds himself as an eccentric in the current prevailing system. He wants to revolt against the system and break the taboos. Not having been able to do all this he is persuaded towards suicidal thinking.

When writer tells that he is planning to write a social play about the live experiences of all the four members, Amal wishes good luck to writer. Vimal advises writer to make indrajit the hero and the remaining three soldiers in the play. Writer himself introduces the fictitious heroine of the play and names her Manasi. Immediately writer asks Indrajit to narrate his tale.

When Indrajit feels difficulty in starting the tale, writer tells Indrajit to narrate the story of the relationship he has with the girl named Manasi. Indrajit argues with writer introducing the girl as his cousin and her name is not Manasi. When writer asks Indrajit whether the girl is a friend or something else, Indrajit reveals that she is a good friend to him and he feels happy after talking to her. The scene changes to a public park where Indrajit and Manasi are sitting on the green grass. The conversation between the two starts with the rules and regulations made by the society. Indrajit perceives the predictable social rules as something absurd. When Manasi tells him that girls have to go by the rules, but boys don't have to, Indrajit tells her that she is worshipping the rope that ties her. He longs to bring down all the ramparts between them. He is an envoy of the contemporary youth who want to marginalize all limitations and distinctions.

INDRAJIT: Is there a rule that one has to abide by rules?

MANASI: what else can one do?

INDRAJIT: one can hate rules. Why should they be there at all?

MANASI: what would be the point of hating them?

INDRAJIT: what's the point of worshipping the rope that binds you?

MANASI: I'm not asking you to worship it.

INDRAJIT: but you are! If the rope is a rule and you accept it happily that is worshipping it.

MANASI: what else would you do with it?

INDRAJIT: perhaps – tear it into shreds. Bring down all these walls which surround us.

When Manasi asks Indrajit about his anger against rules, referring to the biblical myth of the “Tree of Knowledge”, he replies: “If I hadn't tasted the fruit of knowledge I could have gone on living in this paradise of your blessed society of rules. Now I can only batter my head against the wall.” (23) At the end of their conversation about the rules, Indrajit considers himself as an ordinary boy in the society and expressed his thought of marrying Manasi saying: “These should be no problem if an ordinary boy marries an ordinary girl.”

In Act II, writer and Indrajit come together after seven years. When writer asks Indrajit where he had been all those years; in Bhopal or somewhere else, Indrajit replies that at first he was in Bhopal but after a year he travelled to Bombay, Jullundur, Meerut, and then Udaipur because of his transferable job. When Indrajit asks the writer about Amal, Vimal and Kamal, writer replies that they all are well, got jobs, got married and owned houses. After learning that Indrajit is not yet married, writer asks Indrajit about Manasi. Indrajit replies that Manasi is also well, she also got the job. Only the pen paper friendship is going on between them, and they meet once a year and explains his failure as a man and as a lover. Thus in the second Act we the audience come to know the failures of Indrajit and his conscience.

10.4 PARTS OF THE TEXT – *EVAM INDRAJIT*

The play opens with writer's (a character in the play) predicament who painfully struggles to write a play in vain. Not having witnessed life at the principal basic realities, he is motivated to write only about those who belong to the middle class society. He goes on writing with no contentment to himself and tears off whatever he writes. At last he gets motivation from the girl named Manasi (literally, the creation of the mind). Manasi is the Indian complement of Jung's anima, an individual serving as a baton to the communal consciousness. Following the advice of Manasi he suddenly turns towards the audience and calls out to four latecomers and asks them to come on to the stage. On his asking they give their names as Amal Kumar Bose, Vimal Kumar Ghosh, Kamal Kumar Sen, and Nirmal Kumar. Writers do not admit the name of the fourth as he feels that the fourth is hiding his identity. He shouts suddenly and asks the fourth to tell his original name. On the Writer's persistence, Nirmal Kumar finally reveals his identity as Indrajit Ray and his age is thirty-five.

Act I Scene 1 *Evam Indrajit*

WRITER: ... What's your name?

FOURTH: Indrajit Ray

WRITER: Then why did you call yourself Nirmal?

INDRAJIT: I was scared

WRITER: Scared? Of what?

INDRAJIT: scared of unrest. One invites unrest by breaking the norm.

WRITER: have you always called yourself Nirmal?

Indrajit: No, but I do now

Writer: why?

INDRAJIT: I am older now. Age is afraid of joy, of happiness. It only once comfort, peace. Now INDRAJIT only wants the comfort of dark, cloudy sky.

Writer: How old are you?

Indrajit: A hundred. May be two hundred. I don't know. According to the Matriculation certificate, thirty five.

ACT1 SCENE 2 *Evam Indrajit*

INDRAJIT: Is there a rule that one has to abide by rules?

MANASI: what else can one do?

INDRAJIT: one can hate rules. Why should they be there at all?

MANASI: what would be the point of hating them?

INDRAJIT: what's the point of worshipping the rope that binds you?

MANASI: I'm not asking you to worship it.

INDRAJIT: but you are! If the rope is a rule and you accept it happily that is worshipping it.

MANASI: what else would you do with it?

INDRAJIT: perhaps – tear it into shreds. Bring down all these walls which surround us.

10.5 BADAL SIRCAR'S "EVAM INDRAJIT" AS A PLAY IN THE ABSURDIST TRADITION

Satyadev Dubey rightly asserts that "Evam Indrajit" presents "the residue of the middle class who have failed to adjust align and ceased to aspire and also those are enmeshed in the day – to – day struggle for survival".

It is a typical absurd play such as "Ionesco's *Amedee* or Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*" in that it exemplifies the hollowness and futility of a pseudo – modern existence. Badal Sircar was asked in an interview whether he considered "Evam Indrajit" as a political play, or an existential play; he said that he never considered the play as a political play, and he did not know the philosophy of existentialism. Therefore, the play can be perceived as an Absurd play. The play keeps on echoing that our existence is a pointless practice of dust". Therefore, the play is unconsciously colored with *Satrean Existentialism*. The theme is evolved through the dreams, despair and disillusionment of the protagonist Indrajit. The theme of identity crisis is echoed by the very title "And Indrajit". He is ... and Indrajit, a part of the whole. He is described in terms of society, and not in terms of his own existence. He prefers to be called Amal, Kamal or Vimal and conform to the dictates of society or the doctrines of tradition.

His identity is yet again questioned by his teachers by a mere roll number. He can therefore easily pose as Amal and answer his roll-call.

The monotony and mechanical nature of the contemporary times is stressed by the repetition of "one-two-three", words like "from home to school, from school to college, from college to the world" and "after files – then snacks – then files – then tea". And phrases like "going round". The language of "Evam Indrajit" transports us to the world of Absurd Drama with its cyclical and repetitive pattern. The stichomythic design adds to the phenomenon where single lines or parts of lines are spoken by alternate speakers. The utterance of comments of desperation with lack of emotion add endeavor to write a play at the cost of neglecting significant biological functions, is an attempt to do something meaningful in life.

Thus his attempt at penning a play transforms itself to the metaphor of living life evocatively and meaningfully. He attempts to impart meaning to the daily activities of life, love, marriage, profession and prevents himself from submission to a humdrum existence.

The protagonist eventually realizes as in Sartre's "No Exit" that there is no escape. The fulfillment of his love too does not provide him with a refuge for escapism his visit to London further frustrates him and he verges on suicide; he fails in this regard too. He concludes; "The past and present are two ends of a single rope".

Therefore, the play is in the absurdist tradition in that we not comprehend anything significant, meaningful and traditional in it. Neither does it possess a logical or coherent plot. The inadequacy of language echoes the lack of meaningful human associations. The language verges on word-play and is playing at times. The dialogue becomes purposefully elliptical.

Like Pirandello, Sircar utilizes meta – theatrical techniques of writing a play within the play and discovering the apt hero for the play. In rhinoceros Berenger remains the only human on earth who hasn't turned into a rhinoceros and refrains from conforming like Indrajit. There is no realism and the play rather portrays a psychological realism where external conflict reveals internal chaos. There is no concrete characterization. The various characters around appear to be the projection of the protagonist himself.

According to Martin Esslin, Absurdism is "the inevitable devaluation of ideas, purity and purpose" here too the play "Evam Indrajit" is deduced as "nothing but an expression of despair". Nevertheless, we can discern a ray of hope in the dreams of Amal, Kamal and Vimal. Indrajit is no exception in this regard. As critics perceive him as the mythical Sisyphus preparing to carry on the burden of his existence, we discover a ray of hope his words. "This is the keynote of our initiation. There is no pilgrimage, just journey. No destination but only the road which itself is our pilgrimage. Herein lays both deity and destination.

10.6 COMPREHENSION CHECK QUESTIONS

1. Write a note on *Evam Indrajit as an Absurd play*.
2. What is your assessment of Badal Sarkar place among Indian playwrights? Illustrate your answer.
3. Discuss in detail the theme of "Loss" and Struggle for Identity in *Evam Indrajit*.
4. Write a critical appreciation of the play *Evam Indrajit*.
5. Discuss Badal Sarkar as a social reformer with reference to his works.

10.7 REFERENCES

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Dr. M.Suresh Kumar

LESSON 11

SAMSKARA

OBJECTIVES

This unit enables the learner to understand

- The life of the Brahmins in the agrahara.
- The rigidity of caste system.
- How the death rites to Naranappa is discussed.
- How Pranesha undergoes a self-discovery.

STRUCTURE

- 11.1 Introduction to the Author
- 11.2 Introduction to Samskara
- 11.3 Themes
- 11.4 A brief Outline
- 11.5 Summary
- 11.6 Caste system
- 11.7 Conclusion
- 11.8 Comprehensive Check Questions
- 11.9 References
- 11.10 Additional Sources

11.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE AUTHOR

Udupi Rajagopala Acharya Anantha Murthy is one among the most eminent Indian authors. U.R. Anantha Murthy was born on December 21, 1932 at Melige, a remote village in Tirhahalli Taluka, in Shimoga District. He was born into a traditional Brahmin family and was educated in Sanskrit and Kannada as well as in English. He earned Ph. D in English and Comparative Literature from the University of Birmingham, U.K. He taught at various universities in Europe and the United States.

U. R. Anantha Murthy is a recipient of a number of awards. He received the prestigious Padma Bhushan award in 1998. He won the Jnanapeeth, India's highest literary award in 1994. Karnataka Sahitya Akademi conferred the Fiction Award and Award for Literary Achievement, in the year 1983 and 1984 respectively. The creative genius of U. R. Anantha Murthy is reflected in his prolific writings. His contribution to English language is no way less than to Kannada. Many of his works in Kannada have been translated into English by different authors. Samskara has been translated into Hindi, Bengali, Telugu, Tamil, Urdu, Marathi, Oriya, Gujarati and Konkani languages of India. It has also been translated into several European languages including English, French, Russian, Hungarian, German, and Kazak. In 1970 it was made into a movie of the same name by Girish Karnad.

10.2 INTRODUCTION TO SAMSKARA

U.R. Anantha Murthy has written poetry, criticism, and short stories but he is primarily known as a writer of novels such as *Samskara*, *Bharatipura* and *Avasthe*. *Samskara* was published in 1965. Later, in 1976 *Samskara* was translated into English from Kannada by A.K. Ramanujan with a subtitle **Rite for a Dead Man**.

U.R. Anantha Murthy in *Samskara* questions discrimination through the caste system and the practices of the Brahmins. The novel dramatizes a conflict between two extreme ways of life, the ascetic and the hedonistic; the former is represented by the orthodox Brahmins led by **Pranesacharya**, the latter by their defiant and contemptuous opponent, the pleasure-loving and anti-brahminical Brahmin **Naranappa**.

The novel is structured around the problem of death rites to Naranappa and the attempt to solve this dilemma. The novel is interpreted as a forceful portrayal of decadent brahminism in modern India. The whole plot revolves round the question of performing the death rites of Naranappa. The question of Naranappa's death rites is central to the development of the plot, as it raises several questions regarding the essence and relevance of brahminism, leading ultimately to a journey for self-discovery.

11.3 THEMES

The novel centers on Brahmins who are directed by age-old convictions, beliefs, customs, traditions and superstition. The caste system, religious rules, and traditions as well as the ambivalent relationship between the handed down cultural value system and the new values of a changing world are the highlights in the novel. The novel focuses on themes like untouchability, sex, rituals, *samskara* and community feeling. The human weakness such as greed, lust and lack of human concern in Brahmin community are also illustrated.

11.4 A BRIEF OUTLINE

Samskara represents the Brahmin community who are interlocked with each other through various complex relationships. Caste, economy, gender, societal hierarchy, religious questions and taboos ferment a complex web of relationships, against the backdrop of which the story line has been sketched. The novel is based on a thematic motif of a quest external as well as internal though unlike them it does not provide any clear cut answers.

The novel depicts the degenerated ways of a group of Southern Brahmins living within an *agrahara*.

Praneshacharya is the spiritual head of the *agrahara*. Praneshacharya's inability to solve the problem posed by the death of the heretic Naranappa leads to Praneshacharya's questioning of the Brahmin. After his sexual encounter with Chandri, Naranappa's lowcaste mistress, he embarks on a quest, in search of his true self. His existential self takes him to another world. Towards the end he returns to the *agrahara*. The novel ends on this open-ended note.

11.5 SUMMARY

Characters in Samskara

Praneshacharya is a learned Scholar who lives in **Durvasapura**

Naranappa is a Brahmin who rebels against Brahmin life

Chandri is a dalit woman who lives with Naranappa

Garudacharya is a relative to Naranappa

Lakshmanacharya is a relative to Naranappa

Dasacharya is a poor Brahmin

Durgabhatta is a Smarta Brahmin

Anasuya is the wife of Lakshmanacharya

Sitaddevi is the wife of Garudacharya

Bhagirathi is the wife of Praneshacharya

Lakshmidamma is a child widow and a very old woman

The novel is divided into three parts.

- The first part deals with the issue of death rites to Naranappa. When Praneshacharya, the spiritual head in the agrahara fails to give a proper solution on death rites to Naranappa, the Brahmins go in search of other sources.
- The second part focuses on the journey of the Brahmins to Kaimara in search of a solution to cremate Naranappa.
- The third part illustrates Pranesh's journey into the forest where he encounters with the worldly affairs and feels that he cannot shed brahminhood. He undergoes a self-journey and later return to the agrahara.

The first part of the novel begins with an elaborate description of **Praneshacharya**, a Madhva Brahmin. Pranesh is married to **Bhagirathi**, an invalid. He does everything to his wife; therefore, Bhagirathi is dependent on her husband. Pranesh does any kind of service to his wife and is proud of his sacrifice. At the same time he is a reputed person in the agrahara. The Brahmins in the agrahara come to him daily to listen to the sacred legends recited by Pranesh.

The novel opens with the news of Naranappa's death intimated by **Chandri**, Naranappa's concubine to Pranesh. Chandri's presence is not accepted in a Brahmin house as she is from a low caste. She is an untouchable and her presence is polluting to the upper caste people. "If the Acharya talked to her, he would be polluted, he would have to bathe again before his meal". Still, the Acharya responds and goes to Garudacharya, who is related to Naranappa for five generations. Naranappa's great-grandfather's grandmother and Garuda's great-grandfather's grandmother were sisters. This news spreads in the agrahara and creates an anxiety among the Brahmin families in the agrahara. "Alive, Naranappa was an enemy; dead, a preventer of meals; as a corpse, a problem, a nuisance". Naranappa did not

have a child, in such case any Brahmin can perform the last rites and shall also inherit the dead man's property. This initiates selfish, calculations by various Brahmins and their wives.

Garudacharya and **Lakshmanacharya** question his brahminhood. Naranappa did not live a Brahmin life. He was married to, Anasuya's sister. Later left her and started living with Chandri. In the words of Lakshmana,

Naranappa abandoned his lawful wife after tying the wedding-string round her neck. You may condone even that Lakshmana had closed his eyes again and started talking. He went and got mixed up with some woman. My wife's sister became hysterical and died: he didn't even come to the funeral rites. You may condone even that; but he didn't care to observe the death anniversaries of his own father and mother.

Thus Naranappa's brahminhood becomes a question. Pranasha utters What's the way out now? Can we just fold our arms and stare at a dead body laid out in the agrahara? According to ancient custom, until the body is properly removed there can be no worship, no bathing, no prayers, no food, nothing. And, because he was not excommunicated, no one but a Brahmin can touch his body .

The Brahmins reside in the agrahara called **Durvasapura**. It is believed that sage Durvasa performed his penance. The five pandava brothers lived close to this place. Also Praneshacharya, the great ascetic, 'Crest-Jewel of Vedic Learning', settled down. Therefore, the agrahara became famous because of its legends. As Pranasha is unable to resolve the issue of death rite he seeks a solution from the holy texts.

In fact, Pranasha promised Naranappa's mother to bring her son back to right path. He fasted two nights in the week for him, but Naranappa persistently turns a deaf ear to his counsel. Yet Naranappa's evil influence fell upon Garuda's son **Shyama** and Lakshmana's son-in-law **Shripati**. Shyama was forced by Naranappa to desert his family and join the army by signing a bond. Similarly, he is the one who is responsible for Shripati ensnared by loose women. Thus Naranappa not only led a free life but also rebelled against Brahmin life.

Lakshmidamma, is a very old woman in the agrahara and through this character we can understand how the child marriage and possession of property takes place in a Brahmin community. She is a child widow and was under the care of Garudacharya's father and taken custody of the property and jewellery she had possessed. Garuda's wife ill-treated her. Ultimately, she was thrown out of the house. Unable to sleep peacefully, she walks down the streets at night and curses Garuda and his family.

Pranasha made his efforts in consulting the sacred books for a proper solution to cremate Naranappa. Having failed to find a solution he decides to go to the Maruti temple and seek divine guidance.

The rigidity of the caste system is represented in the novel. Until the body is cremated they are not supposed to eat food. For instance, Dasacharya unable to bear the hunger visits Manjappa's house at **Parijatapura**. Dasacharya depended on ritual meals for his livelihood.

Manjappa persuades him to take some milk and fruits. Dasacharya was afraid to eat cooked food in a Smarta house. He says, "No, no, uppittu doesn't really agree with me. Just a little plain flat-rice, and some milk and jaggery will do" (57).

Meanwhile vultures start invading the agrahara. Dasacharya suggests that gongs and conches may be used for driving the inauspicious, offensive birds away. But when they stop beating the gongs the vultures return. The women were worried to see the plight of the agrahara. **Sitadevi** and **Anasuya** went to their husbands and begged tearfully: 'Let the gold go to hell! Why do we need other people's property? Please take out the body and get to the rites. Naranappa's spirit is calling out these vultures.'

Pranasha patiently waits throughout the day for some sign from the Maruti temple. At nightfall he is reminded of his wife's medicines and leaves the temple. Chandri who was waiting outside the temple for Acharya's decision falls at his feet, on the spur of the moment he has liaison with her. This encounter is the turning point in his life. This incident makes him to wander to find out the truth of one's existence. That is the end of part one.

Part two begins with Chandri's efforts to cremate Naranappa's body. She finds the body swollen and disfigured. She seeks the help of cartman Sheshappa's house and requests him to cremate Naranappa. Sheshappa is afraid to touch a Brahmin body. She goes to Muslim section and asks Ahmad Bari to help her. Ahmad remembers Naranappa's kindness, how he loaned him to buy oxen. He secretly loads the body and the firewood in his bullock-cart, drives to the cremation ground and kindles a flapping flaming fire. Later, Chandri sets off to Kundapura.

The agrahara appeared miserable

In house after house, children, mother and father seemed to become one shapeless mass, hugging each other and shivering in the dark. When night was over, the sun's rays descended through the holes in the rafters and brought courage in little circles of light in the dark houses. They all got up slowly, unbolted the doors and looked out. Vultures, birds of carrion. Again, the vultures, driving away the crows, sitting obstinately on the rooftops. The men tried to shoo them away, clap at them. But they didn't budge. Down-hearted, the Brahmins blew their sacred conches and beat their gongs.

Pranasha admits that he could not get any answer from **Maruti temple** and tells them to do as they like. The Brahmins go to **Kaimara agrahara** to ask **Pundit Subbannacharya** for a solution; if he doesn't then they can go straight to monastery and see the **Swami**. The pandit in Kaimara too is unable to guide them so they move to the monastery. In due course the acharyas' fall sick: **Dasacharya** suffers from high fever and **Padmanabhacharya** also develops high fever.

The Brahmins reach the monastery and meet the guru. The guru tells them that though Naranappa gave up brahminism, brahminism cannot leave him. He suggests that he should be duly cremated and that the property must be offered to the monastery. As Garudacharya is running high temperature he is left there while the rest of the Brahmins hurry to Durvasapura agrahara to cremate Naranappa. Dasacharya dies followed by Baghirathi. Pranasha cremates his wife and leaves the agrahara. Thus the second part ends in Pranasha's self-discovery.

The third part illustrates Pranasha's journey into the forest. After his encounter with Chandri he feels that he is cut off from the world and possesses no moral obligation to guide the Brahmins. He wants to lead a life without desire. He is reminded of his friend Mahabala, who studied along with him in Kashi who gave up his studies and lived with a prostitute.

Engrossed in the thoughts he walks into the forest. **Putta**, a villager, who is going for the car-festival at Melige follows Pranesha and gets stuck to him.

Putta accompanies Pranesacharya in his wanderings. The acharyas' who return from the monastery learn about the death of the Acharya's wife. Dasacharya too dies. Garudacharya becomes sick and Padmanabhacharya in a high fever. Lakshmanacharya abuses Garudacharya for preventing Naranappa's funeral rites. Garuda prays to Maruti, 'I'll pay the penalty, please forgive me.' Unaware that Naranappa's body is cremated they proceed to Naranappa's house and make a stretcher for the body.

Putta and acharya reach Melige, a small town which is holding a festival. The colourful gaiety affects the Acharya strangely the smell of new clothes, the song of the balloon-seller, the sights of the Bombay Box convince him that till this point he had stood outside the world of pleasures.

In all this bustle and busyness, amid noises of balloons and pipes, the soda-pop and the sweetmeats, the peal of temple bells, the gorgeous spectacle of women's bangle shops, Pranesacharya walked as one entranced, following Putta. Purposeful eyes everywhere, engaged in things. His eyes, the only disengaged ones, incapable of involvement in anything.

When Putta invites him to a coffee shop, he is initially afraid of being seen by some acquaintance. 'He looked around timidly, fearing the presence of some familiar person. If someone sees the Crest-Jewel of Vedanta Philosophy drinking a cup of polluted restaurant coffee Thuth, I must first rid myself of such fears,' he cursed himself.

Putta accompanies Pranesha to various shops. They halt to watch cock-fight. Pranesha was in a panic. He felt he had dropped into a demonic world. Later Putta suggests Acharya to take food in the temple. Pranesha fears that someone will recognize him. Suddenly, a man says, 'I think I've seen you somewhere.' Pranesha thinks that he too has committed a sin like Naranappa. He worries how to tell his people at Durvasapura.

What shall I tell them? I slept with Chandri. I felt disgust for my wife. I drank coffee in a common shop in a fair. I went to see a cock-fight. I lusted after Padmavathi. Even at a time of mourning and pollution, I sat in a temple-line with Brahmins and ate a holy feast. I even invited a Malera boy to come into the temple and join me. This is my truth. Not a confession of wrongs done. Not a repentance for sins committed. Just plain truth. My truth. The truth of my inner life. Therefore this is my decision. Through my decision, here! I cut myself off."

Finally, after embarking on a worldly trip he decides to go to Durvasapura. Putta too accompanies Pranesha saying that he had to negotiate the purchase of an orchard with Naranappa. The novel ends with Acharya's journey back to the agrahara.

11.6 CASTE SYSTEM

The caste system is very intricate and complicated. The caste system is based upon the organization of society in four distinct classes Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras. Samskara traces how caste becomes the basis of labour division, social discrimination and gender exploitation.

Brahmins were originally the people who preached spiritual teachings to the society and lived ascetic spiritual lives. Traditionally, they depended on performing religious rituals for their livelihood. While the Brahmins are supposed to be the spiritual guides the Shudras perform menial services only. The novel portrays the constrictions of a caste based economic choice. Brahmins of the agrahara are poor and ill fed.

Lakshamanacharya is depicted as having “sunken cheeks, yellow eyes deep in sockets, ribs protruding altogether an unbalanced body”. Dasacharya lived “entirely on the meals that Brahmins get at death-rites and anniversaries”. Untrained in any alternate skill, hesitant to accept new ways, these Brahmins are as much a victim of the caste system as the lower caste. The listless poverty of the Brahmins of the agrahara is presented in the novel through various episodes. They depended on cucumber during the rainy season for everything, “curry, mash, or soup made with the seeds”. They could walk a distance of 30 miles just for attending a festival feast.

The Brahmins are prohibited to eat food touched or prepared by a member of a different caste. A Brahmin cannot eat food given by a Shudra. Dasacharya is afraid of social criticism, if he openly eats food at Manjayya’s place. Being a Smarta, Manjayya is considered to belong to a lower sect of Brahmins. Dasacharya is afraid that if he eats “cooked stuff in a Smarta house” he may be socially boycotted by his own sect, I don’t really mind eating in your house. But if those rascals in our agrahara hear about it, no one will invite me to a ceremony again. What can I do Manjayya?” When Manjayya amusedly assures him of secrecy, Dasacharya asks for some milk, jiggery and plain flat-rice.

When Chandri calls at Pranasha’s home to inform him about Naranappa’s death he had yet to take his meal. If he talks to Chandri before taking his food he will have to bathe again. This is because when a Brahmin is in contact with a person of a lower caste can negatively alter one’s purity and may require some form of remedial procedure such as bathing or changing clothes.

While Pranasha fails to find a solution, Chandri decides to cremate the body with some body’s help. But people were not ready to touch a Brahmin body. For an example when Chandri requests Sheshappa, the cartman, to cremate Naranappa’s body, he refuses, “Chandravva, that can’t be done. Do you want me to go to hell, meddling with a Brahmin corpse? Even if you give me all eight kinds of riches, I can’t”.

Putta takes the acharya to a Brahmin restaurant for a coffee telling him that they keep a special place inside for orthodox Brahmins like him. “Praneshacharya squatted on a low seat unwillingly. He looked around timidly, fearing the presence of some familiar person. If someone sees the Crest Jewel of Vedanta Philosophy drinking a cup of polluted restaurant coffee”. Similarly, he was afraid of entering a temple and eating there during the period of his wife’s mourning. He later realizes that he would never have the courage to defy Brahmin practices as Naranappa had done.

11.7 CONCLUSION

Samskara, a serious novel deals with the traditional ritual of the cremation of the dead body of a Brahmin. The novel illustrates the heartlessness of the Brahmin men and women who did not feel pain in the death of Naranappa. Instead, they were worried that they may not

be able to have their regular meals. The decadence of brahminism becomes unambiguously clear by the end of the novel.

11.8 COMPREHENSIVE CHECK QUESTIONS

1. Write an essay on the taboos of brahminism in *Samskara*.
2. Who is Praneshacharya? Discuss the measures taken by him to resolve the death rites of Naranappa.
3. Elaborate on the Significance of the title *Samskara*.
4. Write a brief note on the major themes dealt in the novel.

11.9 REFERENCES

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11.10 Additional Sources

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Dr. G. Srilatha,

LESSON 12

CHARACTERS IN SAMSKARA

OBJECTIVES

This unit enables the learner to understand

- The main characters in the novel
- The taboos of Brahminism
- How the search for identity is depicted
- The struggle of the Brahmins to keep up their brahminhood

STRUCTURE

- 12.1 Brahmin Community
- 12.2 Character of Praneshacharya
- 12.3 Character of Naranappa
- 12.4 Character of Lakshmiddevamma
- 12.5 Character of Chandri
- 12.6 Conclusion
- 12.7 Comprehensive Check Questions
- 12.8 References

In the previous lesson we have discussed Naranappa's death and its after effects in the agrahara. The issue of death rites is not resolved because the greedy Brahmins argue on the right to possess the property and gold of Naranappa. In this lesson we shall study the main characters in detail to understand the strict life led by Praneshacharya and the rebellious attitude of Naranappa.

12.1 BRAHMIN COMMUNITY

The Brahmin is the highest in the social order and must be pure. He is the keeper of the sacred traditions and the Vedas, which he had preserved for two thousand years, and transmits for the posterity. *Samskara* portrays two sects of Brahmins and the taboos associated with their life style. Durvasapura and Parijatapura are the two sects narrated in the novel.

Durvasapura: The Brahmins in Durvasapura represent a microscopic view of Hinduism in India. Durvasapura has a legend. The Brahmins believed that Sage Durvasa performed penance sitting on a hill besides the Tunga river. Hence the agrahara had become famous in all ten directions. Moreover, Praneshacharya, the great ascetic, 'Crest-Jewel of Vedic Learning', had settled down in the agrahara.

Parijatapura: The Brahmins in Parijatapura were Smartas. They are not like Madhva, their lines are little mixed up. They are pleasure lovers and are good at betel nut farms and are also rich economically. They are not worried about orthodoxy and strict rules. For example, the widows do not shave their heads, grew long hair and chewed betel leaf.

Brahmin men: The Brahmin men are portrayed as greedy and lusted. U. R. Anantha Murthy has focused on the evil practices of the Brahmin community. The novel highlights the need to

fight brahminic orthodoxy. Although the Brahmins are God fearing ones they starve for food for days because a fellow Brahmin's body remains uncremated. In the name of God they cope up with all hardships of brahminic law without raising any queries. But towards the end of the novel they collapse. Dasacharya's breaking of his fast is an example of breaking of the brahminic laws. Though all despised Naranappa, it is Naranappa's life that the Brahmins followed. Pranasha who tried his best to bring back the brahminic way of life faces failure and in the long run he too fails to live up to his status of a pious Brahmin. He deliberately married an invalid wife and served her. But later he sleeps with Chandri in the forest. All his brahminic philosophy undergoes a sudden change after that experience.

Brahmin Women: The Brahmin women live in the background they occupy the periphery. Garuda's wife Sitadevi and Lakshmana's wife Anasuya persuade their husbands to visit Pranasha to plead their cases. When Anasuya, Lakshmana's wife blurts out her anger with comments and sobs, she is conveniently ignored. They are mute listeners; women never have a direct participation in dialogue.

Brahmin women are referred to greed and lust for gold. The Brahmin women were stunned by Chandri's generosity of surrendering her ornaments. For Example when Chandri offers her ornaments for meeting out the expenses of Naranappa's death rites, "The women calculated swiftly; that heap of gold was worth at least 2,000/-. One after another the wives scanned the husband's faces. The women kept staring at the heap of gold and they were disappointed by their husband's words."

12.2 CHARACTER OF PRANESHACHARYA

Praneshacharya, a Madhva Brahmin, is the spiritual head of the Brahmins of Durvasapura. He is introduced as a learned ascetic. "Crest Jewel of Vedic Learning." The Brahmins of the agrahara visit his house to listen to his recitation of sacred legends. He is the spiritual guide of the agrahara. In all religious matters, he is the ultimate arbiter. People look up to him for guidance and consolation.

Praneshacharya lives a life of a celibate house-holder. At the age of sixteen, he had opted for marriage, but had chosen Bhagirathi, a bed-ridden, invalid and sick woman for wife. He deliberately deprives him not only of conjugal happiness, but also of familial pleasures. He takes care of his invalid wife and is pleased to think that such action would bring his nirvana a bit closer. His relationship with his wife is not based on love or mutual understanding. Despite his compassionate attitude towards her, hypocrisy can be read in his attitude towards her.

Bhagirathi is portrayed as a sensitive and traditional woman. She is well aware of the barren nature of their marriage. She tells the Acharya, "A house needs a child to make it home. You've had no joy in this marriage". But the acharya feels that by marrying an invalid he gets "ripe and ready" for the ultimate salvation. For twenty years the Acharya has served her faithfully, as one would tend a child, without taint of reproach or dissatisfaction. He implicitly follows the teaching of the Bhagavad-Gita, "Do what is to be done with no thought of fruit." He is proud of his sacrifice.

Pranasha is superior to other Brahmins of his community, yet he is not free from human weakness. Although he has practiced rigorous self-denial all his life, he vicariously enjoys the sensuous beauty of heroines in poetry and drama. Naranappa is a threat to the

agrahara, as he rebels against the taboos of a brahminical life. Pranesha fails in his efforts to counsel Narannappa to lead a true Brahmin life. He does not excommunicate Naranappa. Therefore Naranappa's death poses a problem: is he a Brahmin and should a Brahmin perform the last rites to him.

The Brahmins in the agrahara depend on Pranesha to solve this problem. He makes all efforts to analyze Naranappa's brahminhood and who should cremate him. He read many books. Finally, having failed to find a solution in the sacred books, Pranesha goes to Maruti Temple for a divine answer. He also fails to get a solution in the Maruti Temple. On his way back he encounters with Chandri. Pranesha's union with Chandri is the turning point of the novel. He is flabbergasted when he encounters Chandri while coming out of the Maruti temple. He had led a celibate life and is suddenly dwarfed by his raging passions when Chandri falls at his feet.

Pranesha tells the Brahmins that he is unable to find a solution. The Brahmins left to Kaimara agrahara to consult Pundit Subbannacharya, and later proceed to the monastery to seek Swami's guidance. The Brahmins had to walk a long way, moreover their hunger and fatigue makes them fall sick. Meanwhile Bhagirathi falls sick and dies. Pranesha takes the help of Brahmins and cremates his wife. Pranesha had to balance his mind. He walked without a destination. He remembered "Yoga is the stilling of the waves of the mind." He also wants to put aside the thought of God's holy names.

Thus he decides to search for a meaningful after-life and decides to undertake a journey, rather an aimless wandering, in the hope of finding a release or a working out of tensions in this personal-social problem. Pranesha too decides to venture out into an unpredictable world its isolating atmosphere has its own logic and may help him to get a better grip on the meanings of his life. The journey is a symbol of his restlessness and fuzziness of emotions.

Pranesha's journey symbolizes his awareness with the world. In the journey Pranesha meets Putta. Putta engages Pranesha with riddles, when Pranesha refused to solve the puzzle, Putta pities Pranesha, considers him good and not a very clever Brahmin. At the festival in Melige, Putta enjoyed everything; while Pranesha could not come down to enjoy the world of ordinary pleasures. "In all this bustle and busyness, amid noises of balloons and pipes, the sods-pop and the sweetmeats, the peal of temple bells, the gorgeous spectacle of women's bangle shops, Pranesha walked as one entranced, following Putta".

In the beginning of the novel Pranesha believes that if he talked to Chandri "he would be polluted; he would have to bathe again before his meals". In the first half of the novel Pranesha is portrayed as a sober and idealistic Brahmin. In the later part of the novel he is criticized. For example, he had sex with Chandri, wanted to live with her, and was not averse to sleeping with Padmavathi who was a half-caste Malera. Later when Pranesha was recognized at the temple where he was taking meals, he ran away. In Putta's words, "What's this Swamy? Not a word, and you're running like someone in a hurry to go to the bathroom for a big job". Putta laughed, "These things do happen. Calls of nature became most urgent right in the middle of dinner. I thought that is what happened to you, so I felt like laughing".

Pranesha's journey is a search for wholeness for a complete experience of the desires and its fulfillment. It is Putta who shows him the darker sides of life, good and evil together constitute the fullest experience of life. Pranesha was incomplete till Chandri showed him the

passions which he had never experienced before. Even Pranesha, the embodiment of a 'real Brahmin,' ultimately fails to fully live up to the exacting standards of caste.

To conclude, Pranesha's journey is a kind of pilgrimage. The journey enables him to analyze and study his own self identity. He wanders through forests and lonely roads, and did what Naranappa did for years. He sleeps with the prostitute Chandri, visits fairs and cockfights and eats in a temple in an unclean condition. Despite all these, a sad realization haunts him, "he may have rejected Brahminhood, but brahminhood never left him." Towards the end Pranesha goes back to Durvasapura, to face the other Brahmins.

12.3 CHARACTER OF NARANAPPA

Naranappa poses a threat to the Brahmins in the agrahara: both during his life time and also after his death. Naranappa, a Madhva Brahmin lived with Chandri, a low caste woman and posed a threat to the other Brahmins in the agrahara. Once he went to a town, returned with a high fever and died within a couple of days. Naranappa, being childless leaves no heir to perform the last death rites become a crucial issue to be resolved by Praneshacharya.

The fact is that Naranappa died of plague which he contacted from Shivamogge. Since the body lay uncremated it was natural for the rats to eat and die of it and spread the plague to the entire agrahara. None of them think about consulting a doctor. Naranappa does everything contrary to Brahminical norms, and is considered a degenerated Brahmin.

Naranappa abandoned his Brahmin wife and kept a lowcaste women Chandri as his mistress.

He was married to the sister of Lakshmanacharya's wife who got hysterical and died because of Naranappa's misbehavior. Though he was a Brahmin, never performed any sacred duty and worse was his attitude to challenge people and their beliefs. He did everything that Brahmins' should not. He lived with a low caste woman, ate meat, polluted Holy River, spoiled the young minds of Agrahara, openly drinking liquor, cooked sacred fish from the temple tank and had eaten them.

The most learned Madhva Praneshacharya who is called the 'Crest-Jewel of Vedanta' and a scholar who has mastered Vedas and the Puranas is in a dilemma on Naranappa's brahminhood. All the Brahmins in the agrahara too expressed their disgust and hatred to Naranappa's life. Naranappa's relative Garudacharya says, "Let's set aside the question of whether I should do the rites. The real question is: is he a Brahmin at all? What do you say?"

He slept regularly with a lower caste woman". The greediness of the Brahmins for free sumptuous meals and their fear that they might not be invited to such meals if they hurriedly performed the death rites of Naranappa without consulting the books is expressed by the Brahmins in the novel.

Dasacharya, depended entirely on the meals that they get at death rites and anniversaries. Unable to suppress his hunger, he went to Parijatapura, where lower clan of Brahmins stay. "He soon stood in the shade of Manjayya's thatched canopy. How could he ask here openly for food? In all his born days, he hadn't touched water in the houses of these crosslined Brahmins. After all, he was a Brahmin who lived on ritual meals". When

Manjayya offered him food, he pretended being afraid of his agrahara people coming to know about it. “Dasacharya rubbed his belly to the name of the supreme spirit, and didn’t say No. Just for courtesy’s sake, he pretended to cover his eating leaf with his hands Enough. Must leave some for you” .

Naranappa rejected brahminhood by keeping Chandri, a prostitute as his wife. He never ill-treated Chandri. He rather defended his living with her. Naranappa wanted to shake the very foundations on which the Brahmin community had based its ethos. He challenges the Acharya and says, Your Garuda, he robs shaven widows, he plots evil with black magic men, and he is one of your Brahmins, isn’t he? All right, let’s see who wins, Acharya, you or me? Let’s see how long all this Brahmin business will last.

He is self-reliant and advocates a direct participation in life. He believes in imparting equal treatment to all castes. “Your texts and rites don’t work anymore. The Congress Party is coming to power, you’ll have to open up all temples to all outcastes”.

Naranappa has rendered help to people such as he had loaned money to Ahmad Bari, the fish merchant, to buy oxen when he was bankrupt and had donated a harmonium to the Parijata Dance group and was its prime mover. He never repents about his actions and attitudes, though there is a hint that just before his death, his confidence had slightly wavered. Chandri recalls:

Naranappa, who wouldn’t fold his hand before a god any time, had started talking strangely as his fever rose to his brain. As coma set in, he mumbled, ‘O mother! O God Ramachandra, Narayan!’ cried out, ‘Rama Rama.’ Holy names. Not words that come out of a sinner’s or an outcaste’s mouth. She hadn’t quite understood what was going on deep inside him.

Chandri’s confusion about Naranappa’s last words is not resolved. All the Brahmins in the agrahara except Pranesacharya, envy Naranappa’s luck in having her as his mistress.

Although Naranappa rejected brahminhood, it is held that brahminhood never left him. He was never excommunicated and so, remains a Brahmin even in his death. Shyama and Shripati are influenced by Naranappa.

Shyama: Shyama is the only son of Garudacharya. He was a friend of Naranappa. Therefore on Naranappa’s influence he ran away from the house and joined the army.

Shripati: Lakshmanacharya’s son-in-law is Shripati. Shripati, an orphan was misled and perverted by Naranappa. Shripati hardly stays at home. He has joined a Yakshagana player’s troupe and keeps the company of Parijatapura boys.

12.4 CHARACTER OF LAKSHMIDEVAMMA

Lakshmiddevamma, a child widow is the oldest woman in the agrahara. There is a prejudice against her because she is a widow, or because she is a woman living alone, or both. She represents the male form of hierarchy and domination of caste system where a woman even though belongs to the Brahmin caste cannot have her share in the village community. She has to live alone. After her father, husband, in laws, since she does not have a son, her property falls into the hands of others. She is called Half-Wit Lakshmiddevamma.

Anantha Murthy describes her life as, Her life was a Purana by itself. Married at eight, widowed at ten. Her mother-in-law and father-in-law had died when she was fifteen. The agrahara had sneered at her as the ill-starred girl. Before she was twenty her father and mother had died. And then, Garuda's father had taken custody of the little property and jewelry she had. He'd brought the woman over to his own house. That was his way always.

He had managed similarly Naranappa's father's property too, saying the man wasn't bright enough to manage it himself. Lakshmiddevamma had spent twenty-five years under that roof. Garuda took over when his father died.

Lakshmiddevamma is 70 years old, and is frustrated with the male domination. When she is unable to sleep, she would stand before Garudacharya's house, "invoke sons and grandsons and ancestors, summon gods and goddesses for witness, throw fistful of curses at him". She would go to sleep after closing the door with loud noise. In the words of Anantha Murthy.

Her door and her belch were famous in the agrahara. Both could be heard from one end to the other. Her fame had spread to the Brahmin colonies in all four directions. Because she is a child widow, they called her Lakshmiddevamma the Ill-Omen... They all called her sour Lakshmiddevamma.

Lakshmiddevamma represents the Brahmin system of widowhood. Being a child widow she is denied of all rights and in fact is dependent on any male family member.

Therefore, she wails before Garudacharya's house, calling him a "ruiner of towns" and a "widow-taker."

You villain! A golden man like Naranappa became an outcaste, got himself a harlot. You fellows call yourself Brahmins, you sit there and don't want to take out a dead man's body. Where has your brahminism gone, you rascals! Brahminism is in ruins. Why don't you shave your heads and become Muslims, why do you need to be Brahmins, you!

When Lakshmiddevamma was disturbed she would come out and stand in front of Garudacharya's house and curse him and his family. On one such occasion when Lakshmiddevamma spent sleepless night, after Naranappa's death she observes somebody running from Naranappa's house. "Look, look, look! It's Naranappa's ghost! Ghost!" shouts Lakshmiddevamma. It was in fact Shripati who goes to visit Naranappa and he is unaware of Naranappa's death because he left the agrahara with a troupe a week ago. Thus he enters Naranappa's house only to shriek *Ayyayyoo* and runs for life.

12.5 CHACRACTER OF CHANDRI

Although Chandri falls as the major background in the novel, it is her silent but good-intentioned actions which trigger the further actions in the novel. Chandri is portrayed in the novel as selfless, positive, caring and regenerative potential. Chandri is from the class of prostitutes and symbolizes all women of her caste. She is not only untouchable to Brahmin but even a look of her will pollute the Brahmins. She is the only character who presents herself with more mature vision than anyone in the whole agrahara.

Though Chandri's relationship with Naranappa was not approved socially, they happily lived together for ten years. She was aware of her own caste status and behaved like a cultured woman. She neither demanded anything from him nor did she meddle with his affairs. Her only regret was that she remained childless. After informing all Brahmins about Naranappa's death, she silently waits for their decision for the last rites which will be decided by Acharya, as he is the one who is well educated at Kashi and consequently has final authority in every matter because in the Agrahara nothing is out of religion.

Though Chandri is referred as a "filthy whore" (8) and describe her as "provocative", and though they consider her beneath them, she is in many ways more free than the Brahmin women because she is not tied down to duty of just an onlooker. The duties of the Brahmin women do not apply to her. Chandri in many ways symbolizes domination free exercise of desire and a kind of sense which is not only common but more practical according to the nature of world. She represents a woman, who is very conscious of her identity. Moreover, Chandri is faithful to Naranappa than other Brahmins are to their wives.

Chandri possesses the profundities and complexities of the human mind and develops with changing circumstances. When she goes to Pranasha to inform him about Naranappa's death, she stands meekly in the yard. She also requests Naranappa not to eat food cooked by her. While the Brahmins gather to discuss the matter of Naranappa's rites, she remains on the periphery, sitting against a pillar. Her spontaneous decision to offer gold for the expenses of the rites startles everyone.

Suddenly Chandri did something that stunned the Brahmins. She moved forward to stand in the front courtyard loosened her four-strand gold chain, her thick bracelet, her bangles, and placed them all in a heap before Pranasha. She mumbled something about all this jewellery being there for the expenses of the rite and went back to stand in her place.

She is afraid that if he is not cremated properly, he may turn into an evil spirit. She is determined not to let it happen, "She'd eaten his salt, she, Chandri." Sitting on the verandah, waiting for Pranasha's decision, she even tries to push her drowsiness away. She cannot take rest until his dead body is properly cremated. While the other Brahmins are unwilling to perform Naranappa's death rites due to many religious and personal reasons based on property disputes, it is only Chandri who is worried about Naranappa. "If Naranappa's body didn't get the proper rituals, he could become a tormenting ghost. She had enjoyed life with him for ten years. How could she rest till he got a proper funeral?" It is believed that if the death rites do not take place properly he will become an evil spirit.

Chandri possesses practical sharpness. Unable to leave Naranappa's body rotting in his house, she tries to arrange his cremation. When Sheshappa indicates his inability to meddle with a Brahmin corpse, she seeks the help of a Muslim acquaintance without bothering for religious rituals, she causes the corpse to the cremation ground and burns it, as she feels that it was only a carcass. She alone has the clarity to understand that is corpse "not her lover Naranappa. It's neither Brahmin nor Shudra. A carcass. A stinking rotting carcass".

The deed is performed by Ahmad Bari, a man in debt to Naranappa who loads the corps and firewood onto his bullock-cart, sets it afire in the cremation ground. After ensuring a proper cremation of Naranappa's body, Chandri wanted to go away to her village and

“weep for him there.” She is also unwilling to create any complexities in Pranesha’s life, and leaves the agrahara. Thus after the cremation Chandri catches the morning bus to Kundapura.

12.6 CONCLUSION

To conclude from the lesson we understand that

- Praneshacharya, a Brahmin who follows strict rules, happens to do all the things that Naranappa did.
- Naranappa, lived a carefree life unmindful of anybody and rebelled against the Brahmins.
- Lakshmiddevamma represents the struggles of a Brahmin child widow.
- Chandri proves to be sensible. She waits for Pranesha’s word, but as the Brahmins delay in action she takes the decision to cremate Naranappa without any rituals.
- Thus the Brahmins struggle and fail to stick to the strict rules of Brahmin life.

12.7 COMPREHENSIVE CHECK QUESTIONS

1. Write a brief note on the main characters in the novel Samskara?
2. Discuss the characteristic features of Naranappa.
3. Illustrate in detail the journey undertaken by Praneshacharya and comment on his company with Putta.
4. Write an essay on the Brahmin women with special reference to Lakshmiddevamma.

12.8 REFERENCES

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Dr. G. Srilatha

LESSON 13

INDULEKHA

OBJECTIVES

- The main objective of the lesson is to understand
- How culture and modernity is blended in the novel
- The Nair taravad system
- The practice of Sambandam
- The impact of English education on the Nairs'

STRUCTURE

- 13.1 Introduction to O. Chandumenon
- 13.2 Introduction to Indulekha
- 13.3 Indulekha in Brief
- 13.4 A brief note on the Communities
 - 13.4.1 Nairs
 - 13.4.2 Namboodiri
- 13.5 Characters
 - 13.5.1 Indhulekha
 - 13.5.2 Madhavan
 - 13.5.3 Namboodiri
- 13.6 Summary of the Novel
- 13.7 The Main Issue
- 13.8 Points to Remember
- 13.9 Conclusion
- 13.10 Comprehensive Check Question
- 13.11 Works Cited

13.1 INTRODUCTION TO O. CHANDUMENON

O. Chandu Menon was born on 9 January 1847 in Kozhikode District. He received education in Sanskrit and English. He qualified for civil service and started his career as a clerk in the government service. During his position he rose to the position of sub-judge of Calicut. He was a member of the committee constituted to inquire on Marumakkathayam and report on the Malabar Marriages Bill. He was also a social reformer. He made observations on matrimony among Nairs and polyandrous matrimony of Nair women that prevailed during the time are of historical importance.

13.2 INTRODUCTION TO INDULEKHA

In 1889 O. Chandumenon wrote the first novel in Malayalam called *Indulekha*, which was later translated into English in 1891 by the then Collector of Malabar district. The novel represents the social life of Malabar during the colonial rule in India and depicts the eternal conflict between the older generation and the younger generation. The novel represents the traditional values of the people in Malabar as depicted through the older generation on the

one hand and on the other hand the influence of the Europeans on the younger generation who prefer to learn English and work in British beaurocracy.

Mr. John Willoughby Francis Dumergue, the then collector of Malabar found the novel to be interesting and translated it into English. It is believed that even Queen Victoria was impressed by the story and graciously awarded a certificate to Chandumenon. By 1989 centenary publication, the novel had gone into an estimated 72 reprints, which proves the success of the novel. The novel illustrates an ordinary love story but the manner in which the novel is set in the midst of the social conditions of those days and the colonial rule makes the novel very interesting.

13.3 INDULEKHA IN BRIEF

Indulekha was published in 1889, and is considered to be the first Malayalam fiction. The novel focuses on the Nair community during the second half of the nineteenth century when people were influenced by western ideas and English education. The novel also portrays the orthodox practices of temporary marital alliances between Nair women and Namboodiri men. The Nairs who received education were placed in prominent positions in British India. It was a period of cultural clash, because the Indians were orthodox and at the same time they were also educated.

The issues of feudalism, polygamy, and caste oppression are highlighted in the novel. The novel is also a sharp criticism of the contemporary society where women were given little priority for education. During the eighteenth century there was a contrast between love and money. Most of the people gave importance to money so in the novel people assume that Indulekha's sambandam with Nambuthiri would make her rich but she refused to do so and preferred to succeed in her love. In this regard, she exhibit immense courage to choose her husband.

13.4 A BRIEF NOTE ON COMMUNITIES

13.4.1 Nairs

The Nairs are a Sudra upper caste. They were a martial community and were landowners. The Nair taravad or joint family is governed by the Marumakkathayam law of inheritance. Marumakkathayam means descent through one's sister's children. A taravad consists of the descendents in the female line of a common ancestress. Members of the taravad collectively owned taravad property and lived together in one house. Taravad property was indivisible. Each branch of the taravad, meaning each sister in the taravad, would be of a different branch of the same joint family. Under the Marumakkathayam system, all the members of the taravad were entitled to the daily requirements of food, clothes, and toiletry from a common pool of resources. Thus the taravad took care of the members' personal needs.

One of the ritual practices which was prevalent during the nineteenth century and associated with a girl's life in the Nair taravad was the talikettukalyanam. This ceremony gave the right to the girl to take a sexual partner or enter into contract or sambandam on maturity without much ceremony. The sambandham could be with a Nair man or a Nambuthiri. He gives her a cloth to mark their relationship. He visits her in her taravad but does not eat there. He remains a member of his mother's taravad but does not eat there. The couple could break the sambandam and enter into another sambandam. A man has no rights

towards his children. The bonded with the mother's family and often had little or no contact with their biological fathers.

13.4.2 Namboothiri

The Namboothiris are the Brahmins of Kerala. They were primarily priests and landholders. Only the eldest Namboothiri son's marriage takes place with Namboothiri woman. The other sons have a social contract called sambandam with Nair women. The sambandam could be with a Nair man or a Nambuthiri. Polygamy was accepted. The child born from such relations belonged to their mother's family. The matriarchy practiced by the Nairs is attacked during that period.

This kind of social system seems to have emerged as early as the twelfth century. But the introduction of colonial rule during nineteenth century has brought about changes. The educated Nair men gained employment with the expanding British colonial bureaucracy and started amassing wealth outside the taravad. The inter caste arrangements obviously created close bonds between the Nairs and the Nambuthiris.

13.5 CHARACTERS

13.5.1 Indulekha

Indulekha is 18 years at the beginning of the narrative. She is a charming and beautiful lady, well equipped with a classical education as well as English. Like Madhavan, she too is a rebel. According to O.Chandumenon, beauty is the result of an inner glow, of an inner radiance. Indulekha is the epitome of such beauty in women. She was under the care of Kochukrishnamenon, the eldest son of her maternal grandfather Panchumenon. She acquired knowledge in English, Sanskrit and music. When she was 16 Kochukrishnamenon passed away and she lived with her grandfather in Poovarangu. Though she received an English education, she was keenly aware of her Malayali identity. According to horoscope she should be named Madhavi, but Kochukrishnamenon considering her beauty and gentleness called her Indulekha. However, Madhavan calls her Madhavi.

Indulekha's complexion and beauty is narrated as :

Only by touch could one distinguish between her skin and the brocade border of the mundu which normally covered her midriff. It was impossible to tell by mere sight where the gold-threaded border of the mundu she normally wore ended and where her body began. Her eyes their length, their triple tone, their sparkle, the way she uses them on occasion, and the intense fire in them can be described only by men who have been subjected to their effect.

Indulekha's education and manners matched her physical beauty. She was the daughter of a king from the house of Kilimanoor. Indulekha's father, the king, had passed away when she was only two and a half. She was barely three when her amman Kochukrishnamenon, the eldest son of her maternal grandfather Panchumenon, had taken her away to live in his house. Kochukrishnamenon was a dewan in the government service, drawing a salary of Rs. 800. She was taught English and trained in Sanskrit drama. She also received an advanced education in music and acquired skills in playing the piano, the violin, the veena and other musical instruments. By the time Indulekha was sixteen,

kochukrishnamenon passed away. Thereafter, she lived with her grandfather and mother in her grandfather's house Poovarangu.

Indulekha's daily routine, her practices, and behavior were extremely charming and delightful. She did not dislike Hinduism nor was she attracted to atheism. The respect she had for elders, her aesthetic sensitivity, the lack of pride, and the way she behaved was a source of constant amazement to those who were acquainted with her. Anyone would say that she was a model of how youngsters should learn to behave. Indulekha thus turned out to be a person who upheld her uncle's name and prestige.

13.5.2 Madhavan

Madhavan a brilliant and good looking young man is an embodiment of extreme intelligence. He is a learnt man, courageous and courteous. His physical appearance attracted all. He learnt English till B.L degree. Madhavan's physical accomplishments are described thus:

His body was the color of pure gold. It had the beauty of a youth nurtured in the rites of daily exercise; it was irresistible. What could be seen of Madhavan's limbs and chest was neither too stocky nor too lean and seemed cast in coppery gold. Madhavan's glowing face, the beauty of the different parts of his body, their individual and mutual proportion and harmony, the manly charms of his figure and face can only be termed as amazing. No European who made Madhavan's acquaintance could help but be charmed by his appearance and all of them quickly became his friends.

While young men of the age around eighteen are prone to unethical behavior, Madhavan did not indulge in anything of that kind. Hence, at maturity, his natural glow, his intelligence, and virility were a joy to cherish. He also excelled at English games like lawn tennis and cricket. At a very young age, Madhavan had tried his hand at hunting. He always possessed two or three excellent rifles, a couple of pistols, a revolver and other sundry equipment.

13.5.3 Namboodiri

Nambuthiripad is both fickle and a womanizer. The Nambudiri who appears in this novel is a dimwit. He did not receive any education. He was forty-five years old and took care of the household from a very young age. He was a bachelor and by nature a libertine.

Two of his younger brothers were married. He whiled away his time taking Nair women as wives. Though he was fair-skinned, he was not good looking. Nambuthiripad was crazy about kathakali. He was well versed in the art and had great taste. He would not be satisfied even if he were to watch kathakali for 365 days a year.

13.6 SUMMARY OF THE NOVEL

Part-1: The first part presents the meeting of Indulekha and Madhavan and their attraction towards one another. However, controversial issues such as providing English education to the younger generations emerge in the novel. So the novel begins with an argument about providing English education to the younger ones. Madhavan, a young gentleman, completes B.L exams in Madras and returns to his native place. He wishes that his "Karavan", should

educate the little boy Shinnan. But Panchumanon refuses to pay for the boy's schooling, because Shinna is a distant relation. So Madhavan takes measures to educate his cousin Shinnan. This rouses outrage among the older generation. Panchumenon, a 70 years old man is the grandfather of Madhavan and is the "Karanavans of the taravad of the wealthy Chambazhiyot Poovally taravad". It is a custom that the Karavans educate only their direct nephews and bring up their distant relatives as agriculturalists or servant boys in the Taravad house. Madhavan revolts against this attitude of the Karavan. A note of authority of the older generation is evident from the opening lines:

"How on earth did you dare to speak so, Madhavan? No, you shouldn't have".

Shankaramenon, brother of Panchmenon is annoyed to hear of Madhavan's rebellious attitude to educate Shinnah. "The Karanavan is such a senior person, how could you have spoken so disrespectfully to him? Is this the fruit of the English education he equipped you with? And to think of the vast sums of money he has spent on you!".

The high spirited and honest young Madhavan considered such conduct on the part of his Karanavan extremely shameful and consequently spoke to Panchumenon on the subject strongly. Madhavan represents the younger generation and raises his voice against the taravad system of discrepancies. The Nair taravad was governed by the Marumakkathayam law of inheritance. The taravad system consists of the descendants in the female line of a common ancestress. The members of the taravad collectively owned taravad property and lived together in one house. The karanavan who was normally the eldest male member, looked after the matters of the estate and family. The joint nature of family (taravad) life disturbed the Nairs as it was impossible for individuals to claim property. The younger generations were victims of taravad that would not even pay for their education. Irrespective of the opposition Madhavan decides to take Shinnan along with him to Madras.

When Indulekha moved to Poovarangur she met Madhavan frequently, to the extent that both became extremely fond of each other. It was known that throughout Malabar that Indulekha was a gem of a woman. They began to fall in love but Indulekha did not exhibit her love for him. Similarly Madhavan did not let her know of his love for her. They entertained themselves by reading, singing, playing the piano and playing chess. One can say that in their heart of hearts, they were already married to each other. Most people were happy that Indulekha and Madhavan were in love because they were clearly suited for each other in their education and social status.

Madhavan ponders over what is in Indulekha's mind. They indulge in conversations over the marriage practices. According to Madhavan if Indulekha agrees to marry him the world would appear as a heaven. Whereas Indulekha debates that the relationship between a man and woman is not a serious one. Madhavan gets engrossed over this issue such that even his B.L results do not excite him. However, Indulekha assures him and that they would marry in the near future and share a secret moment in their inner most hearts and promised themselves to each other. "My dearest husband! Why do you grieve like this? I have regarded you as my husband for the last two years. My body and my whole self are yours. You should be what you want to be and remain happy. I have not desired anyone other than you-and will not desire anyone else".

Madhavan's quarrel with Panchmenon makes him to go to Madras. Indulekha desires to accompany him, but considering such an act to be foolish, he assures her that he would return with a job and take her.

Part-2: The second part of the novel demonstrates the separation between the lovers. In this section the novelist takes the opportunity to discuss the practice of Sambandam and how Indulekha, a modern lady rebels against such practices.

Panchumenon is shattered by Madhavan's rebellious attitude. Although he is aware of the love between Indulekha and Madhavan, in a fury he called Kesavannambuthiri and enquired about Moorkillatha Nambuthiri. He intends Nambuthiri to start a sambandam with Indulekha. So a letter of invitation is sent to Nambuthiri.

Nambuthiri accepts the invitation and visits Poovalangu to start a sambandam with Indulekha. The novel is a social criticism of sambandam. Indulekha's attitude and reaction towards the issue of sambandam is interesting. The Nambuthiri is 45 years old and has not received any education. He being a libertine has a great taste to watch Kathakali. The procession of the Nambuthiri is narrated as:

Eight people for the Palanquins, 6 for the litter, those who were bearing these as well as those who were walking along to relieve the bearers, had been ordered to hum together. 14 people humming together in one voice. 2 to 4 people crying out 'hey, hey, fo, fo, hu, hu at the fore. This cry was the royal sign of the Nambuthiripad .

All gap at Nambuthiri's arrival. They believe it is worth seeing. He appears like a golden statue. Right from his head to toe he glitters with gold cap, gold coloured clothes, gold-glided slippers and gold rings on all ten fingers. The moment Nambuthiri steps out from the palanquin around one meter circle the glare of the sun turns yellow acquiring a golden glow. People believe that this would be the most fitting sambandam for Indulekha because there is nobody in the kingdom as rich as he, while she is not bothered to even look at him.

In contrast to Nambuthiri, Indulekha shows a sense of taste; which turns away from ornamentation and jewellery to notions of a simple elegance in clothing. Her clothes are with special weave and gold border; they are kept clean and white. The dominance of gold in Nambuthiri's attire is contrasted with the elegant cleanliness of Indulekha's white clothes with a golden border. Gold, a sign of wealth, is subjected to different norms, while gold occupies the position of substance in Nambuthiri's attire, it becomes a sign in Indulekha's clothing.

Indulekha stays undisturbed over Nambuthiri's arrival. In fact when her aunt questions if she saw the procession, Indulekha replies in a satirical manner "Why was there a festival in the temple? Why didn't you call me Grandmother? How many elephants were there? I didn't hear the music or the drums" .

Nambuthiri pays two visits to Indulekha's room. On his first visit, seeing Indulekha, he feels as if lightening had struck his eyes. Indulekha's manner of conversation stuns Nambuthiri. The usage of "I" startles him because a Nair lady had never spoken to him like that. While Nambuthiri fails to recite few slokas Indulekha recites a Sanskrit sloka at ease.

Aastham piyushabhassumughi garajara mrityuharee prasidha-

Sthallabhopayachinthapi cha garalajusho hethurullakhathaya
Nochedaloladrishthiprathibhayabhujagii dushtakarma muhusthe
Yamevalambya jive katha madhara sudha madhurima pyajanam.

During the second meeting she snubs him in each and every dialogue. However, she plays the piano as she learns that her grandfather did not have a good opinion about Nambuthiri. The music emanating from Indulekha's room makes people believe that the sambandam has taken place.

But the fact that Indulekha is neither attracted to Nambuthiri nor is tempted by his wealth makes him feel insulted and broods over the issue. He discusses with Govindan his servant and realizes that Indulekha with her English customs and manners would not fit into the "mana", he decides to make a sambandam with Kalyanikutty, niece of Panchumenon. As it would be humiliating for him to return without a sambandam he insists that the sambandam should take place on the same night and that they should leave in palanquine so that people would assume that he had carried Indulekha. Finally, he talks to Panchumenon and succeeds in having the sambandam with Kalyanikutty.

Shankarshastrikal, a good friend of Indulekha and Madhavan, visits Poovarangu and learns about the sambandam. Looking at the jubilant procession Shastrikal wonders how Indulekha could make such a decision. "Indulekha's love is a love for amazing wealth. She knows no other love". He is shattered and leaves for his home town. On the same day Madhavan arrives home from Madras and learns from Shastrikal that Indulekha's sambandam has taken place. Madhavan being well educated is misled like others that Indulekha is carried away by Nambuthiri. So in a fury he decides to go away from his home town. He sends a letter through Shinna to his father Govindapanikkar that he wants to set out on a tour of the country.

Part-3: The third part of the novel reveals the efforts taken by the older generation to unite the lovers.

Panchumenon realizes that Madhavan would be the right match for Indulekha. He appreciates Indulekha's personality and wishes to fulfill her desire to marry Madhavan. The elders are annoyed at Madhavan's misunderstanding and his trip, so Govindapanikkar (Madhavan's father) and Govindakuttyemenon (son of Panchumenon) set out in search of Madhavan. Meanwhile Madhavan boards the ship that was sailing to Calcutta. During his trip he comes across prominent millionaires of Calcutta. Babu Govinda Sen and his brother Chitraprasad are impressed by Madhavan and invite him to their house. Madhavan is spellbound to see their bungalows that stood in the midst of a beautiful garden. The novelist elaborates on the richness of the people by adopting modernity. The bungalow of Babu Govinda Sen shows the intrinsic taste for art that they adopted from English people.

There were a variety of tables patterned after English designs with marble, white stone, special wood, and ivory Carved crystal chandeliers hung in a wide circle. There were numerous other lamps with crystal hangings in white, blue and yellow. In some places, the floor was covered with silk carpets, in other places set with finely crafted marble slab. The rooms had grand interiors with expensive silk curtains at the windows and in doorways (168). Madhavan accepts the hospitality of Babu Govind Sen and stays for ten days in this heaven-like bungalow called Amaravati. Here Govind Sen is referred as a rich man equal to Kubera.

At last they trace out Madhavan and return to Malabar. They discuss how Madhavan could lose sense and run away from home. Probably his English education has made him to revolt against the elders. Indulekha falls sick during Madhavan's absence but stays strong and grieves over Madhavan's readiness to believe the false story. Madhavan's return brings joy to the family. Panchumenon arranges a swayamvaram for Indulekha. Barely after a month of their marriage, Madhavan enters in civil services. Thus the story ends on a happy note with the lovers united.

13.7 THE MAIN ISSUE

The young members of the taravad were mostly English-educated and were getting access to prosperity outside of the taravad, mainly through jobs in government service. O. Chandumenon was appointed as the member of the Malabar Marriage Commission by the government in 1891. The novel was written against the background to regularize Nair Marriages. Subash Jeyan comments on modernity in Chandumenon. He writes:

He is neither with the traditionalists, who are either at a loss in the face of changes taking place in society, portrayed in a character like Panchumenon or who don't really have a clue about their own traditions, brought out in a character like the Nambuthiripad. Neither do his sympathies seem to lie with a demand for outright change, as someone in the novel like Govindankuttymenon would have it. Chandumenon's modernity occupies a space between these two extremes.

He felt Nairs were capable of moving into modernity without giving up their own culture. Indulekha was written in the very midst of these discussions and controversies. A large number of these issues like Nambuthiri dominance, the structure of authority in the taravad, western education, women's education, the study of English, Nair marriages etc. are discussed in the novel through the dialogues of the characters. Chandumenon concludes that the Nair taravad can retain its structure and also be reformed.

13.8 POINTS TO REMEMBER

- The novel portrays the decline of the feudal system in Kerala and the emergence of an educated middle class.
- Nambuthiri represents the decadence of feudalism, its caste oppression and polygamy.
- Lack of willingness of the Nambudiris to adapt to the change of times.
- The struggle by Nair women to break out of the age-old principle of Sambandham.
- Indulekha dramatizes the resistance of a progressive woman. She refuses to succumb to the oppression of the Nambuthiri and marries Madhavan.
- She represents a balance between tradition and modernity.
- Madhavan represents the younger generation.
- Both Indulekha and Madhavan exhibit a reasonably comfortable stance with tradition and their education in English is a remarkable sign of an emerging modernity.

13.9 CONCLUSION

The novel demonstrates how the transition takes place from the old system to modern system. The lovers overcome all odds, brought about by the weaknesses in the society, and use their education in the right sense to unite and live happily, marking a great transition from

the uninitiated old system to the years of modernity. The most interesting aspect of the novel is the manner in which Indulekha is portrayed. Indulekha's beauty, refined manners, simplicity of taste, conversational powers, wit, and humor adds to her intellect. Her behavior and attitude is a blend of intelligence that she gained from both English education and classical one. Indulekha retains tradition, culture and accepts modernity striking a balance between both. Thus the novel reveals the social life of Malabar during the colonial rule. The novel gained popularity for the manner in which O. Chandumenon emphasized on rights of a woman.

13.10 COMPREHENSIVE CHECK QUESTIONS

1. Discuss the impact of English education on Madhavan and Indulekha in the novel *Indulekha*.
2. Write a brief note on the system of Sambandam and how it is practiced.
3. Illustrate the character of Indulekha.
4. Elaborate on the significance of the title *Indulekha*.

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Dr. G. Srilatha

LESSON 14

PREM CHAND: GODAN

Translated by Jai Ratan and P.Lal

OBJECTIVES

After going through the novel, you will be able to:

- Understand about the life and works of PremChand in Indian Writing in English translation
- Understand the bad effects of social evils practiced in the society in 1960-70's.
- Understand the features Social Realistic Novel
- Religious sentiments of Middle class and poor sections of India.

STRUCTURE

- 14.1 Introduction of the Writer
- 14.2 Summary of the Novel
- 14.3 Conclusion
- 14.4 Comprehension Check Questions
- 14.5 References

14.1 INTRODUCTION OF THE WRITER

Premchand (31 July 1880 – 8 October 1936), better known as **Munshi Premchand**, Munshi being an honorary prefix, 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 Hindustani writers of the early twentieth century. Born **Dhanpat Rai Srivastav**, he began writing under the pen name "Nawab Rai", but subsequently switched to "Premchand". A novel writer, story writer and dramatist, he has been referred to as the "*Upanyas Samrat*" ("Emperor among Novelists") by some Hindi writers. His works include more than a dozen novels, around 250 short stories, several essays and translations of a number of Premchand was born on 31 July 1880 in Lamahi, a village located near Varanasi (Banaras). His ancestors came from a large Kayastha family, which owned six bighas of land.

His grandfather Gur Sahai Rai was a patwari (village accountant), and his father Ajaib Rai was a post office clerk. His mother was Anandi Devi of Karauni village, who could have been the inspiration for the character Anandi in his *Bade Ghar Ki Beti*. Premchand was the fourth child of Ajaib Lal and Anandi; the first two were girls who died as infants, and the third one was a girl named Suggi. His parents named him Dhanpat Rai ("the master of wealth"), while his uncle, Mahabir, a rich landowner, nicknamed him "Nawab" ("Prince").

"Nawab Rai" was the first pen name chosen by Premchand.

When he was 7 years old, Premchand began his education at a madarsa in Lalpur, located near Lamahi. Premchand learnt Urdu and Persian from a maulvi in the madarsa. When he was 8, his mother died after a long illness. His grandmother, who took the responsibility of raising him, died soon after. Premchand felt isolated, as his elder sister had

already been married, and his father was always busy with work. His father, who was now posted at Gorakhpur, remarried, but Premchand received little affection from his step-mother.

The step-mother later became a recurring theme in Premchand's works.

After his mother's death, Premchand sought solace in fiction, and developed a fascination for books. He heard the stories from the Persian-language fantasy epic *Tilism-e-Hoshruha* at a tobacconist's shop. He took the job of selling books for a book wholesaler, thus getting the opportunity to read a lot of books. He learnt English at a missionary school, and studied several works of fiction including George W. M. Reynolds's eight-volume *The Mysteries of the Court of London*.^[8] He composed his first literary work at Gorakhpur, which was never published and is now lost. It was a farce on a bachelor, who falls in love with a low-caste woman. The character was based on Premchand's uncle, who used to scold him for being obsessed with reading fiction; the farce was probably written as a revenge for this.

After his father was posted to Jamniya in the mid-1890s, Premchand enrolled at the Queen's College at Banaras as a day scholar. In 1895, he was married at the age of 15, while still studying in the 9th grade. The match was arranged by his maternal step-grandfather. The girl was from a rich landlord family and was older than Premchand, who found her quarrelsome and not good-looking.

Premchand's father died in 1897 after a long illness. He managed to pass the matriculation exam with second division (below 60% marks). However, only the students with first division were given fee concession at the Queen's College. Premchand then sought admission at the Central Hindu College, but was unsuccessful because of his poor arithmetic skills. Thus, he had to discontinue his studies.

Premchand then obtained an assignment to coach an advocate's son in Benares at a monthly salary of five rupees. He used to live reside in a mud-cell over the advocate's stables, and used to send 60% of his salary back home. Premchand read a lot during these days. After racking up several debts, in 1899, he once went to a book shop to sell one of his collected books. There, he met the headmaster of a missionary school at Chunar, who offered him a job as a teacher, at a monthly salary of rupees 18. He also took up the job of tutoring a student at a monthly fees of rupees 5.

In 1900, Premchand secured a job as an assistant teacher at the Government District School, Bahraich, at a monthly salary of rupees 20. Three months later, he was transferred to the District School in Pratapgarh, where he stayed in an administrator's bungalow and tutored his son.

Dhanpat Rai first wrote under the pseudonym "Nawab Rai". His first short novel was *Asrar e Ma'abid* (*Devasthan Rahasya* in Hindi, "The Secrets of God's Abode"), which explores corruption among the temple priests and their sexual exploitation of poor women. The novel was published in a series in the Benares-based Urdu weekly *Awaz-e-Khalk* from 8 October 1903 to February 1905. Siegfried Schulz states that "his inexperience is quite evident in his first novel", which is not well-organized, lacks a good plot and features stereotyped characters. Prakash Chandra Gupta calls it an "immature work", which shows a tendency to "see life only white or black".

Socialistic ideology

Prem Chand was a progressive writer. His aim was not only to present the plight of the small farmers, but also to highlight the disparity between the rich and the poor, and the apathy or rather the antipathy of the 'haves' against 'have-nots'. The rich money-lenders were not only blind to the abject conditions, in which the small farmers were living but Prem Chand had sympathy for the underdog. He could not become a communist because communism could not get roots in the soil of India in spite of the wide-spread poverty all over the country. But socialism was certainly in his blood. He would change the society through education and understanding, through love and persuasion, instead of a bloody revolution.

14.2 SUMMARY OF THE NOVEL: GODAN

Godan is a step in this direction. Prem Chand draws attention towards the miserable condition of the small farmers. They were poverty-stricken, yet they were exploited by the Zamindars and the money-lenders. To some extent, their poverty was manmade. Hori was a small farmer. In the opening chapter, he expressed his fear of the Rai Saheb because he knew that several farmers had been thrown off their land only because they had annoyed the Rai Saheb. Lest the Rai Saheb should be displeased with him. He was also burdened with debt-"He knew that there was no money at home, that the land rent was still unpaid and the loan from Bisesar Shar was still outstanding, with one anna to the rupee interest mounting on it monthly." Buying a cow, which was his dream, he knew, would never be fulfilled without a trick.

Fines imposed upon farmers

As he appeared before the Rai Saheb, he was informed that the Rai Saheb had to scrape twenty thousand rupees and his village had to contribute five hundred rupees. He was seething with anger since he failed to surmise how this additional payment would be made by the starving populace-"He picked up his stick and headed for home, tormented with the trouble of where the money could be raised for this special occasion.

Getting and losing the Cow

Hori told revolting Gobar, his son that they had to dance and pay taxes according to the whims and fancy of the Zamindar to keep the Zamindar in the good cheer---"One cannot fight with the crocodile while living in water." He had to trick Bhola into giving him cow on the false promise that he would get him a second wife. The cow brought a ray of happiness to Hori's family, but the joy was short-lived. Jhinguri Singh, the money leader, cast his evil eye on it and Hori's younger brother, Hira, grew so jealous that he poisoned the cow to death. The small dream of the family was soon shattered.

Exploitation by Damri

A poor man was easily be fooled and exploited. Hori was in need of money. He decided to sell his bamboos at the rate of twenty rupees for a hundred. But Hori asked Damri that he should tell his brother that he had bought them at the rate of fifteen rupees in the bargain. But Damri exploited him, and actually paid fifteen rupees for a hundred.

A get-together

A get-together was arranged at Rai Sahib's house. A sumptuous dinner was held. The poor person had not even heard of the valuable dainties served to the guests. And after a formal discussion on several issues, they come upon a plan to allure the teetotaler editor Onkarnath into drinking. Dr.Malti was persuaded to do the trick and she succeeded as she made the tempting offer that a street in the city would be named after him. Pundit Onkarnath projected himself as a man of principles, but all his principles evaporated in the heat of small temptations.

Hunting parties and hospitality of tribal girl

Then the guests were divided into three different parties to go out for hunting. Miss Malti went with Mehta in a tour of the jungle. Mehta shot at several animals but missed the target. Mehta crossed a river with Malti perched on his shoulder. While walking along the bank, Mehta shot at a bird which fell down injured into the stream. Mehta tried to get at the bird, but in vain. A girl in the mean time jumped into the stream and in flash caught the bird.

Mehta was struck by her agility. The girl took Mehta and Malti to her hut. At the request of Mehta, the girl made corn flour Chapattis for them. The hospitability and the elemental simplicity of the girl impressed Mehta so much that he told Malti, "If you had some of her qualities, you could be a real goddess."Mehta further told her, She'd have gone to all this trouble just a readily if you were some poor woman. All I can do is write essays and give speeches on universal love and brotherhood. She puts that love and sacrifice into practice."

When Malti asked the girl to get the car arrogantly, the girl's sense of self -respect was hurt. She told Malti, "I am nobody's slave. You may be rich but only in your own house. I haven't come begging to you for anything. I won't go for the car."

Revelry with the labor class

A similar incident happened with Mirza Khurshed and Tankha,Miraz killed a deer, which must be a good eighty pounds at least. Mirza was sad to see the dear dead. A woodcutter offered to carry it for Mirza but Mirza gave it to him. He took it to his village feast was held with Mirza and Tankha as special guests. Again, the primeval simplicity and exuberance of life are revealed to the pleasure of Mirza, though Tankha did not take interest in the revelry.

Tyranny of the Zamindar

On a rainy day, the farmers went out to sow the fall crop but the word came from the Zamindar that nobody would be allowed to sow the crop until the debts were repaid. This was a bolt from the blue. The farmer could not understand how they would repay the loans if their fields remained idle. They went to Nokheyram, agent of the Zamindar, but he told them that those were the master's orders. Hori could not understand the game because the master was very sympathetic for the farmers. In fact, the agents and other employees were more cruel than the master. The farmers were so much terrified that they didn't have the courage to go to the master with the complaint against his agent. Hori thought of going to the Rai Saheb but he had to give up the idea because none else was protesting.

Money-lender's policy

It was a Nokheyram's policy to force the farmers to get further loans from the money-lenders. The farmer ran to Mangaru, Pandit Datadin, Dulari and Jhinguri Singh. Hori could not go to any money-lender other money-lenders. Jhenguri Singh was already looking for an opportunity to grab Hori's cow. But the fate would not have it because Hira had poisoned the cow.

Enquiry into Cow's murder and police excess

Pundit Datadin volunteered himself to make an enquiry into the murder of the cow which was a sin. Before Matadin could pronounce his judgement, the village Chowkidar informed the police. As a result, the Police Inspector, Ganda Singh arrived and asked for thirty rupees on the condition that fifty per cent would be the commission of the four money-lenders. But Dhaniya took the bold stand. She said that she would not pay anything since it was none of Hori's fault. But the Inspector would not go without the bribe. He asked the village elders to pay him fifty rupees. They had to shell out the sum. The novelist remarks, "what is earned by extortion will be lost the same way."

Gobar-Jhuniya affair

Hori's wife, Dhaniya, got the wind of Gobar's affair with Bhola's widow daughter, Jhuniya, being carried in a clandestine manner. Hori and Dhaniya did not approve of it. Nevertheless Gobar brought Jhuniya to his house and himself went away to Lucknow with the resolve that he would come back after making some money. Hori and Dhaniya did not turn Jhuniya out of the house. They accepted her as their daughter-in-law. This act of humanity put Hori to new troubles. The event aroused a furore in the village. Bhola decided to get the price of the cow paid to him immediately or he would file a suit against Hori. At the same time Hori's caste excommunicated him, stopped sharing a smoke with him.

The elders of the village decided unanimously to impose a fine of a hundred rupees on Hori. Dhaniya protested against the tyranny, but Hori was sitting duck; he accepted the verdict lying down. As a result, "the gain was gone and another hundred rupees had been added to the burden of debt on their heads."

Gobar arrives at Lucknow

When Gobar reached Lucknow, he came to know that Mirza Khurshed was employing labourers for six annas a day, which was a big sum for Gobar. When he went to work, the labourers were asked to play Kabaddi, but Gobar was assigned the job of watering the plant. Mirza later arranged a kabaddi match of the oldsters and sold tickets for it. The match was held and Dr. Mehta won it.

Characters of Khanna and Tankha

The talks between the Rai Saheb and Khanna revealed the fact that Khanna had arranged a loan for Surya Pratap Singh at a lower interest of seven per cent because he knew that there were few chances of getting the property redeemed. Tankha tried to lure Miss Malti to contest election but Malti dismissed the idea straight. However he succeeded in enticing the Rai Saheb.

Bhola took away the bullocks

Hori's crop had gone. He was starving, His brother's wife, Punia came to his rescue. She gave him some bushels of grain. But Bhola came to ask for the price of his cow. As Hori was penniless, Bhola said that he would take away his two bullocks. He made it clear that he should either turn Jhuniya out of his house or give him his two bullocks. Jhuniya offered to leave the house with her baby, but Dhaniya did not let her go, no matter what happened to them. Though the village elders wanted to check Bhola from taking away the bullocks, Hori allowed him to take away the bullocks since he would not turn Jhuniya out of his house.

Mischief of the print media

When the Rai Saheb came to know about the fine realized from Hori, he asked Nokheyram to explain what right he had to collect a fine from his tenant without informing him : Nokheyram, Pateshwari, Datadin, Jhinguri Singh felt they would soon be in trouble and they could not find any way out. Therefore they wrote anonymous letter to the daily paper Lightning.

Onkarnath was on the lookout for such an opportunity. He asked the Rai Saheb whether he had realized a fine of eighty rupees from one of his tenants. The Rai Saheb went personally to Onkarnath to make him realize that he was getting money from him regularly and sweets on all the festivals and was invited to the parties. He, therefore, expected him to ignore such complaint. Onkarnath gladly accepted fifteen hundred rupees from the Rai Saheb. Even the newspaper which claimed to be the champion of social justice changed stance on getting money.

A trick of Datadin

Hori's bullocks had gone. It was therefore not possible for him to plough his fields. For Datadin it was a God sent opportunity. He gave him seeds and a bushel of barley on the condition that he would get half of the yield. Hori accepted the offer because his field was lying fallow. Something was better than nothing.

Hori left penniless

Mr. Khanna started the sugar mill. He offered to make spot payment for the sugarcane. When Hori, Dhaniya, Sona and Rupa cut the crop, all the money-lenders, Dulari, Mangaru, Datadin, Pateshwari, and jhinguri Singh came running from all directions. Hori got hundred and twenty rupees for his crop, but Jhinguri deducted his full dues with capital and gave him only twenty five rupees which he gave to Nokheyram. Thus Hori was again left penniless.

Khanna-Govindi affair

Khanna and his wife were not getting long. Khanna wanted to be married to Miss Malti, Govindi told him frankly she had "a thousand old fools like you in her pocket." but the quarrel became so serious that Govindi left the home and went to the zoo with her child. Mehta also happened to go there and found Govindi in a despondent mood. He explained to her that she was a virtuous and noble wife and mother. He took her back to her home.

Gobar's business

Gobar was not more a country lout. He pursued his aim of earning money in all possible ways. He worked as a labourer on daily wages, then became a hawker, selling spices, etc., and then he setup a stall to sell cold-drinks in the summer and tea in the winter.

Thus he earned money which he lent on interest. He could know that the Mirza Khurshed was in the habit of not repaying the loan. .Therefore like a clever man he put off Mirza when he asked for money. . On the advice of his neighbors he decided to bring Jhuniya from the village.

Hori's poor health

Hori's conditions forced him and his wife Dhaniya to work as labourers for Datadin, who was hard task master, and extracted as much work as possible from the labourers. Hori could have only roasted grams once a day and was forced to do hard labor. Therefore he fell down unconscious.

Gobar's confrontation with money-lenders and his parents

When Gobar arrived in the village, he found his parents and sisters in tatters. He was seething with anger and decided to settle score with the money-lenders and other tormentors of his parents. He told the money-lenders that he would not pay them such high-rate of interest and that he would bring the matter to the notice of the Rai Saheb, as hews living in the same town with him. Gobar ridiculed them also on the Holiday. Gobar went to Bhola and managed to get back the two bullocks of his father. Gobar told his mother that he would go away to the city with Jhuniya as it was not possible for him to stay in the village and repay all the debts of his father. He told her brashly, "and now you and father both expect me to settle all your debts , pay the rent and take care of the girls marriages. It's as though I'm living only to finance your payments. Don't I have family too. "These words of Gobar pierced the hearts of his father and mother.

Hori and Dhaniya's worries

Dhaniya held that Jhuniya had poisoned the mind of Gobar and incited him against his parents. But Hori was of the view that the city life had changed the boy's outlook. The parents failed to realize that Gobar had seen through the villainy of the money-lenders in the village and Hori's slavish submission before them. He was, distracted and said plainly, "You're worse than a baby who hears a cat meow and starts screaming. How long do I have to run around defending you?"

Siliya affair

Hori and Dhaniya got involved in Siliya affair. Siliya had bought rose colouring worth two pice from Dulari during the Holi festival. When Dulari asked for payment, Siliya gave her four pice worth of grain out of Matadin's stock , believing that she had the right to do so by virtue of being Matadin's mistress, but Matadin didn't want to give anything in return through he had taken possession of Siliya's body and soul. Matadin told her that she had no right to squander his grain, and that she was nothing more than a hired labourer. Siliya's parents and caste people were so much anguished by this that they caught hold of Matadin

and stuffed a big piece of bone in Matadin's mouth. They wanted to take away Siliya with them, but Siliya refused to go with them, as she still thought that Matadin would accept her as his wife as he had promised to her. Contrary to her expectation, Matadin told her to stop following him and that he would not have any connection with her. Dhaniya took pity on Siliya and gave shelter to her in her house.

Problem of Rupa's marriage

Sons of Jhinguri, Pateshwari and Nokheram came home during Dusehra holidays. They were like the three bulls on the rampage. They started hovering around Hori's house since Sona was now a young girl of seventeen. Dulari promised to give him money for Sona's marriage which was being fixed with Mathura. Gauri Mehto advised Hori not to worry regarding dowry. He was willing to make his own arrangement for food. As Hori's crop was auctioned off because Mangaru got a decree against him. Dulari refused to loan money to him because there was no security for repayment left when the cane crop had been auctioned.

Bad reputation of Nohri and loan for Rupa's marriage

Bhola and his wife Nohri were turned out of their house by their son, Kamta. Bhola was given employment by Nokheyram who was interested in Bhola's young wife. Nohri got money and respect in the village for being the mistress of Nokheyram. People said all sorts of things about her morals.

Nohri offered to give money to Hori for Rupa's marriage she hoped that this act of altruism would improve her image in the village. Thus Rupa was married to Ramsewak.

Gobar's Degradation

Gobar began to live a life of dissipation. He indulged in sex and took to drinking and gambling. His business was taken over by other vendors in his absence. Jhuniya was expecting again. She had become weak since she didn't get proper diet. After some time her son, Lallu, died. It was a serious blow to her.

Help of Chuhia and Self-employment of jhuniya

The pregnancy of jhuniya had advanced, but she didn't have money at all. Chuhia, whom she had met at the public water tap became sympathetic. When jhuniya had labour pains, she came to help her. Gobar didn't have money to get a midwife. Chuhia, who had given birth to a dozen of children, volunteered to act as the midwife. It was with her help that Jhuniya gave birth to a male child. Chuhia had to give suck to the child since jhuniya didn't have milk in her breast.

There was a strike in the Mill. The Mill-owners decided to employ new workers. It was decided that they would prevent the new workers from entering the premises. Mirza khurshed who was the president of the workers union was beaten up, and Gobar who was trying to protect him was seriously injured. His whole body had been mangled. Jhuniya was nervous, but Chuhia came to her help. She gave money to Gobar to go to the hospital. Gobar not only got the medical aid but also the assurance that he was not going to die.

But it would be months before Gobar would be well. Therefore Jhuniya made up her mind to go to work. She started cutting grass and selling it in the market. Gobar was recovering, but he had realized his mistake of being cruel to Jhuniya.

Khanna's Mill caught fire

Khanna's sugar mill caught fire. Khanna bewailed that two hundred thousand rupees he had borrowed from the bank was invested in this mill. He was therefore penniless. But in this hour of grief, he remembered, "you have no idea, Mr. Mehta, how I have sacrificed my principles-how many bribes were given, how many bribes were taken, the kind of men I hired to weight the farmer's sugar caned false weights were used." The writer wants to say that Khanna had the retribution for his sins.

Matadin's love for Siliya

Matadin showed signs of love and compassion for Siliya, and also of guilt for having deserted her when she was pregnant. He gave two rupees to Hori to pass it on to Siliya, who was extremely happy to receive the money because the sum was the token of Matadin's love and regard for her. She went all the way to Sona's house to tell her of her good fortune but her meeting with Mathura was misinterpreted by Sona as a love rendezvous between the two. She snubbed Siliya very hard for coming between her and her husband.

After some time Siliya gave birth to a child. Matadin came to Dhaniya's house, took the child in his arms. "a tingle ran through him like rays of light quivering through rippling water." But one day the child ate the hailstones, fell ill and died. Matadin broke all restrictions, and went to the cremation ground and went to live in Siliya's hut which, he said, was the temple of his goddess. The novelist gives the message that love conquers all, even caste and colour prejudices.

Rupa's Marriage held

Hori's condition was deteriorating day by day. His daughter, Rupa, was of marriageable age. Matadin brought the proposal of her marriage with Ramsewak, who was only three or four years younger than Hori. It was a serious blow to Hori. How could he marry Rupa who was in full bloom with the withered old stump. But Hori knew that he had no alternative. Dhaniya also felt the delicacy of the situation. Rupa was married to Ramsewak.

Gobar's commiseration

Gobar came to attend his sister's marriage. He was grieved to see the plight of his father. He realized that he could be of some help to them and regretted that he did not perform his duty. Hira also appeared and begged excuse for the sin of killing a cow, and the suffering caused to Hori. Hori pardoned him.

Hori's death

But Hori was exhausted. He did not have a square meal a day for months on end. And one day he died penniless. His wife Dhaniya brought twenty annas they had made that morning from the twine, placed the money in the cold hand of her husband and gave it to

Datadin , saying that it was his Godan, the gift of the cow, though the poor fellow had never had the luck of having a cow.

14.3 CONCLUSION

Premchand's "Godan" produces the rustic, simplistic and heart-rending lives of the peasants. Far, from exaggeration, "Godan" is "a novel of stark reality". It deals with the dreams, despairs and day-to day events of Hori, the protagonist of the novel, and his family.

Through the peasants, Premchand has portrayed the pathetic life of the rural arena. Hori is an embodiment of peasant-virtue, simplicity and truth. He leads an inconsistent life with his wife Dhaniya, and his three children. Their unstable financial situation always tends to lend them frustration and despair. A tension-free life is not theirs. If they spend a quarter of their lives in starvation, they spend the rest paying unwarranted loans. The money-lenders take full advantage of their poverty and therefore take unreasonable interest from them.

Premchand writes: A loan was an unwelcome guest, once in the house, dug himself into permanent fixture." The money-lenders also exploit the ignorance and gullibility of the peasants. The village-folk in the higher strata of society, who are financially sounder, take advantage of the village-peasants. In the novel, we find, we find how Dulari mounts a small amount of money into a hundred rupees within a small fraction of time.

The Zamindars are no exception in this regard. They make maximum use of the tenants and extract manual labor from them. Hori, already old, and fatigued from poverty has to do strenuous work in order to make both ends meet. The cow he eventually gets hold of is mercilessly killed by his cruel brother Heera.

Their ambitions and dreams are also made apparent by the novelist. While some of them love their soil, the younger generation opts for city life. For them, material prospects hold more water than sentimental values. Hori therefore does not approve with Gobar to shift to the city. For Gobar, material prospects hold more water than sentimental values. Therefore Hori does not embrace the idea of moving to the city. A typical peasant, his land is everything to him.. He regards the cattle also as a member of the family. Isolated life does not appeal to them and they long to thrive and integrate with the community. This becomes apparent when Hori is willing to pay the fine imposed by the village for admitting Jhuniya.

Hori does not want to be treated as an outcaste. He tells Dhaniya that he wants to live with society and not outside society.

The lack of education of the peasants can be considered a major factor in their backwardness. Superstitions are prevalent. We have a humorous account of how news spreads in the village of Dania's over-powering the inspector. After the incident, people flock around Hori's hut to have a Dashing of Dhaniya. They undergo all the rites, to protect the newly arrived cow from the evil eye. They cannot fling away their false pride even in the face of dire poverty. Even though, Sona's bridegroom does not demand any dowry, they pay it as it a matter of prestige in society. Again, the caste-system very much exists. We find Heera admonishing Punia for quarrelling with a low caste man.

Women are not portrayed as equal to men. We find Damri exclaiming to Hori how his son ran away leaving his wife with another woman. Subsequently, his wife gets married to

another man. Damri gets revolted only with the infidelity of women and not men thereby practicing double standards. The husbands ill treat their wives after drinking. Dhanial talks of Hori's ill-treatment and quips how it would have been if it were the other way around. Heera also abuses his wife. Though Gobar is affectionate towards his wife in the beginning, gradually their relationship deteriorates. "Early married life throbs with love and desire; like the dawn the span of life is suffused with a roseate glow. The afternoon of life dissolves illusion into its stinging rays, but brings face to face with reality."

Some of the scenes will always be memorable. Like, for instance, when Rupa sucks on a raw mango in starvation. The handing over of the child-like Rupa to the elderly man in marriage. The deserting of the aged parents by Jhunial and Gobar, who bore all pains and social stigma for them. The economical system came as a blessing, but Jhenguri Singh makes maximum use of it to manipulate people. The most heart-rending scene is the death of Hori or more precisely his last moments. His being religious and magnanimous, the family does not possess the adequate means even to complete his final rites. The novel thus ends in a tragedy.

14.4 COMPREHENSION CHECK QUESTIONS

1. Write a note on *Godan* as a Socialistic Novel...
2. What is your assessment of Premchand's place among Indian novelists of regional literatures? Illustrate your answer.
3. Discuss in detail the theme of "Struggle for Survival" of the Indian peasants with reference to "Hori" character.
4. Write a critical appreciation of the novel *Godan*.
5. Discuss Premchand as a social reformer with reference to his works.

14.5 REFERENCES

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- 2) Pillai, D. *Indian Novel: A Critical Perspective*. LNA, New Delhi, 2009.

Dr. M.Suresh Kumar

LESSON 15

PREM CHAND: GODAN

Translated by Jai Ratan and P.Lal

OBJECTIVES

After going through the novel, you will be able to:

- Understand about the life and works of Premchand in Indian Writing in English translation
- Understand the bad effects of social evils practiced in the society in 1960-70's.
- Understand the features of Social Realistic Novel
- Religious sentiments of Middle class and poor sections of India.

STRUCTURE

15.1 Introduction of the Writer

15.2 Godan as an epic

15.3 Godan is a Criticism of Life: Literature is a Criticism of the Society

15.4 Conclusion- Godan is a Criticism of Life:

15.5 Comprehension Check Questions

15.6 References

15.1 INTRODUCTION OF THE WRITER

Premchand (31 July 1880 – 8 October 1936), better known as **Munshi Premchand**, Munshi being an honorary prefix, 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 Hindustani writers of the early twentieth century. Born **Dhanpat Rai Srivastav**, he began writing under the pen name "Nawab Rai", but subsequently switched to "Premchand". A novel writer, story writer and dramatist, he has been referred to as the "*Upanyas Samrat*" ("Emperor among Novelists") by some Hindi writers. His works include more than a dozen novels, around 250 short stories, several essays and translations of a number of Premchand was born on 31 July 1880 in Lamahi, a village located near Varanasi (Banaras). His ancestors came from a large Kayastha family, which owned six bighas of land.

His grandfather Gur Sahai Rai was a patwari (village accountant), and his father Ajaib Rai was a post office clerk. His mother was Anandi Devi of Karauni village, who could have been the inspiration for the character Anandi in his *Bade Ghar Ki Beti*. Premchand was the fourth child of Ajaib Lal and Anandi; the first two were girls who died as infants, and the third one was a girl named Suggi. His parents named him Dhanpat Rai ("the master of wealth"), while his uncle, Mahabir, a rich landowner, nicknamed him "Nawab" ("Prince"). "Nawab Rai" was the first pen name chosen by Premchand.

When he was 7 years old, Premchand began his education at a madarsa in Lalpur, located near Lamahi. Premchand learnt Urdu and Persian from a maulvi in the madarsa.

When he was 8, his mother died after a long illness. His grandmother, who took the responsibility of raising him, died soon after. Premchand felt isolated, as his elder sister had

already been married, and his father was always busy with work. His father, who was now posted at Gorakhpur, remarried, but Premchand received little affection from his step-mother. The step-mother later became a recurring theme in Premchand's works.

After his mother's death, Premchand sought solace in fiction, and developed a fascination for books. He heard the stories from the Persian-language fantasy epic *Tilism-e-Hoshroba* at a tobacconist's shop. He took the job of selling books for a book wholesaler, thus getting the opportunity to read a lot of books. He learnt English at a missionary school, and studied several works of fiction including George W. M. Reynolds's eight-volume *The Mysteries of the Court of London*.^[8] He composed his first literary work at Gorakhpur, which was never published and is now lost. It was a farce on a bachelor, who falls in love with a low-caste woman. The character was based on Premchand's uncle, who used to scold him for being obsessed with reading fiction; the farce was probably written as a revenge for this.

After his father was posted to Jamniya in the mid-1890s, Premchand enrolled at the Queen's College at Banaras as a day scholar. In 1895, he was married at the age of 15, while still studying in the 9th grade. The match was arranged by his maternal step-grandfather. The girl was from a rich landlord family and was older than Premchand, who found her quarrelsome and not good-looking.

Premchand's father died in 1897 after a long illness. He managed to pass the matriculation exam with second division (below 60% marks). However, only the students with first division were given fee concession at the Queen's College. Premchand then sought admission at the Central Hindu College, but was unsuccessful because of his poor arithmetic skills. Thus, he had to discontinue his studies.

Premchand then obtained an assignment to coach an advocate's son in Benares at a monthly salary of five rupees. He used to live reside in a mud-cell over the advocate's stables, and used to send 60% of his salary back home. Premchand read a lot during these days. After racking up several debts, in 1899, he once went to a book shop to sell one of his collected books. There, he met the headmaster of a missionary school at Chunar, who offered him a job as a teacher, at a monthly salary of rupees 18. He also took up the job of tutoring a student at a monthly fees of rupees 5.

In 1900, Premchand secured a job as an assistant teacher at the Government District School, Bahraich, at a monthly salary of rupees 20. Three months later, he was transferred to the District School in Pratapgarh, where he stayed in an administrator's bungalow and tutored his son.

Dhanpat Rai first wrote under the pseudonym "Nawab Rai". His first short novel was *Asrar e Ma'abid* (*Devasthan Rahasya* in Hindi, "The Secrets of God's Abode"), which explores corruption among the temple priests and their sexual exploitation of poor women.

The novel was published in a series in the Benares-based Urdu weekly *Awaz-e-Khalk* from 8 October 1903 to February 1905. Siegfried Schulz states that "his inexperience is quite evident in his first novel", which is not well-organized, lacks a good plot and features stereotyped characters. Prakash Chandra Gupta calls it an "immature work", which shows a tendency to "see life only white or black".

15.2 GODAAN AS AN EPIC

A large picture of the society

Godan is often described as an epic in prose just as Fielding's 'Tom Jones' is described as a comic epic in prose. Prem Chand has indeed chosen to present a picture of the society on a large canvas as we find in an epic. The Indian society of the early part of the 20th century consisted mainly of the farmers, Zamindars, and businessmen. Prem Chand has described the life and thoughts of all those sections of the society. Hori is the representative of the farmers who formed the bulk of the society since Ludia was mainly an agricultural country and eighty per cent of the population lived in villages. The irony of the situation was that this largest section of the society was poor and mercilessly exploited by Zamindars, Brahmins and police.

The money-lenders can be said to be a part of the Business group, yet they were a class apart. They were cruel and responsible to a great extent for the poverty of the farmers.

The other groups of the business class were also devoid of sentiments of love and sympathy. Business men were so much after money that they could not look beyond the money-making activities, which were also generally immoral. The business class is represented by Tankha and Khanna. Print media was also playing an important role. The newspapers avouched that they were trying to highlight the plight of the underdog and fighting to protect their interest. They also said that they were giving expression to the ambitions and aspirations of the people. This class is represented by Pt. Onkarnath alone. He is the Editor of Lightning. But it is discovered that Onkarnath was a crook, trying to extort money from Zamindars and other rich persons on flimsy grounds. This grim atmosphere of the society has been relieved a bit by the example of the two educated persons, Mehta, professor of Philosophy and Dr. Malti, a medical practitioner.

Women's class

But the society is not uni-sexual, it has its women too. Prem Chand has created several women characters, all of whom are free from the vices of the male society, and each of them has her own dignity of character. Dhaniya is the wife of Hori and a foil to him. Hori is willing to bear the tyrannies silently hoping that his sacrifice will bring a change in the attitude of the tormentors, but Dhaniya knows for certain that the money-lenders are heartless creatures, blind to the sufferings of the others. She fights against the injustice at every step, and averts some of the crises. It is she who prevents Hori from getting a further loan to can , take away the bullocks but she will not turn Jhuniya out of the house. Dhaniya follows her dharma even in the case of Siliya, Jhuniya also takes marriage is considered a taboo among Hindus.

Moreover, it is Jhuniya who courts Gobar: it is something which is not expected even of a European woman. Generally it is the man that courts the woman. Jhuniya is bold in getting hold of a husband, Siliya remains faithful to her man, like an ideal Indian wife, even though the man deserts her and succeeds in winning him back by her chastity. Govindi reveals the power of love and forgiveness and Malti's selfless service to the poor and needy makes her an ideal woman. Godan presents a picture of all the major sections of the society with the help of a large number of characters and episodes as an epic does.

Belief in socialism

Besides the large number of characters and episodes, the novelist has given true pictures of the moral standards and attitudes of the people. As the farmers, who were the backbone of the society, were being exploited and enervated by the Zamindars and money-lenders, it had taken the shape of war-between 'haves' and 'have-nots', though the people of India somehow failed to embrace the violent form of communism. India had instead an indigenous form of socialism which was gaining ground. The novelist has made a passing reference to it. The Rai Saheb admits, "It is ridiculous and disgraceful that a few people can make thousands by governing and commanding those who can't even get a crust of bread. I know very well how dissolute, how immoral, how dependent, and how shameless we Zamindars have become in these circumstances." This is a kind of individual socialism which was being propagated by Mahatma Gandhi and his ilk. Mahatma Gandhi had given up even wearing a shirt because he had found that women in villages were half-clad. But the Rai Saheb says that he is remorseful for his lavish living on account of his personal view of life also. The Indian view, to which the Rai Saheb also subscribed, is that one should live a simple life, free from all sorts of ostentation. According to the Indian culture, simplicity is the mother of all other virtues.

Therefore the Rai Saheb says, "My feeling is that we can't even justify ourselves from the point of view of self-interest. In order to sustain such ostentation we have to destroy our conscience to such an extent that we're left without a trace of self respect." the novelist also speaks about disparity between the rich and the poor. Mahatma Gandhi had suggested that the gulf between the rich and the poor should not be too wide. In this context, the Rai Saheb asks, "how do you justify"

Devouring eight hundred rupees month when millions of our brothers get along on just eight-rupees." But as it is said above, India did not or could not adopt communism which believed in making an equitable distribution of wealth by force. Indian society allows freedom to be rich but it expects that the rich will consider their wealth as a trust of the society. It is also believed that economic disparity is natural. If the wealth is redistributed by a stratagem, "But to distribute intelligence, character, beauty, talent and strength equally is beyond your power." it is true that intelligent and the industrious will rule the roost therefore, the novelist says that the best way to bring so speaks against the accumulation of wealth in the hands of a few persons. He is ready to "turn over power, prestige and leadership but not property into the hands to the intelligent.

A man's prestige die with him, but his property spreads out like a poison, growing in strength. Without intellect there can be no progress in society. But what we want to do is to remove the sting from the scorpion. "Thus the novelist has given expression to the public opinion, which makes an integral part of the epic.

Message of the epic

Though the concept of socialism is a part of the message that the novelist has given, while giving expression to the aspirations of the public, the message of love and service is given in detail through Mehta and Malti affair. Both of them make hunting a party and go to the jungle where they meet a tribal girl who, finding that Mehta was making a vain attempt to catch the wounded bird floating in the river, jump into the river and brings the bird. Then, she cooks food for them. Malti fails to appreciate the service rendered by the girl. But Mehta

explains to Malti that the girl has mad, she a practical application of service about which he has only read. The lesson goes home to Malti. She devotes herself to the service of mankind, and makes a sacrifice of her own interests. She decides to remain unmarried to dedicate her life to the service of the humanity. She asks Mehta, "if we set up our own small household, shutting our souls in a little cage and restricting our joys and sorrow to each other, could we ever approach the infinite?" it would just put an obstacle in our path. There are rare souls who put themselves in these shackles and are still able to move." then she starts visiting poor patients at their homes without charging any fees. She takes care of Gobar's son and also goes to the village to tell the villagers how they can live a healthy. It was the crying need of the British days since the villages didn't have any doctors and even teachers. The things have improved a bit in the villages around the cities, but the villages around the cities, but the villages in the remote areas, in the interior, do not have any doctors even now. Malti has become a missionary of a sort. The novelist gives the message of service, as we find in the epics.

Godan is certainly a novel of epic dimensions. It has good number of characters, each of which has his own attitude of life. Again it has several episodes which reflect the contemporary social conditions, and each episode makes the suggestion how values of life which have been neglected can be re-established. The novel, like an epic, has a high poetic diction as Homer's Iliad or Milton's Paradise Lost has. But Godan doesn't have that style of an epic and it certainly cannot bear the burden of that style, of Homeric similes, etc. It is a novel of common people and written for common men. Therefore it is justifiably written in the lingua franca. The novel otherwise has all the characteristics of an epic.

15.3 GODAN IS A CRITICISM OF LIFE: LITERATURE IS A CRITICISM OF THE SOCIETY

Prem Chand was the pioneer of progressive writing in Hindi novels. The novelists that preceded him were writing romantic tales, but for Prem Chand novel-writing was a serious business. He studied the social problems like a sociologist, and presented them like an artist, arousing noble emotions of love, kindness, charity, pity, etc. For the fellow beings without any prejudices of caste, colour or race. His ideas about the functions of art have close affinity with those of Matthew Arnold, who wrote, "Poetry is at bottom a criticism of life, that the greatness of a poet lies in his powerful and beautiful application of ideas to life, " that the greatness of poet lies in his powerful and beautiful application of ideas to life, to the question: how to live?" Prem Chand also seems to say something similar as he presents the disparity between the rich and the poor, the Zamindar and the farmer, and also the emotions of love and sacrifice deeply rooted in the hearts of the people, as low as Chuhia and as high as Professor Mehta and Dr. Malti

Poverty of the farmers

Godan is novel of epic dimensions portraying the exploitation of the farmers though India was then a country of villages and depended almost entirely on the labor of the farmers.

Prem Chand has devoted more than half of the novel to the depiction of poverty of the farmers represented by Hori. He had a life time ambition to own a cow, but it had become a task as difficult as buying a BMW or a Rolls Royce. Hori had tricked Bhola into giving him cow, yet the money-lender, Jhingur Singh would not let him have the pleasure of owning a cow, and his own brother, Hira, poisoned the cow out of jealousy once lost, he could not get

the cow again in his life time, except in his last vision in which" the image of a cow rose before him, just like the celestial cow which grants all wishes. He milked the cow and was giving the milk to Mangal when the cow turned into a goddess..." Hori died without the satisfaction of owning a cow, which was nothing less than owning the Kamdhenu for him. Tyranny of the money-lenders, Zamindars etc.

The farmers were at the mercy of the Zamindars and the money-lenders who had no mercy for them. The Zamindars would realize not only the rent, but would also impose fine, throw them off their land on a false excuse; the money-lenders were far more crafty and cruel.

The farmers had no escape-between the devil and the deep sea they were: Rai Saheb, the Zamindar, asked Hori to inform the villagers to collect Rs. 500/-for him though it was too big a sum for the villagers. The money-lender were vultures ready to gorge themselves on his body. Prem Chand writes to expose their tyranny-" Murderers and Bloodsuckers, that's what you village headmen are. Interest rates of twenty five and fifty per cent, tips and donations, bribes and graft-rob the poor any way you can! Police Inspector has been named Ganda Singh by Prem Chand because he was strong as a ram to extort money from the farmers.

About the oppressive role of different agencies, Prem Chand writes: "everyone around here considers the farmer fair game. He can hardly stay on in the village if he doesn't play off the patwari. If he doesn't satisfy the appetite of the Zamindars men, life is made impossible for him. The Police Chiefs and the constables act like sons-in-law. Whenever they happen to pass through the village, the farmers are duty bound to entertain them royally and provide gifts and offerings lest they get the whole village arrested by filing a single report. Someone or other is always turning up the head record keeper or the Commissioner-and the farmer is supposed to attend him on bended knee." Thus the novelist has drawn attention of the society towards the tyranny that the farmers were subjected to.

Predicament of the Zamindars

But the condition of the Rai Saheb, who was the Zamindar, was no better. He was patriotic and commiserated with his tenants yet he was obliged by the circumstances to impose penalty. He explained, "We seek shelter from revenge with the police, the officials, the judges and the lawyers, and like beautiful women, we become mere playthings in their hands... When the British Saheb comes here on a tour or a hunt, it's my trail along after him. One frown from him and our blood runs cold. We have fallen prey to the system a system that's completely destroying us." the novelist has soft corner for the Zamindar who he thinks is caught in vicious circle.

But money-lenders have no saving grace. They are incarnations of devil, the offsprings of Mammon who was damned to hell because he loved nothing but gold.

Prem Chand exposes their villainy as he tells the society, "I remember you're giving us thirty rupees to buy a bullock. Then it becomes a hundred, and now hundred has become two hundred. That's how you people rob the farmers and turn them into hired hands while you take over control of their land."

15.4 CONCLUSION

Premchand's "Godan" produces the rustic, simplistic and heart-rending lives of the peasants. Far, from exaggeration, "Godan" is "a novel of stark reality". It deals with the dreams, despairs and day-to day events of Hori, the protagonist of the novel, and his family.

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Premchand writes:" A loan was an unwelcome guest, once in the house, dug himself into permanent fixture." The money-lenders also exploit the ignorance and gullibility of the peasants. The village-folk in the higher strata of society, who are financially sounder, take advantage of the village-peasants. In the novel, we find, we find how Dulari mounts a small amount of money into a hundred rupees within a small fraction of time.

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gradually their relationship deteriorates. “Early married life throbs with love and desire; like the dawn the span of life is suffused with a roseate glow. The afternoon of life dissolves illusion into its stinging rays, but brings face to face with reality.”

Some of the scenes will always be memorable. Like, for instance, when Rupa sucks on a raw mango in starvation. The handing over of the child-like Rupa to the elderly man in marriage. The deserting of the aged parents by Jhunia and Gobar, who bore all pains and social stigma for them. The economical system came as a blessing, but Jhenguri Singh makes maximum use of it to manipulate people. The most heart-rending scene is the death of Hori or more precisely his last moments. His being religious and magnanimous, the family does not possess the adequate means even to complete his final rites. The novel thus ends in a tragedy.

15.5 COMPREHENSION CHECK QUESTIONS

1. Write a note on *Godan as a Socialistic Novel...*
2. What is your assessment of Premchand place among Indian novelists of regional literatures? Illustrate your answer.
3. Discuss in detail the theme of “Struggle for Survival” of the Indian peasants with reference to “Hori” character.
4. Write a critical appreciation of the novel *Godan*.
5. Discuss Premchand as a social reformer with reference to his works.

15.6 REFERENCES

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- 2) 2. Pillai, D *Indian Novel: A Critical Perspective*. LNA, New Delhi, 2009.

Dr. M.Suresh Kumar

LESSON 16

PUPPETS

G. V. Krishna Rao

OBJECTIVES

- To familiarize the students with the biographical details of the Author
- To sensitize the students about the post-independence social conditions
- To make the students appreciate the intellectual backdrop of the novel
- To get the students acquainted with the themes of the novel
- To encourage the students' critical analysis and evaluation of the novel

STRUCTURE

- 16.1 G. V. Krishna Rao's Biography
- 16.2 The Beginnings of Telugu Novel
- 16.3 An Outline of *Puppets*
- 16.4 On Translation and Other Issues
- 16.5 Self-assessment Questions
- 16.6 References

16.1 G. V. KRISHNA RAO'S BIOGRAPHY

It seems that a book-length biography of G. V. Krishna Rao is not available. The biographical details given by Nidadavolu Malathi in her review on the website *Thulika.Net* are perhaps the most accessible in English. The biographical details given in *G. V. Krishna Rao Rachanalu* are also quite informative. The following biographical description is mostly based on Nidadavolu Malathi's account slightly modified based on Hitasri's account given in the 7th volume of *Rachanalu*:

Krishna Rao was born in 1914 in Kuchipudi village, Tenali taluq, Andhra Pradesh, India. In an autobiographical essay, Dr. Krishna Rao stated that originally he was not very keen on attending school. His parents had no education but wanted him to obtain education. Not much came out of it though. Either he absconded school or when went to class, his mind was elsewhere. Later, his aunt took him to her village and put him through school there.

He was not much of a learner in traditional methods. He says that when he tried to write *cheap* [fish], it would look like *chaapa* [mat]. Nevertheless, he wrote a parody and showed it to his friend. That friend showed it to their teacher. The teacher chided him kindly though, "You can't recite even ten verses and you're writing poetry?" At the same time, the teacher also gave him a piece of advice, which he says was worth a million. The teacher told him, "It is wrong to write poetry without studying literature on poetics thoroughly. It will let the hell break loose." At the time, Krishna Rao was in eighth grade.

Thenceforth, he started studying classics and ancient grammatical works on his own. He says that study had its negative consequences. For instance, he came to believe that writing meant only writing poetry and that scholarship meant writing complex phrases. In his later years, he understood that prose was more important and put it on a higher pedestal. In

his final year of high school, his teacher, Sastry, corrected his essay and told him, “Writing long, meandering phrases is not good. Beatific meaning is important. Unless there is efficacy, one should not use a word that is not comprehensible instantaneously. A document must always be lucid as like a peeled banana. That is the greatest writing.”

Krishna Rao was well-versed in grammatical texts ever since he was a child. He started creative writing in high school. At the age of 17, he wrote his first novel, and wrote a *satakam* (a book of 100 verses) at the age of 20. He also wrote a storybook for children and tried to have it prescribed as textbook in schools, but did not succeed though. During the same period, he was upset with one of his teachers and wrote a poem on the blackboard. That resulted in him being transferred to another school. There he met with Tummala Venkatramayya with whom he had forged good friendship. Venkatramayya recounted a couple of interesting incidents from this period.

First, Krishna Rao’s name in school records was Gavini Venkatakrishnayya. He researched the origins of his surname, and found out that there was a word Gavaka meaning the entrance to Durgamapuram. In course of time, that the word underwent several variations such as gavanu and gavani. He preferred the name Gavanu. Currently, however his surname is appearing in books as Gavini. During the same period, he filled the answer papers with his comments on the grammatical errors in the questions given to him, instead of answering the questions. In his school days, parents used to request him to write poems of blessing for their sons and daughters at their weddings.

Krishna Rao performed *ashtavadhaanam* and *sataavadhaanam* – a peculiar kind of poetic application where a poet crafts poems, extempore and one line at a time in response to eight or one hundred individuals, called *Prucchaka* [interrogators] in one sitting. Krishna Rao took it as a challenge and practiced these skills in woods, pretending the trees to be the interrogators, and playing himself both the interrogators and respondent. He would not much give much weight to these early writings.

Then he pursued his studies up to BA in A. C. College, Guntur. In his college days, he wrote a poem, *Varuudhini*. He got his BA degree in the year 1937. While he was studying for his bachelor’s degree, he met Gopichand, a prominent leftist writer of his times, from whom he had acquired a taste in Western literature and literary styles. Krishna Rao studied M.N. Roy’s works and Marxism, which changed his entire perspective. He understood that the use of colloquial language was important for his work. In those days, he also used to meet with traditional writers as well as modern writers like Chakrapani and Kutumba Rao. They all met regularly in some medical store and discussed the characteristics of criticism and short stories. Tenali was a literary center in those days and these circumstances have formative influence on Krishna Rao.

After obtaining his bachelor’s degree, he tried to get a job but without success. During this period, it became hard for him even to get food to eat which reminded him of an episode describing the anger and frustration of the sage Vyasa in *Kasikhandam*. Inspired by the episode, Krishna Rao wrote a play called *Bhiksha Paatra* [Begging bowl]. He says, “It is my first writing that emanated from the bowl filled with experience.” He sent it to several magazines but none of them accepted it for publication. However, the play has received critical acclaim later and been performed in several places numerous times. In this context, the comment made by Kurma Venugopalaswamy, registrar of Andhra University in the fifties and an avid supporter of Telugu stage is worth mentioning. He commented that he had read

the play several times and had it performed in the experimental theater of Andhra University, Waltair, Andhra Pradesh. It has been translated into several Indian languages also.

After failing to obtain a job, Krishna Rao went to Benares to study for his master's degree in English literature. He took a tutoring job to pay his tuition fee. At this time he also pursued his other interests. He studied eminent literary works in Telugu, Sanskrit and English. That part of his studies resulted in a classic work, *Kavya Jagatthu*. About this book, Krishna Rao says, "I explained the metamorphoses of theme in a kavya from the perspective of Marxism, quoting various from notable Indian and Western works, from Bharata to Panditarayalu, and from Plato to Marx." Further, he added, "I reviewed modern literary movements and their characteristics, and wherefrom they originated, namely, the social conditions and the leaders of those movements."

Another milestone in Krishna Rao's life was attending the political conference organized by Radical Democratic Party following the end of Second World War. At the conference, M. N. Roy vehemently criticized the existing political parties and proposed a new humanistic idea that is non-divisive and democratic in principle. That speech stunned Krishna Rao and paved the path for his future literary pursuits. That was the start of his studies in philosophy. Eventually, Krishna Rao worked on *Kalapoornodayam* for his Ph.D. and received his doctorate in 1955. His thesis was titled *Studies in Kalapurnodayam* and he did critical justice to Pingali Surana through this work.

From his writings, Krishna Rao's life appears to be one long stretch of endless inquiry, insatiable thirst for knowledge from meaning of a given word to meaning of life. He has stated that the theme in his novel, *Keelu Bommalu* (1951) reflects this enquiring mind: "What does freedom mean? How humans are losing it? What is the way to regain it? To what extent, the economic and political matters are influencing human lives? What is the duty of individuals? inciting this pursuit of knowledge is the goal of *Keelu Bommalu*," he has stated in the preface to the book. Once a reader wrote to Krishna Rao suggesting the novel should have a happy ending. Krishna Rao replied, "Had I given it a happy ending, I wouldn't have gotten even this note from you." Apparently, the author was happy his novel provoked the reader to think.

While he was working in a degree college, he studied keenly the grammatical works of Acharya Nagarjuna, *Vigrahavarthini*, *Ratanavali* and several others and translated them into Telugu poetical works. Unfortunately, his translations were stolen. He said he was able to translate again only one book *Vigrahavarthini* and published it with extensive preface. He also translated Plato's *Republic*. He also wrote the novel *Ragarekhalu*. He brought together some occasional plays and published the anthology, *Adarsha Sikharalu*.

In 1962, he lost his job. Then he started writing another novel, *PapiKondalu* but left it unfinished as he got a job in a radio station. While working at the radio station, he wrote some poetry, translated *Pratima Natakam* by Bhasa, and published an anthology, *Udabinduvulu*. His last novel *PapiKondalu* was never completed. Krishna Rao died in 1978. His play *Bomma Yedchindi* is published in the year 1979. This play gives the message that the rulers should have religious tolerance.

Krishna Rao is one of those rare scholars who had examined the Indian traditional values and ancient works as well as Western philosophies thoroughly, developed his perspective on life and the world and presented his own philosophy. His works such as *Jegantalu* and *Kavya Jagatthu* vouch for his standing as a literary persona. He had been persistent in his *Jignasa* [pursuit of knowledge] even from his childhood days.

Sahiti Chaitraratham is a commemorative volume, put together in honor of Krishna Rao, his service to Telugu literature and his distinctive personality. The volume includes articles by several prominent writers, critics, and admirers of Telugu literature. It also contains three essays by Dr. Krishna Rao.

Jegantalu is a Telugu rendering of Plato's philosophy. In his essay *Kavya Jagatthu*, the author discusses the essence of *kavya* from the perspective of Marxism. The book includes extensive discussion of various poetic works in Sanskrit, Telugu and English and the author's perspective on the themes under discussion. There is a glossary at the end. *Udabinduvulu* is an anthology of his poems, stories and plays, including the play, *Bhiksha Patra* mentioned earlier.

Nidadavolu Malathi rightly states that Krishna Rao was "a seeker of Truth, [and] philosophical commentator." In fact, he thought seriously about philosophers like Kant, Hegel, Marx, Sartre, Freud, Russell, and Roy; and his writings are studded with his philosophical opinions. Prabhasa Publications, Tenali, has published many of his writings in seven volumes, and the last volume is devoted to Krishna Rao's philosophical writings.

16.2 THE BEGINNINGS OF TELUGU NOVEL

The Telugu novel has a great lineage spanning over hundred years of history. Although the status of the first novel in Telugu is a matter of debate still, it is generally agreed that Narahari Gopalakrishnama Chetty's *Sri Rangaraja Charitra*, published in the year 1872 is the first novel. *Rajasekhara Charitra* written by Kandukuri Veeresalingam, and published in 1876 is a contender for the coveted status of the first novel. A comprehensive treatment of Telugu novel is too big a topic to be taken up here and definitely out of place as well. Signposting some important landmarks may be useful towards contextualising the study of *Puppets*.

An important feature of Telugu novel is its unmistakable concern with the contemporary conditions of the society in which it has taken life. Unnava Lakshminarayana's *Malapalli* published in the year 1921 has attained the status of a classic. The problem of untouchability is the central concern in the novel and the writer's critical attitude towards that inhuman practice is unmistakable in the novel. Although Viswanatha Satyanarayana (he got Gnan Pith Award) and some other writers have taken a clearly conservative position on the social issues, the predominant trend in Telugu literature has advocated change and progress and the rejection of out-dated opinions and practices. Adivi Bapiraju is noted for his novels and he also took up historical themes in his novel *Gonaganna Reddy*.

Even a short account of Telugu novel cannot ignore the writings of Chalam. Through his novels like *Maidanam*, *Daivamichchina Bharya*, and *Brahmanikam* etc., Chalam has advocated the cause of women in a powerful language unknown in Telugu fiction until then.

Although Chalam must have been influenced by Western ideas, his novels do not advocate any theoretical positions. But this role of setting the intellectual agenda through their novels is ably played by writers like Gopichand, ButchiBabu, and G. V. Krishna Rao. Gopichand's reputed novel *Asamarthuni Jeevayaathra* is an exploration into the psyche of its protagonist SeetaramaRao, who is perhaps the first anti-hero in Telugu novels. His novel *Pandita Parameswarasastry Veelunama* is also noted for its philosophical preoccupations.

ButchiBabu's *Chivaraku Migiledi* is well-known for its concern with the theme of alienation and isolation. The striking feature of these novels that are known for their intellectual thematic concerns is that they are often discussed with reference to the theories that have become popular in the Western literary discussions. G. V. Krishna Rao's writings manifestly evince the intellectual flair of their creator. His work stands out as the outcome of a mind that has taken both the Western and Indian philosophical traditions seriously.

16.3 AN OUTLINE OF *PUPPETS*

Keelubommalu, is Krishna Rao's maiden novel written in 1951. It has been acclaimed as one of the outstanding novels in Telugu. *Keelubommalu* is translated as *Puppets* (1997) by D. KesavaRao into English. The novel is typical and candid in its representation of post-Independence social reality in a village in coastal Andhra Pradesh. The novel offers a panoramic view of post-Independence India with all its fissures and fractures. In doing so, the novel also evinces an eclectic array of intellectual influences that ignited the minds of the educated elite in those days.

Undeniably, it is a novel of ideas and realities at the same time. Most of the characters are portrayed representing some social and political ideas and status positions. Prof. C. Vijayasree says in the "Introduction" that the novel "draws its inspiration from Johan Bojer's *The power of a lie* (1903) which deals with the consequences of forgery." The central issue in *Puppets* also revolves around a false forgery case. Pullayya, a Shavukar of the village, stands surety for Chandrasekaram, an industrialist, who was prosperous at the time of taking the loan. But later, his paper mill goes bankrupt and he could not repay the loan. At such a tough time, Pullayya turns against Chandrasekaram denying that he stood surety.

As a young man Chandrasekaram was brimming with enthusiasm and was inspired by the socialist ideals. But he lacked the experience, skill, and financial acumen to run his paper mill. To make the matters worse, he did not receive the required co-operation from his workers. He resorts to utopian measures that do not work in the mundane world. He decided on a six hour factory shift. His workers were better paid than others in the area. Even medical benefits were provided. But the workers demanded more facilities and used their unions to propagate the idea that he was exploiting them. Their discontent resulted in a decline in production and in the increase of production cost. He explained the situation to the workers and asked them to run the factory on a co-operative basis. But they only wanted an increment in their wages and the provision of various facilities. Chandrasekaram was caught in a thorny situation. Having no other way, he mortgaged the mill to the *marwadis* and went bankrupt.

Pullayya's wife, Lakshamma plays a crucial role, with her hasty, assertive attitude, in filing a case of forgery against Chandrasekaram in the court of law. Chandrasekaram, in

turn, circulated rumours that Pullayya had cheated the villagers in the turmeric business. Now, Pullayya came to know that Chandrasekaram was his relentless opponent, and the real director behind the screen was no one else but Mallayya. Mallayya, another Shavukar belonging to the other party in the village than the one to which Pullayya belongs, is the epitome of wickedness. He could not bear to see anybody prospering in the village. He sees a potential rival in everybody that looks relatively better-off in the village.

Indeed, Mallayya deviously helped Chandrasekaram and, in a way, he had fuelled the factionalism. But later, he came to learn that in the torching of the houses and hayricks in the village it was he who would be put to loss than others. Greatly alarmed, he met Ammayammagaru and they both met the minister and explained how the communists were unleashing terror in the village and how insecure their lives would become unless the police force was sent immediately. Not many days passed before the Malabar special police force descended on the village. They surrounded the village and conducted a house to house search especially in the two areas where the Malas and Madigas lived and even resorted to gang rape and killed people at will.

Dormant caste rivalries in the post-independence India were exposed by the incidents that occur in the novel. When Pullayya's bullock had died, all the people went to bury it. The incident enraged the whole village and their wrath is directed at the "Harijans". Everyone sympathized with Pullayya as he lost his bullock. The villagers felt that the Malas and the Madigas were getting out of control. They thought that it was all because of their own lenient attitude. At this juncture, somebody says in the village: "In fact in our days a Mala or Madiga didn't dare to walk with his chappals on, even at noon during RohiniKarte. Bad times are fostering bad thoughts".

The novelist Krishna Rao portrays the complexities of the divided village community both in the personal and social domains. Against the backdrop of the false case, the writer depicts the deplorable conditions of the whole village. Chandrasekaram suffers a lot due to the fraudulent case, though he is blameless in reality. He is punished with three years imprisonment as a result of the case. His wife Lalitha and his children are thrown on the streets and ironically Pullayya and other villagers donate money for the sake of the destitute family, around the end of the novel.

Satyanarayana Panthulu, the clerk of Pullayya, was considered a good Brahmin, but he would not come forward to reveal the truth to save Chandrasekaram. Panthulu always feels to be greatly obliged to Pullayya, because Pullayya had a house built for him, when his house was burnt. As he tells the truth to Chandrasekaram when the latter sought his help, it is his economic dependence on Pullayya that prevents Panthulu from giving evidence against Pullayya. Panthulu finds solace in rationalizing his attitude by likening his position with the position of Drona, who could not join Pandavas though he clearly knew that Kauravas were unjust. When his wife Padma becomes pregnant after a fortuitous affair with the doctor, Vasudeva Sastri, Panthulu turns psychologically deranged. In spite of his noble behavior, the doctor also feels guilty because of this unintended affair with Padma and eventually leaves the village.

Despite all the corruption described in the novel, no one is depicted as a villain. Even Pullayya was a kind-hearted man in his own way. It pains him greatly, even if his bulls are hurt and a word of praise about his bulls will surely find favor with him that usually finds expression as a gift of a dried leaf of tobacco. When his servant, Subbadu dies, he allows the

widow, Rani, to stay in his house. Many a time, he repents for his mistake and even gets nightmarish day dreams. Before he sued in the court of law, an act that seemed to have occurred mostly due to the force of accidental circumstances, he had even tried to stop Basavachary from propagandizing the false news of forgery, but his efforts come to nothing by dint of circumstantial pressures.

Pullayya has a daughter, Sita and a son, Rama Rao. Rama Rao was greatly influenced by the philosophers like Dewey and Bertrand Russell. He believes in modern theories and ideals and he tries to talk against his father and even thinks of giving evidence against his father when the later refused to be dissuaded by him. When his father was felicitated by the villagers, he grew despondent, but he never compromises with his father at the cost of his convictions. The writer portrays the social complexities accurately. Paradoxically, both Pullayya's and Mallayya's sons seemed to be genuinely influenced by the emerging communist movement. Both of them resent the atrocities committed by their fathers.

Chandrasekharam was also greatly influenced by the socialist ideas, though he was unsuccessful practically. One could see how the influence of thinkers like Marx, Freud and the existentialists helped the writer in depicting the deeper social realities successfully in his novel.

On the other hand, Ammayammagaru is portrayed with her innate meanness, in spite of all her reformatory activities. She was really responsible for the evil existence of the Malabar Police in the village. She also initiates the felicitation of Pullayya and Mallayya. Now, Pullayya is no more an ordinary person in the village. All the villagers look at him with a great reverence. Now Pullayya is wearing 'Khadder' garments, a symbol of a politician.

Ironically the novel ends with the symbolic unveiling of Pullayya's portrait and with the emergence of Pullayya as a man of the people — 'Sardar Pullayya' as he is acclaimed by the people now. Indeed, Pullayya's metamorphosis as a politician is remarkably typical of many first generation politicians, at least in this part of India.

In the novel, we have Chandrasekharam, the industrialist with new-fangled ideas and ideals; Pullayya and Mallayya, the Shavukars in the village; Ramayya and Kusalayya who represent the poor peasants, each with their one acre land; Ammayamma, the pseudo-nationalist reformer who wants to trade on the reputation that she earned in her past; Satyanarayana Panthulu, a Brahmin with a glorious ancestry to speak of, but economically ruined in the contemporary reality; Lakshamma and Lalita, exemplifying the polar extremes of the unenviable role called a housewife; Polayya, a man from the downtrodden caste with his noble character; Pullayya's son, Rama Rao as well as Mallayya's son as the torch-bearers of the hope for a better future.

But none of these people are mere types and the writer's knowledge of the individuality and idiosyncrasies of his characters stands out in the memory of the readers.

The cares, concerns, moods and mannerisms of the characters make them what they are. As Eagleton says, "A 'typical' or 'representative' character incarnates historical forces without thereby ceasing to be richly individualized" and the characters in *Puppets* amply satisfy this requirement.

In *Puppets*, we are introduced to a society that could be described as a species of pre-capitalist agricultural society. This mode of life bestows a peculiar ethos as the backdrop to the social life dramatized in the novel. The social relations and responsibilities are part of this ethos. The whole rhythm of the peoples' life seems to be echoing the concerns somehow related to agriculture. How else can we appreciate Pullayya's compassion for the toiling bulls and the villagers' sympathy for him when his bullock died? — a sympathy that is not evidenced in the case of the people hurt by the bullock.

Farming and related concerns are so deep-seated in the minds of the villagers that they even reckon time with reference to these activities. When Mallayya asked Veerayya to recollect the incident related to Pullayya's signing for surety, the way Veerayya tries to invoke the elusive traces of memory is an interesting case in point:

From that day Veerayya could think of nothing else. Veerayya knew that Chandrasekharam's future depended on him alone had Madhavayya told him, Veerayya, about it at anytime? If he had — when? Was it during the ploughing season of the dry land? Or during the harvest? Probably not, because at that time Madhavayyahad had an attack of asthma and was confined to bed. Haydust did not agree with him. So, it was not at that time, then. Probably it was during the first rains.

The expression "first rains" here, is the translation for *Tholakari*, and it is doubtful how many readers can feel the cultural connotations of the original word in its translation. Further, the very translatability of the word into any language that has lost its agricultural aroma is also a question to ponder upon.

No doubt the novel induces a nostalgic longing in the reader for this fast-disappearing mode of life. But the mode of life presented in the novel is not a change-insensitive, stagnant, secure heaven. Instead, there are clear hints of change in the land ownership and the consequent change in the social structure. A memorably witty sketch of Mallayya's character runs like this:

Mallayya would prove [any learned theory] in no time. He could demonstrate the truth without any support. The energy in the world— 'money'— is a fixed quantum. It cannot increase. If a man grows richer, it means that others are losing proportionately. It needed the vigilance of a thousand eyes to protect what he had or to retain his status as a Shavukar. It was because of such vigilance that the assets of the village Brahmins, from lands to house sites had come into his grasp. If he hadn't been alert, what would have happened? Others would have snatched them away.

This refers to the silent revolution witnessed by most of the coastal villages of Andhra Pradesh in which land ownership changed hands from Brahmins to the non-Brahmin communities. One may be tempted to reason against Mallayya, telling that wealth need not only change hands and new wealth could be produced. Yet, one should not forget that Mallayya lives in an agricultural society where the chief form of wealth is land itself, and that could not be produced but only transferred. The clash of interests between Chandrasekharam and the shavukars is also a sign of changing conditions in the village. A proper appreciation of these historical vicissitudes is indispensable for a genuine understanding of the social conditions at work, behind the personal plights of the characters portrayed in the novel.

16.4 ON THE TRANSLATOR AND THE TRANSLATION

When the present writer of the lesson presented a paper on *Puppets*, at the University of Hyderabad, the following critical comments are made in that paper about the translation and it may not be out of place to revisit them here:

The avowed aim of the translations as explained in the initial words “About this Series”, is to express the “unique sensibility” of different languages. By confining the explanations mostly to individual words, it is doubtful how far such an aim could be achieved. Even so, some words (like *raitu* on page 32) remained untranslated (as something like farmer or peasant) and explained at the end of the English translation; whereas the word *vulavalu* (when used as the feed to the bullocks) is translated as horse-gram (page 115), in gross violation of its linguistic and cultural connotations. As a general rule the translator seems to have a preference for words that have some semantic affiliations with religion; and matters that are of folk significance are relatively uncared for. In a sentence that speaks about the custom of “preparing appalu an offering to Anjaneya swamy” (page 9), Anjaneya swamy is explained as the monkey-god but appalu which have a pride of place among South-Indian delicacies escapes notice. In another sentence that speaks about the hypocrites who have “amritam on the lips and poison in the heart” (page 7), it is difficult to see why amritam cannot be translated as nectar or something like that and why it demands explanation at the end.

On the other hand, a child’s interjection “Baav”, which is used by children to frighten the people for fun, finds no explanatory attention. Other words like *Gundraayi* that have a unique place in folks’ lives are deprived of their specific colour in the translation, and got translated into a plain word like a ‘stone’ (page 26). Similarly, an expression that is a repeated more than once in the novel is *vusuru*, a notion that is integral to the sensibility of the villagers, and the fear of different people about getting affected by it, as a baneful result of harming somebody is strikingly shown in the novel. But the word was not thought to be a right word to be explained in the appendix. It is difficult to restrain the presumption that lapses like this may have their source in our elitist understanding of culture.

As is well-known, idioms, sayings and stock expressions in a language contribute a major part of people’s linguistic heritage that go into the making of their “unique sensibility”.

As the textual explanations are mainly confined to words, these linguistic features did not receive the treatment they are worthy of. Chapter three, for instance, starts with a description of the beautiful moonlight, which is, according to the English version, “like flour spread on the ground” (page 14). Understandably, the Telugu version has the expression “aarabosinatlu”, an expression that includes the purpose of spreading the flour, i.e., to dry it up. This is a familiar practice to the native Telugu speakers. Instead of including details that explain the cultural specificities, here the translation ignores a crucial detail that makes the comprehension incomplete. Likewise, in a typical homely scene in the novel, Pullayya as well as his daughter tries to make fun of Pullayya’s wife, by passing bantering remarks about her brother — a scene that is as familiar to the native people as it is foreign to others. Is it ambitious if a translation that is basically meant for people of a foreign tongue is expected to explain such things?

Finally, a rather minute matter: At an emotionally charged moment, Vasudeva Sastri thinks about Polayya, a man of downtrodden caste, “. but whatever the case, one’s moral

strength is important” (page 153). The original has *caste* in the place of “case”. This might be a casual typo, but the loss of meaning is significant.

Perhaps any great work of translation cannot be impervious to such debates, and the novel *Puppets* offers a number of examples and strategies about the cross-cultural issues and solutions a translator cannot help dealing with while translating a remarkable work of art.

16.5 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. Bring out the post-independence social conflicts as represented in the novel.
2. Write a note on the ideological underpinnings of the novel.
3. Write an essay on the paradoxical predicaments of the characters in the novel.
4. What, do you think, are the elements of change in the life portrayed in the novel?
5. Attempt a critical analysis of the novel.

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Dr. E. Dileep

(403EG21)

MODEL QUESTION PAPER
M.A. DEGREE EXAMINATION
Fourth Semester
English

Paper III — Indian Literature in Translation

Time : Three hours

Maximum : 70 marks

Answer ONE question from each Unit.

All questions carry equal marks.

1. (a) Answer any four of the following

- (i) Social Realism
- (ii) Tilak's idea of beauty
- (iii) The rural setting in Godan
- (iv) Manasi's character in Evam Indrajit
- (v) Regional Literature

Or

(b) Bring out various types of exploitation with a special reference to the texts prescribed for your study.

2. Answer any ONE of the following

- (a) Elaborate the special inequality in Indian society as focused in Joshua's Graveyard.
- (b) Examine the thematic concerns in Tilak's poetry with reference of the poems for your study.
- (c) Estimate the contribution of Subramania Bharati's to modern Indian literature.

3. Answer any one of the following

- (a) Discuss Evam Indrajit as an existential play.
- (b) "Indrajit represents an angry young man image in Sircar's novel". Explain.
- (c) "Sircar's" Evam Indrajit depicts a true picture of the contemporary society".
Elaborate

4. Answer any one of the following

- (a) Examine the predicament of Praneshacharya in Samskara.
- (b) "U.R. Anantha Murthy's Samskrara is an allegory rich in realistic detail". Discuss.
- (c) Examine Sanaskra as a novel of Conflict.

5. Answer any one of the following

- (a) "Godan holdes mirror to the misery of Indian peasantry in modern India". Elucidate.
- (b) Ortray Indulekha's character as a New women.
- (c) Do you find exploitation of women i the novel "Godan"? If so. Discuss.