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BACKGROUND STUDY
PART I
HISTORICAL REVIEW OF INDIAN WRITING IN TRANSLATION

Unit Structure:

1.0 OBJECTIVES OF THE UNIT:

1. To make the students aware of Historical Review of Indian Writing in Translation and Indian literature in Translation**.**
2. To make the students acquainted with the regional translated literature in India
3. To help students learn the impact of Western trends and movements on Indian literature.
4. To have an understanding of partition literature

1.1 INTRODUCTION:

A study of the background to the History of Indian Translation Literature reveals the various aspects of the ancient Indian literature and its effect on the contemporary scene of Indian literatures written in English. This can be seen through an examination of the background to the History of Indian Translation Literature. In addition to this, it focuses on and explores the fundamental essence of translation as it relates to the Indians, Indian culture and Indian philosophy.

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When we look at the Indian situation in particular, we may see both endotropic and exotropic situations. The former applies when one Indian language is translated into another) and latter applies when one Indian language is translated into English. It explains the origins of translation in Indian history and concludes that translation,is an impressionable interface of cultural traffic, which is an excellent tool for intercultural synergy.

The Ramayana and *the Mahabharata* are the two brilliant examples of ancient Indian literature that have been preserved owing to the practice of translation, which dates back to ancient times. Because of increasing interaction and contact with native Indian languages has proven to be one of the inevitable activities of communication and interaction to the extent that it has become an indispensable part and parcel of any language and its literature in India to be translated, and therefore whether it be translation or transliteration or transcreation that has now gained a particular place in Indian literature written in English. This is due to the fact that translation is now considered to be an important part of Indian literature. For instance, the recent publication of the world-famous biography of Steve Jobs written by Walter Isaacson is available not only in English but also in more than fifty other languages at the same time. This amply vouchsafes how translation has evolved into a major phenomenonthat hasenabled and metamorphosed and transformed the literature written in English and at the same time it has not only decolonized English but widened and expanded the scope of Indian English. As a result, conducting a literature assessment of Indian translations is of critical importance.

1.2 LITERARY TRANSLATION IN ANCIENT INDIA:

India's translation history has a mixed bag of results. Some of the oldest known translations appear to have occurred between the ancient Indian languages of Sanskrit, Pali, and Prakrit. Islamic texts, such as the *Panchatantra, Ashtangahridaya, Hitopdesa, Yogsutra* and the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, were translated into Arabic between the eighth and ninth centuries as a result of an active exchange between Indian narratives and knowledge texts and Persian manuscripts. Bhasha texts such as *Jnaneshwari*, the Marathi poet J*naneshwari* translation of *the Gita* and several free translations of epics such as *the Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* by the saint-poets of various Indian languages came into contact with Sanskrit texts during the Bhakti period and produced great bhasha texts like *Jnaneshwar*i. Among these are *Pamp, Kambar, Malla* and Ezhuthacchan's versions, as well as those by Tulsidas and Premanand, as well as MadhavKandali and the Krittibas retelling of the Ramayana.Taking into consideration, India's translation history, which has a mixed bag of results. Some of the oldest known translations appear to have occurred between the ancient Indian languages of Sanskrit, Pali, and Prakrit. Islamic texts, such as the *Panchatantra, Ashtangahridaya, Hitopdesa, Yogsutra* and *the Ramayana and Mahabharata,* were translated into Arabic between the eighth and ninth centuries as a result of an active exchange between Indian narratives and knowledge texts and Persian manuscripts.

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1.3 LITERARY TRANSLATION IN PRE-INDEPENDENT INDIA:

Buddhist texts were first translated into Chinese in the early centuries of the Christian era, and then subsequently into Tibetan. Besides from these associations in the north, there was a significant amount of interaction between the Hindus and pre-Islamic Arabs on the western side of the region, as evidenced by Arab sources. Although there is not much direct evidence left, it is generally accepted that Hindu mathematics, astronomy, and philosophy made their way to western civilization during this age. According to Alberuni's statement, the connection of give and take lasted even after the arrival of Islam. Since the eleventh century and onwards, with the rise of modern Indian languages, Sanskrit technical and cultural texts have begun to be transferred to those languages as a method of preserving those texts through diffusion. These languages include Assamese, Marathi, Kannada, Telugu, Bengali, and many others. Zain-Ul-Abedin (1420-1470), the enlightened monarch of Kashmir, founded a translation bureau for bilateral rendering between Sanskrit and Persian around the same time as translations began to be made into Persian. Zain-Ul-Abedin was active between the years 1420 and 1470. The Persian translations of the Upanishads done by DaraShikoh and the rendition of the Mahabharata done by Mulla Ahmad are two of the most important sites located along this stream. The famous Sikh Guru, Guru Govind Singh, established a bureau between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and had a huge quantity of Sanskrit works translated into Panjabi. This occurred during the time period.

An intricate, two-way, cultural and intellectual exchange developed between eastern and western societies in the latter half of the eighteenth century and throughout the nineteenth century. English became the donor language for translations into Indian languages in the fields of science and engineering, as well as in emerging subjects such as politics and economics. Sanskrit has reclaimed its place as a donor language for translations into English and other European languages in the areas of philosophy, religion, linguistics, and literary theory. In point of fact, throughout the nineteenth century, Europe discovered India at the same time that India discovered Europe, and it is possible that each culture had an equal amount of effect on the other.

By the year 1820, all of Europe's most prestigious universities had established chairs in Sanskrit. Sanskrit Studies exerted an increasingly significant influence on the mentality of Europeans as the century advanced. The most influential thinkers in Europe during the nineteenth century were either Sanskritists or, as they freely admitted, had been deeply involved in Indian thought. These thinkers included Humboldt, Fichte, Hegel, Goethe, Schopenhauer, Kant, Nietzsche, Schiller, Shelling, Saussure, and Roman Jacobson. The list has a lot of impressive items. Otto Bohtlingk published an edition of Panini's Astadhyayi in 1839–1840. This book included German commentary on the game's rules as well as an index of technical words with definitions. A version of the Dhatupatha, which is an enumeration of Sanskrit verb roots, was published by N.L. Westergaard in 1841. This edition included Latin gloss and references. AtharvavedaPratisakhya was first published in English thanks to W.D. Whitney's translation, which came out in 1858. Paribhasendusekhara, written by Nagojibhatta, was given an English translation and published by Lorenz Franz Kielhorn in the year 1874.

1.4 LITERARY TRANSLATION IN COLONIAL PERIOD IN INDIA:

It will now be apt to know how the translation was done during the British period. Even though Macaulay's Minute and the Anglicists' victory in the debate with the Orientalists meant that translations from English into regional languages were no longer encouraged, translation work around Sanskrit still went on because Sanskrit was a donor language, as we said earlier. Even though Indian communities spoke many different languages, most of the people did not know how to read or write, but they were very involved in their oral cultures. They did not have to go outside of their own languages because almost all of them had their own versions of classical epics like the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. So, even though the British did not do much to help translate between Indian languages, and that has not changed much even though people talk about it and feel the need for it, the awareness created by the filter language, English, and the fact that the freedom movement brought people from all over India together led to a lot of translation work. In their own languages, people could read the nationalist writings of V.S. Khandekar in Marathi and Bankim Chandra Chatterjee in Bengali. Also, as part of the effort to get more people interested in science, European textbooks were translated into Sanskrit, Hindi, Marathi, Bengali, and other local languages. During this time, translation became part of a larger movement against foreign rule. It was also a key part of expressing cultural identity and reclaiming the native self.

During the colonial era, there were a lot more translations between European and Indian languages, especially Sanskrit. While people spoke German, French, Italian, Spanish, and Indian, they also traded words with each other. Because the colonisers spoke English, it was seen as the most important language. William Jone's translation of Kalidasa's Abhijananashakuntalam marked the end of the British phase of putting

Indian works into English. Shakuntalam is now seen as a sign of India's cultural prestige and is one of the most important texts in the Indian mind. This is why, in the 19th century, it was translated into more than ten Indian languages. The (colonial) British attempts to translate were driven by the orientalist philosophy and the need for the new rulers to understand, define, categorise, and control India. They made up their own version of India, while Indian translators of texts into English tried to add to, correct, change, and sometimes even contradict what the British thought they knew. This was a battle over old texts, not new ones. Shankara's Vedanta and the KenandIsavasya Upanishads were translated into English by Raja Rammohan Roy. These were the first Indian texts to be translated into English by Indian scholars. R.C. Dutt then translated *the Rig-Veda, the Upanishads, the Ramayana, the Mahabharata,* and a few classical Sanskrit plays. The idea behind these translations was to challenge the Romantic and Utilitarian ideas that Indians were weak and lazy. Then a lot of other people, such as DinabhandhuMitra, Aurobindo, and RabindraNath Tagore, translated it. Around this time, translations between Indian languages also began, though they were not very good at first. In India, however, even the majority of people who can read and write do not have access to English. The only way to really give these people power is to translate important literary and knowledge texts into Indian languages. Gandhi's thoughts on translation are significant:

I consider English as a language for international trade and commerce and therefore it is necessary that a few people learn it… and I would like to encourage those to be well versed (in English) and expect them to translate the masterpieces of English into the vernaculars." He even felt that the adoption of English as the medium of education might prevent the growth of Indian languages.

1.5 LITERARY TRANSLATION IN POSTCOLONIAL PERIOD IN INDIA:

Language and translation activities transformed because of the postcolonial scene. In this context, one of the most important decisions was to divide the states based on their regional languages. This sparked regional pride in their languages and made it harder for any single language to replace English as the national language. Translation is still the best way for people from different cultures to understand each other better. In postcolonial settings, translation can be seen as policy, setting priorities, empowering people, enriching lives, and learning about other cultures. To bring our attention back to the situation in India in the years after independence, or "new nationhood," as Sujit Mukherjee calls it, Indian literature has been published in English translation in different ways. There have been both private and public businesses. The government of India fully funds both the Sahitya Academy and the National Book Trust. Under the public enterprise, these organisations support literary publications.

The development of communication theory, the expansion of the field of structural linguistics, and the application of linguistics to the study of

translation all brought about significant changes in the fundamental principles and theoretical underpinnings of translation throughout the course of the twentieth century. Excellent literature published in any region of the world and in any language is now able to be read by people in other parts of the world thanks to the process of translation. Gitanjali, which Tagore had originally composed in Bengali and then translated into English, ended up becoming the work that earned him the Nobel Prize in literature in 1913. The history of Indian literature in translation is presented below.

As a result of the intimate relationship between the history of the world and the history of translation, there is no doubt that the majority of the world's past has come to us through translation. Throughout history, translation has enabled dominant social groups to understand and control the dominated social classes; it has also provided access to otherwise inaccessible writings that have contributed to the enrichment of their knowledge while also changing people's lives and perspectives regardless of social class or standing. The unending importance and necessity of translation as a weapon for economic, political, cultural, and religious growth in current times is confirmed by technological advancement, the need for quick worldwide communication, and the never-ending migration of people around the world.. Hence:

"Translators have invented alphabets, helped build languages and written dictionaries. They have contributed to the emergence of national literatures, the dissemination of knowledge, and the spread of religions. Importers of foreign cultural values and key players at some of the great moments of history, translators and interpreters have played a determining role in the development of their societies and have been fundamental to the unfolding of intellectual history itself." (Woodsworth 65).

1.6 LITERARY TRANSLATION IN POSTCOLONIAL PERIOD IN INDIA

Emergence of Regional Translated Literature in Indiaand PartitionLiterature:

Following the historical analysis, it is time to analyse how Indians respond to the practice of translating. The academic concept of 'translation' has become more accessible. During our daily speech activity, we often are translating from one language to another. Many of us speak at least three languages: one at home, another on the street, and yet another at work. When we tell our families about what happened at work, we are interpreting, and vice versa. This is not merely a symptom of city life. There are numerous examples of this from antiquity, like as AdiShankara spoke two languages: Malayalam in Kaladi and Sanskrit elsewhere. And he travelled a long distance from Kanyakumari to Kashmir, navigating a complex network of languages.

DilipChitre, a well-known bilingual poet, spoke at least three languages: Marathi at home, Hindi at work, and English everywhere he went. Many

Marathi poets and writers did the same, because of living in a multilingual country. The term "mother tongue" does not have the same connotation as it has in Europe. Conrad is an exception when it comes to writing in a foreign language. In Europe, such geniuses are few and few between.

However, many of our authors in India, some of whom were among the best of their generation, spoke a different language at home. Masti and Putina spoke Tamil at home, but Bendre, the famous poet noted for his wonderful use of language, spoke Marathi. This is true for a great number of Hindi writers who speak Rajastani, Bhojpuri, Panjabi, Awadhi, and many other related languages. The characters in their novels may truly speak these languages, which are represented in Hindi for us. More important in our understanding of what comprises a text is a distinctive Indian phenomenon that is sometimes overlooked. *Shakuntalam*by Kalidasa is not a single-language text. Some writers, for example, have written poems in three languages. Kannada poet ShishunalSharief has poems with the first line in Kannada, the second in Telgu, and the third in Urdu. He came from a region where these languages are spoken, therefore his compositions were understandable to his audience. They were referring to the stillness that existed beyond the spoken word, particularly the silence that was cherished in a variety of ways. Along with this free play of languages, which existed in an environment that allowed for shifts, poets of the past in Indian languages might acquire the territory of Sanskrit for their vernaculars. The usage of vernaculars did not appear to jeopardise free communication with others, instead isolating each linguistic group in its own territory. For over a thousand years, India has been through a process of cultural inclusion and synthesis. It was once the language of Gods that gave way to common people's languages; now, it is the official realm of English that, if grudgingly, gives way to vernaculars in the process of people empowerment.

1.7 EAST- WEST ENCOUNTER, IMPACT OF WESTERN TRENDS AND MOVEMENT ON INDIAN LITERATURE:

Translation, both oral and written, was the primary mode of such talks in the past and in the present. When languages that do not travel (due to a lack of imperial power) still embark on spiritual and intellectual journeys into the experiential richness of other languages, we do not seem to care much about being literally true to the languages from which we translate. We must digest these power languages in any case, or they will dominate us. The Sanskrit word-as-mantra, in which the *shabda* is supposed to provide both sound and sense to the believer, was rarely translated. But we modify and change the story texts without hesitation, even when they are written in the language of Gods or the white men who governed us. The cursed Ahilya in Kamba's Tamil *Ramayana* becomes a stone, rather than a disembodied voice like in Valmiki's*Ramayana*. And it was not just Dryden who attempted to turn Shakespearean tragedies into comedies; numerous Hindi, Marathi, and Kannada writers did as well. Throughout her long history, India has been able to ingest a variety of influences; this was

mostly due to the vernaculars, the unquenchable imaginative hunger of the people who speak these languages.

To that end, these are languages with a twist: they have a self-aware literary tradition in the front yard, as well as a backyard of unselfconscious oral folk traditions that have never died out throughout the centuries. The oral traditions that thrive in the backyard have energy as well as an unfailing sense of what is alive on men's and women's tongues, without which a literary language can become extremely artificial. To back up these claims, considering the small town of Udupi on the coast of Karnataka, a name made famous by its residents who have opened eateries all throughout India. In and around Udupi, at least three languages are spoken. Tulu is the language of many of its population, including peasants and workers, and it is also a folkloric language. This language is spoken by both lower and upper classes. Konkani, a variety of Marathi that is now a separate language, is primarily spoken by traders and residents of coastal areas. As a result, these languages produced a substantial body of native literature. However, when a Tulu or Konkani speaker meets other speakers of those languages, the speaker will invariably utilise the language native to the speaker.

When it comes to English literature, most of the best fiction is produced by Indian authors. Salman Rushdie isbeing translated from Mumbai Hindi, a mash-up of numerous languages and dialects that appears in many of his inventive and beautiful passages.Arundhati Roy's greatest impact is her ability to imitate Syrian Christian Malayalam. Although written in English, Raja Rao's ground-breaking *Kanthapura* is really a Kannada novel in texture and narrative mode-drawing both from Karnataka's oral traditions. With most of the truly creative Indian writers in English who appear to have contributed to the way the language English is handled, creating a distinctive work in English is transcreating from an Indian linguistic setting.

We see a steady decline of translation within Indian languages after independence. The translation space between Indian regional literatures steadily shrunk, and English began to intervene. Despite the fact that the postcolonial period belonged to translation from Indian languages into English, the translation scene in English remained rather stagnant in the first three decades after independence. Besides from the Akademi, the UNESCO Collection of Representative Works financed numerous notable translations during this time period. BibhutibhushanBandopadhay's Bengali novel *PatherPanchali*: *Song of the Road* translated by T.W. Clark and TarapadaMukherji in 1968, made famous by Satyajit Ray's film adaptation; ManikBandopadhyay's Bengali novel, *The Puppet's Tale* translated by. S.L. Ghoshin1968; ShridharPendse's Marathi novel translated by Ralph Russell in 1971.

Because there was no discourse among translators about their art, and no tradition of documenting problems experienced by individual translators, they operated in a type of vacuum, relying primarily on their instincts and their own resources. Omission and compression are the two primary

tactics used by translators during this time period, including the well-planned translation efforts made by UNESCO. The translators added, omitted, and reordered materials, often arbitrarily, with the typical excuse that they were attempting to make the work more appropriate for the target readership. *ChhaManaAthaGuntha* (1902), by Fakir Mohan Senapati, is an unusual case in the history of Indian fiction translation into English. Between 1967 and 1969, three English versions were published of Das, C.V. Narasimha 1967; Senapati B.M &Senapati A.M. 1967; andMisra, Nuri 1969, each with a dramatically different presentation of the text. The translators of two versions changed the title and presented their versions as "rewritten" in English; additionally, one translator presented it as a Victorian English novel, embellishing it with epigraphs in the form of quotations from English classics at the beginning of each chapter and including references to English literature in the body of translation that were absent from the original text. Furthermore, the translator's nineteen-page "Introduction" attempts to contextualise it in the tradition of English novel a specific period, stripping it of all anti-colonial resonance and exhibiting what it means to translate into the language of power/former conquerors.

In the mid-1980s, the establishment of Penguin Books India was a watershed point in the history of Indian literature in English translation. When it began publishing Indian authors in English translation, primarily fiction, translated fiction gained attention it had never had before. The short stories and novellas of Satyajit Ray from Bengali, beginning with *Adventures of Feluda* (1988) and then running into several other volumes, BhishmSahni's novel, *Tamas:Darkness* (1989) from Hindi, Classic Telugu Short Stories (1995) edited by RangaRao, all of which went on to become bestsellers and have registered steady sales ever since they were published, are among the many success stories of Penguin.

Penguin's debut into translation and expanding clout prompted others like as Rupa& Company (later merged with Harper Collins) of Delhi and Seagull Books of Kolkata to extend their translation library. Rupa's three-volume Stories About the *Partition of India* (AlokBhalla (ed) 1997), which featured more than sixty short stories in English translation from almost ten Indian languages, became an instant bestseller as it was released on the occasion of the fifty-year anniversary of India's partition, a cataclysmic event that forever changed the complexion of the Indian subcontinent. Seagull Books in Kolkata has been translating Mahasweta Devi's whole corpus, including short tales and novels, and approximately twenty volumes have been published thus far.

Macmillan India Ltd undertook the most ambitious and systematic endeavour of translating Indian books into English in 1996 with a series dubbed *'Modern Indian Novels in English Translation*.' It has now released almost 100 novels. These translations are accompanied by a scholarly introduction by a critic of the original language, a Translator's Note, and extensive (compensatory) glossing in footnotes. Some of these novels have already been added to university curricula in India and overseas.

1.8 LITERARY TRANSLATION AND DALIT LITERATURE:

Translation into English can sometimes be used to empower the marginalised sections of society - dalits, tribals, women - by increasing the visibility of writers who deal with the struggles of the disenfranchised in society and creating solidarity across the multi-lingual and multi-cultural Indian society. The foremost of such writers in India isMahasweta Devi, who has been well-served by her English translators. Others writers have been writing with regularity and commitment for decades but are unknown outside their language borders due to a lack of translations. When R.R. Borade's Marathi novel *Fall* was translated by SudhakarMarathe in 1998, or Bama's Tamil novel *Karukku* was translated by Lakshmi Holmstrom in 2000, or DarshanaTrivedi and Rupalee Burke translated and edited the collection *Tongues of Fire: Dalit Stories in English* (2000), they raised considerable awareness and interest in the lives of these people who had been living on the margins of society. These books are currently taught in classes on oppressed literature in India and around the world.

Throughout the twentieth century, there was a significant stream of feminist writing in India, but it never achieved the prominence it deserved since it was not available in English translation. Kali for Women, a feminist publishing business, was founded in 1984 with the goal of "making available - and visible - the hitherto little known work of women writing in different (Indian) languages" (Menon 1995:16). It featured a significant body of work by two Urdu fiction writers, IsmatChughtai and Qurratulain*Hyder*. TahiraNaqvi's translation of a collection of Chughtai's stories, *The Quilt and Other Stories* (1990), and a novel, *The Crooked Line* (1995), were instantly accepted for inclusion on university syllabi in India and worldwide. *Hyder* is an excellent example of self-translation. Her own English 'transcreation' of her novel, *River of Fire* (1998), inspired *Times Literary Supplement* to position her 'among her precise contemporaries, Milan Kundera and Gabriel Garcia Marquez, as one of the world's major novelists'. *Stree,* a feminist press based in Kolkata, has published books such as *Cast Me Out If You Will: Stories and Memoirs* (1998) in Malayalam, a collection of Jyotirmoyi Devi's Bengali stories, *The Impermanence of Lies* (1998), and *The Stream Within: Short Stories* by Contemporary Bengali Women (1999), all of which deal with women's spirited struggle against patriarchy. The two-volume anthology, *Women Writing in India* (1993), edited by Susie Tharu and K. Lalitha, presented women's writing, a significant portion of it is fiction, from 600 B.C. to the present. The project is also notable for having a defined translation policy, as seen by the following:

We endeavoured (not always successfully) to resist reductive and stereotypical homogenization in the translations... We favoured translations that did not domesticate the work into a pan-Indian or "universalist" form, but instead forced a translation of the reader into another sociohistorical ethical. We went to great lengths... to keep the work's regional flavour...

The translation technique, which is more akin to rewriting, poses critical considerations about authorship, loyalty, and authenticity. The translator's 'colonial cringe' also contradicts the fundamental objective of literary translation, which is to introduce a foreign text and culture to readers in the target language. One ray of optimism is that, in this postcolonial era of strict copyright rules, current translators cannot do whatever they want with an author's work

We are now experiencing a surge in translation, primarily of Indian language translation into English. Even while it is disappointing that literary translation within Indian languages has not seen such a translation, we should not be afraid of translating Indian literatures into English. English plays a vital role as a connecting language, and translation into English can undoubtedly assist the development of a comprehensive picture of Indian literature. It will also help to eliminate the common misconception encountered while travelling overseas that Indian literature is only published in English. However, we must be clear about the goals of the translations we are undertaking, as these will influence our selection of writers and texts for translation.

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BACKGROUND STUDY
PART II
CONTEMPORARY TRENDS AND MOVEMENTS IN INDIAN WRITING IN ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Unit Structure:

2.0 OBJECTIVES:

- To give readers a brief historical review of Indian writing in translation
- To trace the spread of English languageand democratic values in Post-Independence India
- To understand partition literature
- To trace the emergenceof regional and translated literatures in India
- To examine the impact ofWestern trends and movements on Indian literature and culture.

2.1 INTRODUCTION:

The 20th century brought a paradigm shift in nearly all fields including literature. Literature is not confined by geographical, national, or cultural boundaries. Global issues, changing perspectives and shifting paradigms have transformed nature and interpretation of literature. The seminal

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occurrences of the century have metaphorsed life altogether. Literature is the indicator of hues and colours of life, and has witnessed watershed moments over time. Reading material diversity has transformed readers' desires and expectations. A boom of writings indicates the interdisciplinary nature of literature and fosters innovation under unjustified demands. It is led to writings that challenge categorizations of standard literary canons. Indian English Literature is undergoing major changes with new literary movements and exploding with creativity, translation, transcreation, Dalit Literature, Diasporic writing, postcolonial writing, postmodern and feministic writings. There are English-writing, translating, and transcreating writers. Foreign technocrats and management professionals are writing bestsellers in India. Marketing and creative writing talents can be credited, as can social media. Many authors have Facebook fan pages, including Amish Tripathi, Chetan Bhagat, Shobha De, Anita Desai, and Kiran Desai. This helps them understand the audience and interact indirectly. E-reading includes books. Authors publish internet extracts to boost sales. In declining reading habits, writers have to keep up with fast-paced lives taking into consideration maximum fun with minimum time and effort. Indian English popular fiction shows Indian writers' tastes and can be studied as a cultural artefact.

Peter Childs rightly remarks in Modernism that life, literature, thought, and language are interconnected. Ever-changing global paradigms have provided literature a world to re-examine its theories and practices and charted a road for new ones to arise. Societal, cultural, political, and gender issues must be evaluated in light of changing needs. The advent of a global world has made imitation a complex phenomenon as linguistic diversities have opened the way for multilingualism that co-exists with the ever-expanding territory of a single Global Language, English, which has its own adaptations and "Englishes."

Indian English literature (IEL)or Indo-Anglian literature is referred to as the writings by Indian writers whose native or co-native language is among one of India's many languages. These include early Indian fiction writers in 1930s like R.K. Narayan, Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao, and also Indian-origin authors V.S. Naipaul, Kiran Desai, JhumpaLahiri, RohintonMistry, and Salman Rushdie.

Postcolonial literature is literature from formerly colonised countries like India which smacks of the process of decolonization and also of decolonizing English . Original English creative writing is popular in India and abroad. After Raja Rao, R K Narayan, and Mulk Raj Anand in the 20th century, many talented and gifted writers have emerged in India. Indian writing in English has got its own identity with the emergence of new talents who have produced significant novels, making a mark in the literary world. The psychological and societal repercussions of growth became a key interest for writers since R K Narayan till now. Writers who live abroad and share their time between India and abroad have contributed significantly to Indian Literature, which is now a subgenre of English literature. Indian English literature is no longer limited to "son of the soil" writings. It has expanded these fictional concerns and

perspectives of writers from Indian to international concepts.

The distinguishing features of Indian writing in English are that the setting, background and ambience is typically Indian. English language has adapted to the needs of the Indians. Indian English writing has a distinctive voice and contemporary Indian novelists have contributed significantly to creative writings and have likewise transformed. Their works show global concerns through cultural-cultural reality, rather than a conventional Indian cultural basis and ethos. Changing perceptions have increased their readership. Expansion of their thematic concerns and development of new forms of expression have garnered the writers like V. S. Naipaul several prominent international awards. Instead of presenting traditional Indian sociocultural background and typography, these writers focus on other aspects of existence. Similarly, traditional Indian middle-class society and its contradictions have been replaced by prosperous, socially liberated people. Their efforts are not restricted to the epistemic world of the impoverished and downtrodden. In the 1980s, the Indian novel in English made a second comeback with Salman Rushdie's *Midnight Children* in 1981 which sparked resurgence in Indian writing that surpassed the literature of 1930s. Its influence has been seen in postmodern playfulness, a turn to history, a fresh exuberance of language, the reinvention of allegory, sexual frankness, and even Bollywood references. Imagining the nation, the fate of independence's midnight offspring, which is a critical problem in India. It is a global concern. Rushdie indeed revived Indian English writing. An English writer and critic K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar says:

When an Indian writer of fiction uses a learnt second language like English, he is actually recording a kind of half-conscious translation (from mother tongue into English) that has taken place in the mind. Most of our writers are bi-lingual, some equally proficient in English and the mother tongue, and some more in one than in the other. The background and the situations are usually Indian but the characters may often be drawn from bilingual milieus. The need for expressing the values verities and heartbeats of one culture in the language of another poses its own problems and there is doubtless the inner urge to render in English the rhythms, idiosyncrasies, images, idioms and proverbs of the local speech.

Cross-cultural setting also changes Indian English fiction. Earlier this subject focused on East-West conflict. The exotic characteristics of Indian living were highlighted for western readers. The writings of early Indian English fiction writers contrasted western reason and science with the Indian faith in spiritualism and emotional response to life. It created cultural stereotypes portraying two main cultures in close political touch. This theme was depicted from a binary perspective. The colonisers viewed the two cultures. The core traits of both cultures reportedly caused strife. In this fiction, Eastern and Western transcendental distinctions are fundamental, transcendent, and eternal. Novelists of the 1980s such as UpamanyaChatterjee (b. 1959) have tried to show that the Indian "tang" is not a pure essence but the masala mix of a culture that has always been able to absorb other influences. From this perspective, English is involved

in the polyphony of Indian languages, which relativizes its colonial power. Translations across languages in this polyphony will not be easy. Indian languages have hierarchies. English language becomes important to Indian culture as it is the language of the coloniser and yet remains an aristocratic, business, and modern language. Best novelists write about unequal access to English and communication challenges across classes and cultures in India.

2.2 GROWTH OF MARGINALIZED LITERATURE

India is multicultural and multilingual, with strong morals and ethics at its core. Its basic tenet is unity in diversity. India's pluralism has declined rapidly in the modern world. The unfair treatment of minorities and weaker individuals or groups by the majority or stronger group of the rest of the society is known as marginalisation, and it is ostensibly done for the benefit of the stronger groups in question. Oppression, gender discrimination, subjection of the lower and working classes, disdain for women, and deprived parts of society are all themes in marginalised literature. Third World countries are experiencing poverty and injustice in the age of globalisation.

As Thomas Hardy constructed Wessex for his writings, Narayan created the fictitious town of Malgudi. Mulk Raj Anand stories were harsher, and engaged, often brutally, with caste, class, and religious issues. Anand garnered attention for his brilliant works in English set in rural India.The message of marginalisation and Indian English literature is about community, not individuals, struggle, not passivity, and growth, not regression. This message is communicated to the entire world regarding their position in society by depicting them as exploitative, weak, beset with sadness, repressed, enslaved, and a subaltern state. Regarding genital mutilation, the Indian Dalit can be compared to African Americans to a certain degree. The united political stance of these authors is opposition to the hegemony of upper- and middle-class Hinduism and support for the power of the individual against repressive societal norms. In their works, Dalit authors questioned religion and Identity. Dalit literature attained a solid basis in the middle of the twentieth century, but its framework was built in the early nineteenth century. Today, Dalit authors have an ideological literary base and publish multiple publications.

The word 'subaltern' comes from a German word that implies 'inferior rank'. The concept of ‘subaltern’ is also defined by Julian Wolfreys, “It contains the groups that are marginalized, oppressed and exploited on the cultural, political, social and religious grounds.”In modern worldwide research, subaltern theme is employed in history, sociology, psychology, anthropology, and literature. The 'subaltern' genealogical research refers to three great philosophers. Antonio Gramsci, RanjitGuha, Gayatri Chakravorthy Spivak.

Antonio Gramsci defined the 'subaltern' classes in *The Modern Prince* and *The Prison Notebooks* as individuals who are excluded from any meaningful role in a power regime that subjugates them. These 'subalterns'

engage in the hegemony formed and controlled by the dominant group through agreement. Because hegemony forces subalterns to believe in dominant values, they lack an independent place to express themselves. Gramsci felt that the intellectual must "look for signs of subaltern initiative, class consciousness, and effective political action."

The Subaltern Studies group, led by Ranajit Guha, developed an area of historical study 'from below' in South Asian, primarily Indian, historiography. The 'subaltern,' according to Guha, is the demographic gap between the "dominant indigenous elite" and the masses. The "elite" is made up of "feudal magnates, industrial and commercial bourgeoisie, and recruits to the highest levels of the bureaucracy."

2.3 DEVELOPMENT OF WOMEN'S WRITINGS AND GENDER STUDIES AND SUBALTERN VOICES

Modernization and globalisation in independent India have affected women from different backgrounds to varying degrees, resulting in inequitable distribution of opportunities and resources and a non-uniform pattern of social change not only among men and women, but also among women from different social ranks, hierarchies, and backgrounds. Modern development processes have deepened inequities, subjugating "women" as a wider category and its subsets. The structural economic shifts, increasing markets, cutting-edge technology, greater schooling options, and "development" processes have produced mixed and inconsistent results. These have created space for women's participation in social, economic, and political processes and created wealth and opportunities for a section of the population. They have also deepened poverty, intensified social crisis, and increased vulnerability for large spheres of society. Changing social processes have removed certain limits on women's lives, but they have also caused resistance to the desired improvement in women's status.

Contemporary Indian English fiction has been changed by feminism's focus on women's concerns. Women writers emphasise women's experiences. The fictionalisation of women in their works shows their concern for marginalisation and subjugation. Different women characters from their traditional counterparts show a difference in their portrayal of women. In contemporary Indian English works, we discover assertive and aggressive women instead of timid, docile, and passive women.

Postcolonial perspectives have influenced analytical and creative features of Indian English fiction. How colonial rulers portrayed their subject races to maintain control is a key element of evolving narratives. Contemporary writers from historically colonised nations, especially India, re-investigate British-era life. They highlight the subtle techniques used to persuade colonial people accept their subjugation as natural and transcendental. These writers also show how power politics shapes the relationship between the powerful and the marginalised after political imperialism.

Diasporic writers like Bahrathi Mukherjee, ChitraDivakaruni Banerjee, JhumpaLahiri, and Kiran Desai have different windows on the world of

their lives in India and abroad, they share the common concerns of Indian writers in terms of cultural bonds and bindings that help and hinder us from evolving into a higher level of life, especially a higher standard of peaceful life for all Indians around the world. *The Inheritance of Loss* by Kiran Desai is about an Indian who cannot dwell here, there, or at any place because of social and political factors.

These women seem free from economic difficulties and moral dilemmas from mismatched marriages. Marriage and domesticity no longer sap women's energy or prioritize marriage. They threaten women's traditional moral values. They rule life, especially female sexuality. Novels by Nayantara Sahgal, Shobha De, Kamala Markandaya, Anita Nair, Manju Kapur, Namita Gokhale, Geetha Hariharan, Kiran Sawhney, Anita Desai, Bharati Mukherjee, Shashi Deshpande, Kiran Desai, Arundhati Roy, and others fictionalised fresh elements of women's existence.

Women poets from marginalised segments of society demonstrated their presence across the spectrum of Indian literature in English. From Toru Dutt to Kamla Das, there is an astounding range of subject matter and style. Poetry written by women need not be considered exclusively feminist poetry. It provides examples of how marginalisation occurs in society, such as the segregation of downtrodden classes in India. In each work, the influence of society on the protagonists is examined with a focus on the situations of the protagonists' communities. The uneven reception of women's publications, however, has the effect of marginalising women's literature. In patriarchal societies, women are granted private but not public space, a private but not political or rhetorical voice in writing and poetry composition.

In Modern Literature, Kamala Das stands out as a rebel against the tradition of women's marginalisation in Indian society. She was widely praised as a revolutionary poet for speaking out against patriarchal oppression, which is prevalent in Indian society. Kamala Das attacked openly in her poetry the tradition that enabled the male to force women to subservience and limit their individual rights in order to abolish this fortress of age-old patriarchal domination over the matriarchal sector of society. Das' works have openly and outrageously expressed her indignation and reaction against patriarchal superiority and power, which has resulted in sex discrimination and the marginalisation of women in their social, cultural, and family relationships.

Kamala Das has portrayed herself as a dissatisfied lady in love in her marriage and extramarital life in the majority of her poems. She blames masculine ego for her disillusionment and failure in love. As she paints in her poems, both her husband and her lovers are greedy, fleshy hungry, sex mongers, and, above all, betrayers. According to Julie Mullaney, Roy's writing in "*The God of Small Things*" employs a variety of alternatives and choices, whether complicit, resistant, or both, in a dominant order that frames each of their individual life stories as well as their relationship to familial and societal history.

Toni Morrison and Arundhati Roy, both Afro-American writers, let their survivor characters, Claudia and Rahel, bear witness to the silence of their devastated counterparts. Estha and Pecola. Both authors symbolise the tangle of social, economic, and familial situations that brutalise subaltern youth. They portray their characters as follows: Claudia holds the African American society guilty for parents' obsession with white ideals that ruin subaltern children. In *The God of Small Things*, Rahel survived the horrors of caste-based violence and death she witnessed as a youngster and sees her twin brother. Estha, who has been stunned into silence by the adult world. Roy investigates how Ammu, the mother of the twins, symbolises the caste system's foundational tenet of endogamy by marrying outside the society and then committing the most transgression act of loving a Dalit man. The twins are pushed to the periphery of the family as her offspring, too young to understand the customary norms and hierarchies, and as subaltern children are wounded by the legacy of exclusion their mothers had to adopt.

2.4 POST-COLONIALISM AND DECOLONIZATION:

Magic Realism, absent from pre-independence works, became the dominating genre after independence. Magic Realism weakened social realism. M.K. Naik states, "Magic realism is a jealous mistress; social realism is an unwelcome guest." (1984: 123). The best example of Magic Realism is G.V. Desai's "All About Hatterr." The post-independence novels followed the tradition of Magic Realism established by G.V. Desai, which was strengthened by Salman Rushdie. *The Midnight's Children*, Salman Rushdie's first novel, which received the Booker of Bookers Prize, is an exemplary example of the Magic Realism movement. Although he used this style in future works such as *'Satanic Verses*,' *'The Moor's Last Sigh*,' and *'The Ground Beneath Her Feet*,' he was not as successful in this genre as he was when he wrote *'The Midnight's Children*.' Typical examples include Shashi Tharoor's *'The Great Indian Novel*,' Boman Desai's *'The Memory of Elephants*,' Ranjit Lal's *'The Crow Chronicles*,' Amitav Ghosh's *'The Circle of Reason*,' G.J.V. Prasad's 'A Clean Breast,' Tabish Kher's *'An Angel in Pyjamas*,' RukunAdvani's '*Be.* Another tendency is the English translation of regional literatures. For example, practically all of Premchand's, Rabindranath Tagore's, Subramania Bharathi's, Vijay Tendulkar's, and Vasudevan Nair's works are available in English not just for English speakers but also for those around the world who know English as a second or foreign language. TakazhiSivasankaraPillai's*Chemmeen*, Kesava Reddy's *'He Conquered the Jungle'*, Sundara Ramasamy's *'Tale of a Tamarind Tree'*, U R Anantha Murthy's *'Samsara'*, and others have made significant contributions to English translation literature. There is a distinct trend of women writers rising on the national scene among these translated pieces. Dalit literature, which has also been translated into English, is a new trend and latest development. Contemporary fiction writers focus on the minute and subtle characteristics of human behaviour that cause diasporic persons to feel alienated and kept at a distance. Various writers have attempted to capture the nuances of this experience. There are writers who focus on the

diasporic experience in a foreign area, shaping the supremacist attitude of natives toward them. Other writers consider this experience as the result of cultural exchange that supports the establishment of a universal civilization.

Postcolonial literature includes subaltern literature." Postcolonialism establishes theories in philosophy and literature that grapple with the legacy of colonial power. Postcolonial perspectives mark the emergence of a different trend in Indian English fiction. It does not present the British empire as the culture representing colonial oppression and the eastern or Indian culture, as the other. The contemporary writers tend to bring out internal contradictions of the national culture. The conflicting interests of different communities and the fear psychosis resulting from minority or majority syndrome find expression in their recent fictional works. The presentation of this theme involves the expression of a sense of resentment, in the sub-cultures within the main culture, against the false sense of inclusion of their voice by the majority culture. The clashing interests of various communities, as well as the fear psychosis caused by minority or majority syndrome, are expressed in their contemporary literary.

Indian English writers focus on creative interpretations of Indian society and culture and 'forming and projecting the Indian image' Indian society divides into upper-caste, non-upper-caste, and downtrodden sections. Among them, several castes and subcastes followed many practises and usages; each is unique. Over time, upper-castes have influenced the socio-religious and cultural life of marginalised groups.

2.5 DALIT LITERATURE:

Human rights issues have put a spotlight on literary depictions of marginalised people. Modern Dalit literature in India tries to highlight prejudice, violence, and poverty. These experiences have been buried in silence, frequently with religious and social sanction, and considered non-literary. Recently, they have been denied entirely. The expanding corpus of Dalit literature, poems, novels, and autobiographies examines Dalit culture. Dalit literature is an important post-independence literary movement. The transformation of these branded 'untouchables' into dalit was a centuries-long collective struggle. Mahatma Jyotirao Phule and Dr. B.R. Ambedkar coined the term.

Indian Dalit literature refers to literature of the oppressed, mainly connected with a broad group of people historically regarded the lowest among the Indian population and known as "untouchables." Dalit literature emerged in response to Indian social and cultural history, but translations into English have given it a place in the World Republic of Letters. In an era when human rights are a focus, literary portraits of marginalised communities are important. Recent Dalit literature in India aims to highlight inequality, violence, and poverty. These experiences have long been silenced, often with religious and social sanction, and considered non-literary. Recently, they have been denied entirely. Political groups

back them. The Dalit panthers (begun in 1975) have taken much from America's Black panthers. Dalit status and sensitivity determine the destiny of Dalit literature. New reforming waves are blowing for Dalit literature as resistance literature. Dalit literature is a new dimension in modern literature. Dalit literature, a new charismatic dimension in literature, fascinates many.

The primary goal of Dalit literature is to liberate Dalits. Dalits have a long history of fighting against casteist traditions. In Kannada, for example, it dates back to Chennaiah, the cobbler, the first Vachana poet of the 11th century. The upper castes were challenged by the Dalit saint Kalavve in the 12th century, who said, "Those who eat goats, foul and tiny fish: Such, they call caste people." Outcastes are those who eat the Sacred Cow, which rains foaming milk for Shiva."Dalit writers' poems, short stories, novels, and autobiographies provided valuable insights into the issue of Dalit identity. Now, subaltern communities have adopted a new attitude, 'Dalit is Dignified,' rejecting the Hindu social order's subhuman status.

When human rights are a focus, literary portraits of marginalised communities are important. Recent Dalit literature in India aims to highlight inequality, violence, and poverty. These experiences have long been silenced, often with religious and social sanction, and considered non-literary. Recently, they have been denied entirely. The expanding corpus of Dalit literature, poems, novels, and autobiographies examines Dalit culture. Dalit literature is an important post-independence literary movement. The transformation of these branded 'untouchables' into dalit is a narrative of centuries-long struggle. Mahatma Jyotirao Phule and Dr. B.R. Ambedkar were the first to use Dalit as a noun and an adjective to denote untouchables' oppression. In 1958, at the inaugural Dalit conference in Bombay, the phrase 'Dalit literature' was first used. As an identity marker, 'Dalit' became popular in 1972 when a group of young Marathi writers-activists created Dalit panthers. The name symbolised kinship and connection with Black Panthers who fought for African-American rights in the U.S. Arjun Dangle, a Dalit panther leader, writes:

“Dalit is not a caste but a realization and is related to the experiences, joys and sorrows and struggles of those in the lowest strata of society. It matures with a sociological point of view and is related to the principles of negativity, rebellion and loyalty to science, thus finally ending as revolutionary.”

The term "dalit" literally means "oppressed" and is used to describe to India's "untouchable" casteless sects. Dalit, also known as outcaste, is a self-designation for a group of individuals who have traditionally been considered untouchables. Dalits are a mixed population of many caste groups found throughout India, South Asia, and the world. Many alternative names have been proposed to describe this group of individuals, including 'Ashprosh' (Untouchable), 'Harijans' (Children of God), 'Dalits' (Broken People), and so on. The origins of the word 'Dalit' Dalit is a Sanskrit word that means "downtrodden," "suppressed," "crushed," or "broken to pieces." It was coined by Jyotirao Phule in the

nineteenth century to describe the oppression of the old "Untouchable" classes of twice-born Hindus. To identify the previous untouchables, Mahatma Gandhi coined the term 'Harijan,' which loosely translates as "children of God.

The religious literature *'Manu Smriti'* described the society's 'Varna system' based on occupation. It is a four-society varna system made up of four different types of people from Lord Vishnu's body. According to this legend, Brahmin was born from the head, Kshatriya from the arms, Vaishya from the abdomen, and Shudra from the feet. It stressed shudra as a slave and servant because he was born without feet and was thus obliged to serve the rest of society. As a result, shudra (Dalit) was acknowledged as a lower society of society, an outcaste.

By this so-called civilised Hindu society, Dalits have been intended for lower vocations such as leather work, butchering, or the clearance of debris, animal corpses, and waste. Dalits clean streets, latrines, and sewers as manual labourers. These actions were thought to be damaging to the individual, and the pollution was thought to be contagious. As a result, Dalits were frequently separated and prohibited from fully participating in Hindu social life.

DALIT MOVEMENTS IN INDIA: Lord GautamBudha, who preached the abolition of untouchability, was the first known Dalit reformer. The oldest documented reformation within Hinduism occurred during the mediaeval period, when Bhakti organisations actively promoted dalit involvement and inclusion. The Brahmo samaj, Arya samaj, and the Ramakrishna mission actively contributed in the emancipation of Dalits in the nineteenth century. In Maharashtra, Saint Kabir, the Mahanubhava sect, and the Varkari sect all rejected the word "untouchability" and welcomed Dalits as brothers. Maharashtra was a pivotal state in the reformation of dalit or the change of the untouchable to the touchable. The significant social reformers of Maharashtra included Mahatma JyotibaPhule, RajashriShahu Maharaj, V. R. Shinde, and the towering figure Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. Ambedkar switched his emphasis to Buddhism in the 1950s, and he converted thousands of untouchable people to Buddhism alongside himself. In West Bengal, Chaitanya Prabhu started the 'Namoshudras movement' (bow to Dalit), which transformed people's attitudes about the untouchable population. Dalit reform movements have existed in India since the time of Gautama Buddha. It is still in the process of changing the state through the creative efforts of social reformers.

CONTEMPORARY DALIT LITERATURE:

Dalit literature is a new phenomenain literature in which the torturous experiences of Dalit, Untouchable writers are exposed to portray the contemporary social, mental situation to Dalit and non-dalit readers. Mulk Raj Anand was the first to isolate Dalit literature with novels such as 'Untouchable' and 'Coolie,' both of which were simultaneously translated into English and other languages. Dalit literature is written in a variety of literary forms. Maharashtra Dalit poets and authors popularised Dalit

literature in Marathi. Its primary purpose is to raise awareness among all conscientious readers about the social status of dalits in society.

Dalit poetry: There is a plethora of Dalit poetry that successfully expresses the poet's violent lashing experiences. Narayan Survey was a well-known poet in early Dalit literature. 'vidhyapith' was his most renowned poem. KeshavMeshram wrote "Utkhanan" (Excavation), DayaPawar wrote "Kondwada" (suffocating Enclosure), NamedeoDhasal wrote "*Golpitha"* (The Red Light Zone), TriyambakSapkal wrote "Surung" (dynamite), and so on. The modern generation of Dalit poetry evolved as a revolt or protest against the oppressive conventional restraints.

Dalit folk poetry: In contrast to the enormous Dalit poetry as a powerful means of Dalit expression, folk poetry is also used to promote Dalit sensitivity. Dalit folk poets include Vaman Dada Kardak, BhimraoKardak, VitthalUmap, and others. Folk poetry comprises ballads that captivated the Dalit community's common people. It also raises awareness of Dalit reform movements.

Dalit short stories : Short stories and novels are key genres of literature that Dalit writers portray Dalit sensibilities effectively. Short stories such as 'Fakira' by Anna BhauSathe, 'Davandi' by ShankarraoKharat, and 'JevahMiJaatChorli Hoti' by 1963 Hot AaheMaran Swast-1969 The best examples of Dalit short stories by Dalit writers are (Death is becoming cheap) by BaburaoBagul and Red Stone by N. G. Shende. D) Dalit autobiographies: Dalit writers primarily used autobiographies to interpret their own experiences with social injustice. It is known as Dalit Auto-narrative. This type of literature is best suited for Dalit authors.

Dalit literature conveys a message about their group rather than individuals, about insurrection rather than apathy, and about progress rather than backwardness. This message is to the entire world about their standing in society by depicting them as exploitative, helpless, and engaged in grief, oppressed and subjugated, and in a subaltern state. In terms of mutilation, Dalits in India can be compared to African Americans to some extent. The authors' joint political perspective is against the hegemony of upper and middle class Hindu ideas and in favour of personal power over restrictive social restrictions. Throughout their literature, Dalit authors questioned religion and identity. Dalit literature gained a solid foundation in the mid-twentieth century, but its structure was developed in the early nineteenth century. Dalit writers now have a literary foundation based on ideology and publish in a variety of periodicals. They are also supported by a number of political organisations. The Dalit panthers (founded in 19705) are the most visible of them, borrowing much of their ideology from America's Black panthers.

Dalit literature future is predicated on the current condition of Dalits and their sensitivity. New reforming winds are blowing for the radical growth of Dalit literature as protest literature. Thus, Dalit literature is a new

dimension and literature. People are fascinated by this new charismatic dimension in literature, namely Dalit literature. Dalit Literature has taken on a new dimension, encompassing literature about oppressed Indians, and other groups around the world who are put to a secondary position by the affluent. Dalit literature includes works about the exploitation of nature and the environment, the racial discrimination of Afro Americans in America, women's subordination, LGBT rights, and the neglect of the elderly. Dalit has a broad meaning and a powerful healing power. The central issue woven into the Dalit fabric is the strong rejection of religious justification of poverty and untouchability by those who have suffered at its hands since the inception of the caste system.

Dalit literature has made a significant contribution. It has effectively challenged Brahmanic predominance in literature, isensitised Dalit masses to assert, protest, and mobilise,) stimulated thought in Dalit intellectuals and fostered the formation of organic Dalit intellectuals. Despite the low level of literacy among Dalits, the birth of Dalit literature, in which both writers and readers are predominantly Dalits, is proof of a deep transition taking place in Indian society. Dalit identity and sensitivity will determine the destiny of Dalit literature.

Dr. M. B. Gaijan evaluates the outcast in Rabindranath Tagore's poetry. He demonstrates how Tagore has often poeticized outcast stories in order to recognise the offended as fellow human beings. M. R. Anand's novels revolve around the struggle for life and the exploration of one's own identity. His heroes, the oppressed, do not have tragic defects, but they are prey to society, and their fates are dictated by genetics.

New reforming waves are undoubtedly blowing for the radical growth of Dalit literature as protest literature. Thus, Dalit literature represents a new dimension in the literature of today and the past. People are mesmerised by this new charismatic dimension in literature.Dalit is a socially significant society. Since ancient times, it been subjugated as a subordinate, inferior component of Hindu society. Dalit literature is an explosion of centuries of oppressed people's repressed wrath. Dalits are no longer Dalit (helpless); they are as strong as other persons in society. Their inventiveness makes them rich society's pinnacle. Caste-based system restricted people from changing jobs. In this contemporary era, where money decides status, upper- and lower-class structures evolved. The 'Dalit movement' changes the face of society and eliminates subordination of the downtrodden class.

Jyotirao Phule, a Marathi Dalit (then known as an Untouchable), published his book Gulamgiri (Slavery) in 1873 and dedicated it to the then-Negroes in America as a "'token of admiration for their sublime disinterestedness and self-sacrificing devotion in the cause of Negro Slavery,'" as noted by S.D. Kapoor . The example of the development of African American consciousness and its expression in literature, particularly slave narratives, served as an effective model for Phule in resisting the oppressive caste system that had left the ati-shudras (the untouchables) in India without a sense of self-identity and consciousness. Phule's lifelong endeavour to

educate the lowest castes about their plight as a result of the Brahmin caste system continues to be an inspiration today. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, India's greatest Dalit leader, who framed the Constitution of a free and new India and served as the country's first Law Minister, recognisedPhule's work by dedicating his own book, Who Were the Shudras? to him. Ambedkar, who was prominent in Indian national politics and created the country's first constitution, also saw parallels between African Americans and Dalits. Ambedkar witnessed the developing consciousness among Blacks and their battle to establish their identity and humanity against white supremacist tyranny as a graduate student at Columbia University from 1913 to 1916. Such firsthand experience helped him develop a "framework" for the "issue of caste segregation back home", says Sudarshan Kapur. When Lala Lajpat Rai, a famous Indian anti-British Raj activist and "founding member of the Hindu reformist movement, Arya Samaj", compared the lynchings of Negroes in America with the attitudes of the Brahmins toward the pariahs, the untouchables. Ambedkar thought that the emergence of an American conscience enabled ex-slaves to write their pain as narratives in order to expose the atrocities of slavery. However, he contended that in India, "Hindus" lack a conscience that prevents them from realising the unfairness in the caste system to which they belong.

Sudarshan Kapur traces the history of the well-known relationship between Gandhi's Satyagraha and Dr. Martin Luther King's nonviolent Civil Rights movement in the United States during the 1950s-1960s to much earlier connections between the African American community and Gandhi's activities through the 1920s in his critically acclaimed book, *Raising Up a Prophet: the African-American Encounter with Gandhi.* As Kapur argues, such a rich history of connections prior to King's "discovery" of Gandhi in his seminary years in 1950 two years after Gandhi's assassination not only demonstrates the early awareness in the United States that "struggles for transformation may be shared across cultural and political boundaries," but also demonstrates the early recognition in the United States that "struggles for transformation may be shared across cultural and political boundaries."

2.6 TRANSLATED WORKS OF NATIVE WRITERS FROM DIFFERENT LANGUAGES IN INDIA

Amit Chaudhuri remarks on Indian writing, in *The Guardian*:

"As to the writers from the more troubled regions outside the metropolitan suburbs in which English alone was spoken, ... if you scratched the surface of their slightly bureaucratic veneer, that they possessed an eclecticism of taste and literary predilections, a formal curiosity, as well as a true multilingualism, that made them quite akin – paradoxically for brown men wandering about the streets of Frankfurt and Paris – to the breed of writers once called "European."

Ananthamurthyhas received the Padma Bhushan and the Jnanpith Award for his outstanding work in Kannada literature and is one of the most well-

known Indian regional authors.According to AmitChaudhuri, there are following important Indian Writers in Translation:

Ambai: ***In A Forest, A Deer*****-**Short stories drawing on mythology, feminism and the lives of ordinary women

Ashapoorna Devi: ***The First Promise (PrathamPratisruti)*****-**This is one of the few novels by the prolific and highly esteemed author that has been translated. It follows the development of Satyabati, a child bride who grows to expect much more from her new life in a changing but still repressive Calcutta.

Bama: ***Karukku*** -Bama's account of growing up untouchable, a dalit in modern India.

Bhisham Sahni: ***Tamas*****-** Sahni drew on his experiences working in refugee camps to create the narratives of Nathu, the sweeper whose unintentional killing of a pig sparks a riot, Jarnail, and a number of other characters.

BibhutibhushanBandopadhyay***: PatherPanchali (The Song of the Road), Aparajito)*****-**As Bibhutibhushan followed his protagonist from the little village of Nischindipur to the demands and temptations of the city, Satyajit Ray's ***Apu Trilogy*** was based on these well-known and beloved classics.

Fakir Mohan Senapati: ***Six Acres and a Third*** -Senapati's wickedly funny tale of colonial India

Girish Karnad: ***Collected Plays*****-**one of India's most intelligent and engaged writers, plays that sweep through history and myth to address today's audience.

GopinathMohanty: ***Paraja*** -from the 1930s, it examines the steady collapse of a tribesman deprived of his lands by the state, who turns first to the familiar forest and eventually to drunkenness.

Harivansh Rai Bachchan: ***In the Afternoon of Time*** **-**From the trials of growing up in the regions to the success of *Madhushala* and the superstardom of his son, Amitabh, the renowned poet recounts his life with candour and emotion. The English translation of the four-volume original was a highly effective reduction.

Jibananda Das: ***Selected Poems and Collected Short Stories*****-** Jibananda's multilayered and frequently revolutionary poetry produced a multitude of horrifyingly awful imitations, but few matched his vision's precision. His short stories are less well-known, but they provided a generation of Bengalis with an escape from Tagore's gentle dictatorship.

Kamleshwar: ***Partitions*** **-**One of the finest examinations of the wounds of Partition in Indian literature; piercing, agonising, and highly provoking.

KiranNagarkar: ***SaatSakkamTrechalis*** (Seven Sixes Are Forty-Three)- The protagonist of Nagarkar's first work was KushankPundare, an unpublished author who lived in a slum. Pundare's beautiful blend of

nihilism and wide humour failed to delight the Marathi literary community, but Nagarkar's readers continue to be amused.

Krishna Sobti: ***MitroMarjani, EiLadki*** **(translated as** ***To Hell With You, Mitro and Listen, Girl*****)** **-**Sexuality and the urge for independence are the subject of Sobti's richly comedic, occasionally gloomy studies.

M. Mukundan: ***On the Banks of the Mayyazhi*** **-**In this timeless classic, Father Alphonse, Dasan the freedom fighter, Chitralekha the dancer, and the villagers of Mahe come together.

Mahasweta Devi: ***Titu Mir, Rudali, Breast Stories, Mother of 1084, 'Draupadi'*** **-**shows her wrenching, engaging perspective on history.

Mahesh Elkunchwar: ***Holi, Yuganta, Pratibimb, Party.***

M T Vasudevan Nair: ***Naalukettu*** **-**Literally "the house around the courtyard," Naalukettu uses MT Vasudevan Nair's own memories to portray the ambience of a South Indian village and a young boy's struggles to find his way through a maze of tradition.

Nabaneeta Deb Sen: ***Defying Winter (in Five Novellas by Women), A Nabaneeta Reader*** **-**The writings include children's fiction, travelogues, literary criticism, and mainstream fiction. Defying Winter is a witty and cosy novella set in a retirement community.

NaiyerMasud: ***The Essence of Camphor*** **-**These stories, translated from Urdu, preserve some of that language's fragrance: they are delicate, precise, and mournful, notably the title storey and "SheeshaGhat."

NamdeoDhasal: ***Poet of the Underworld*** **-**This Dalit poet's work is beautifully translated by Dilip Chitre.

Nirmal Verma: ***Selected Stories; The Last Wilderness*** **(translated by Pratik Kanjilal) -**Verma, the founder of the "NayiKahani" literary movement, was a writer of uncommon depth and sensitivity. In *'The Last Wilderness,'* Pratik Kanjilal's translation portrays Verma's story set in the highlands and narrated by the retired civil servant's secretary-companion. This is one of Verma's finest works; he uses the terrain to evoke a sense of threat and possibility.

O V Vijayan: ***Legends of Khasak*****-**Vijayan made Khasak as "real" as Marquez's Macondo, and it possesses a similar degree of depth.

Premchand: ***ShatranjkeKhiladi (The Chess Players)*** **-***Shatranj* remains a personal favourite due to its depiction of a friendship challenged during the last hours of an empire.

Premendra Mitra: ***Mosquito and other stories*** **-**"Ghanada" is an outstanding literary figure known to Bengalis; this collection demonstrates some of Mitra's wit and odd fluidity.

QurratulainHyder: ***Aag Ki Dariya (River of Fire)*** **-**This mammoth book covers 2.5 millennia of Indian history and connects it with four

protagonists who travel through the years and observe the changing of the guard. Hyder's greatest work.

Rabindranath Tagore: ***Selected Short Stories*** translated by Sukanta Chaudhuri and others, *The Home and the World, Chokher Bali* -his short stories are the best introduction to his work. his novels, including *Ghare-Baire (The Home, the World), and Nashto Neer (The Broken Nest, filmed as Charulata)* inspired Ray's films.

Rahi Masoom Reza: ***A Village Divided*****-**Reza's description of the conflicts between competing families in Gangauli is incisive, crisp, and quite humorous..

Saadat Hasan Manto: ***the collected short stories*** **-**Manto used grim humour to frame Partition and the riots; in his tales, inmates of a mental institution must understand the new borders, a guy discovers he has no taste for cold meat, and a youngster sees jelly in a pool of blood.

Sankar: ***Chowringhee*** **-**This expert translation brings to life the inner tales of a large hotel in Calcutta from Sankar's hugely acclaimed book.

Sharatchandra: ***Debdas, Srikanta, PatherDabi*** **-**Sharatchandra's reputation for sarcasm and his incisive criticism of the social conventions of his time is remarkable, Bengal's most well-known novels, and his characters continue to live in the public imagination.

Shivram Karanth: ***Ten Faces of a Crazy Mind*** - one of the greats of Kannada literature, and his autobiography is as unorthodox as was his life.

ShrilalShukla: ***RaagDarbari*** **-**This timeless parody of small-town India looks closely at the corrupt political system without holding its nose.

Sunil Gangopadhyay: ***Sei Samay (Those Days), Pratham Alo (First Light)*** **-**Two of the more well-known works of the prolific Gangopadhyay are historical fiction that walks a delicate line between gossip and an actual account of the life and times of Bengal's best.

ThakazhiSivasankaraPillai: ***Chemmeen*** **-**This led to the meeting of two star-crossed lovers in a Keralan fishing village.

U R Ananthamurthy: ***Samskara*** **-**The central event in Samskara, the challenging and, for its time, revolutionary novel by U R Anathamurthy, is the funeral of a Brahmin who had abandoned the society.

Vaidehi: ***Gulabi Talkies*****-**Short stories translated from Kannada; the title story, in which a village cope with the loss of its midwife, Lillibai, when she chooses to operate the only-for-women cinema, Gulabi Talkies, finest exemplifies Vaidehi's signature style.

Vaikom Muhammad Basheer***: My Granddad Had An Elephant, Walls-*** Freedom fighter, nomad, and author Basheer had a talent for distilling the ludicrous, the humorous, and the tragic into a few spare phrases. The short story collection *My Granddad Had An Elephant by Walls* follows two

convicts who may not ultimately wish to leave for "the larger jail outside."

V K Madhavan Kutty: ***The Village Before Time***

VijaydanDetha: ***A Straw Epic and other stories*** **-**VijaydanDetha's stories are based on Rajasthani folktales, which do not translate well, but this collection captures some of the flavour of the originals. Particularly in "Duvidha," the well-known tale of a love triangle involving a bride, her husband, and the ghost who momentarily takes the form of the husband.

Vilas Sarang: ***The Women in the Cages (short stories)*** **-**He had it translated from its original Marathi into English. His Bombay is a strange city where Ganesha's statue may flee from his own procession and where a man might get in trouble for putting his hands on a funeral fire to warm them on a chilly day.

Vijay Tendulkar: ***GhashiramKotwal, Sakharam Binders or The Collected Plays*** --Few playwrights have utilised current events and biting satire as successfully as Tendulkar did in his brave and fierce plays, which are essentials of any self-respecting Indian theatre company.

2.7 TRIBAL LITERATURE

Adivasis or tribals have a strong tradition of oral storytelling but has remained in the shadows since long. Adivasi literature is the literature written in more than 100 languages by the tribal people of the Indian subcontinent. The tradition of tribal literature comprises oral and written literature in tribal languages. Tribal literature, imbued with Tribal consciousness, attempts to carve out a place for itself in the world of literature and criticism . Tribal literature has now been translated into English and made accessible, owing to the efforts of publishers such as adivaani, Zubaan, and even mainstream publishers. This is a collection of tales about their culture, nature, philosophy, the human condition, and their interconnectedness. From TemsulaAo's short stories to EasterineKire's novels, these books by Adivasis are extraordinary works of scholarship. Tribal literature is the literature of a search for identity, the exposure of past and present forms of exploitation by outsiders, threats to tribal existence and identity, and resistance.Adivasi Sahitya, or tribal literature, is generally available in the form of songs or dance forms. These songs have been passed down from generation to generation and have persisted for a long time. Even some folk songs have been lost forever. Susheela Samad, one of the early Adivasi authors, edited the magazine Chandni from 1925 to 1930 and produced two poetry collections in 1935 and 1948.

In India, the last three decade saw the development of a slew of new movements. Tribal literature is the creative energy developed at the national level after 1991 to defend tribal identity and existence in the face of increased exploitation as a result of economic liberalisation. Both tribal and non-tribal authors have contributed to it. This literature's geographical,

cultural, and linguistic environment is as distinct from the rest of Indian literature as Tribals are from the rest of Indians. This uniqueness is its key factor driving the market.

The evolution of literature and many art forms in tribal cultures preceded the emergence of literature and arts in so-called mainstream society. However, the tribal literary heritage was primarily oral. Even after being thrown into the jungles, tribal communities continued their creative literary pursuits. However, because this literature was written in simple folk languages and the Tribals were located distant from centres of power, their literature, like they themselves, was mostly overlooked. Tribal literature is still being produced in hundreds of indigenous languages today, but we know very little about it.

The genuine demands are increasingly being voiced in tribal literature. Tribals cannot be dispossessed of their water supplies, forests, and land and forced to live in squalor as existence dwellers. The Tribes' existence has been threatened by the government-market nexus. Those who remain in their homes have been caught between the government's devil and the deep sea of extreme Left. Those who have relocated have become like trees with no roots. With rivers, hills, and forests no longer nearby, their distinct identity based on language and culture is fading. Never before had the Tribes faced such a profound crisis of identity and existence. It is natural for any community to fight against threats to its existence. This resistance manifested itself socially and politically, as well as in art and literature. As a result, contemporary tribal literature was born.

Tribals fought undue meddling in their lives wherever it occurred. A series of tribal uprisings have occurred during the last two centuries. These revolutions also sparked creative energy, but it was primarily oral. It could never gain pan-Indian recognition due to a lack of communication channels. Non-Tribal authors occasionally wrote about Tribal life and civilization. This entire heritage of depicting tribal life in literature is the background of contemporary tribal literature. No literary trend begins on a specific day. Its emergence and development are a slow, frequently indistinguishable process impacted by a variety of variables. Contemporary tribal literature began in 1991. As the Indian government's economic policies aggravated tribal oppression and exploitation, so did opposition to it. Because exploitation and resistance were pan-Indian phenomena, so was the creative energy that resulted from it.

Tribal literature is the literature of identity exploration, exposing past and present forms of exploitation by outsiders, threats to tribal identity and existence, and resistance. This is a pro-change, constructive intervention that strongly opposes any form of prejudice against the descendants of India's original people. It backs their right to protect their water, forests, and land, as well as their right to self-determination. Although current tribal writings and discourse are in their early phases, it is encouraging to see that pointless disputes like "empathy versus sympathy" are on the fringes. There is no reason to place such a premium on the genuineness of sympathy and empathy. The honesty of expression is more essential than

the sincerity of feelings. Honest expression is impossible without extensive experience, personal interaction, and sensitivity, particularly in the case of tribals. Empathy cannot be used as the sole factor for determining authenticity. Because tribal literary discourse is still developing, its issues are also getting shape. Over the previous decades, the conversation has addressed topics of tribal society, history, culture, language, and so on. Magazines play an important role in the initiation and growth of every literary movement. The following magazines have played key roles in publicising tribal concerns in the world of literature and supporting creative literature relating to them:

AnujLugun is a poet and writer from India. His lyrics advocated for indigenous renaissance and fierce resistance to Nazism and oppression. Anuj's social justice activism earned him the distinction of Tribal Poet and some include *YuddhratAamAdmi* (Hazaribagh, Delhi; editor: Ramnika Gupta), *Aravali Udgosh* (Udaipur; editor: B.P. Verma 'Pathik'), *Jharkhandi Bhasha Sahitya, Sanskriti Akhda* (Ranchi; editor: Vandana Tete) and *Adivasi Satta (*Durg, Chhattisgarh; editor: K.R. Shah).

Besides, Pushpa Tete through *Tarang Bharati*, Sunil Minj through Deshaj Swar and ShishirTudu through the evening newspaper *Jharkhand News Line* are also promoting Tribal discourse. Numerous mainstream publications have also produced special tribal issues, fostering the growth of tribal conversation. These include *Samkaleen Janmat* (2003), *Kathakram* (2012) and *Ispatika* (2012). Leading Hindi periodicals initially exhibited little interest in Tribal concerns, but as the conversation has grown, so has the Tribal life in their columns. Small periodicals also publish tribal writers.

Tribal texts are varied. The oral literary tradition has benefited tribal authors. Tribal literature has no primary genre like women and Dalit autobiographies. Tribal and non-Tribal writers have depicted Tribal life in poetry, stories, novels, and dramas. The Tribal writers use poetry to fight for Tribal existence and identity. Autobiographical writings are rare in Tribal literature because the Tribal society values the group over the self. Most tribal communities did not understand "private" and "privacy" for a long time. Tradition, culture, history, exploitation, and resistance are all shared. Folk poetry expresses group feelings better than autobiography. Tribal pen is growing quickly.

In colonial India, Tribals' difficulties included a ban on gathering forest produce, varied land revenues, moneylender exploitation, and police abuses. After independence, the misguided development approach of government deprived Tribals of water, forests, and land and evicted them. Today, Tribals face displacement. This threatens their identity and existence. If they try to protect their identity, their existence is threatened, and if they try to ensure their existence, their identity is lost. Hence, Tribal discourse is about existence and identity.

Tribal literature gets its impetus from the tradition of tribal uprisings, therefore the language and geography of such upheavals are important.

Tribal authors write in tribal languages. The vast literary tradition of indigenous languages influences Hindi Tribal literature. This literature has been translated into other languages. Tribal literature is translated into Hindi, Bangla, and Tamil, becoming national. Tribal literature is advancing, imbued with the rebellious spirit of Birsa, Sidho-Kano, and other revolutionary Tribal leaders and their movement.

*Laburnum For My Head*by TemsulaAo-TemsulaAo'sSahityaAkademi Award-winning short story collection is amazing. It evokes many emotions and helps us understand Adivasipain.These stories take us into north-east India's fascinating region and highlight the injustice natives face. *Death of a Hunter* is about a hunter haunted by his prey's ghost, whereas *A Simple Question* is about how a woman released her husband from the army.

The Mysterious Ailment of RupiBaskey and The Adivasi Will Not Dance by HansdaSowvendraShekhar-. RupiBaskey's mystery illness renders her bedridden. Gurubari, her husband's lover, is suspected of black magic. Rupi's life seems grim with an alcoholic mother-in-law and a stubborn child. His debut novel is set in a Santhal hamlet. The drama of a family in Jharkhand and their interactions with other Santhalis keeps us engaged with its story of gods and human emotions. It is a must-read Adivasi literature.

A Girl Swallowed By A Tree: Lotha Naga Tales Retold by Nzanmongi Jasmine Patton

Nagaland's Lotha tribe preserves its culture through traditional stories. Nzanmongi Jasmine Patton has translated 30 of these stories while retaining Lotha language. In *Ranphan, The Brave,* a man kills the tiger that killed his wife, and in *Longtsarhoni and The Snake Man*, a shape-shifting male snake marries a human woman. These tales reveal a little-known society. This work of Adivasi writing, with an introduction by EasterinKire, is remarkable.

Becoming Me by Rejina Marandi-Liya is a young girl who strives to survive in riot-ridden Assam while keeping her goals and dreams alive. Rejina Marandi's debut novel is "a coming-of-age story" of an Adivasi in a place full with horrors, discrimination, and biases. The hardships of the tribals in Assam are exposed through the story of a girl, and it will be a wake-up call for people ignorant of our country's politics.

Painted Words: An Anthology of Tribal Literature by G. N. Devy-This collection of tribal poems, songs, folk stories, and tribal renditions of *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* by G.N. Devy reveals how closely tribal culture is entwined with mainstream culture and how Adivasis are exploited in India.

The Black Hill by Mamang Dai- In the 1850s, when the British wanted to conquer India, they attacked the north-east. Abor and Mishmee tried in vain to keep "outsiders" off their land. Gimur and Kajinsha fall in love as war looms and decide to marry. Their plan is foiled by the murder of a

monk who wants to reach Tibet. Mamang Dai's *The Black Hill* is a survival story that shows how vital land is to tribals.

A Respectable Woman by EasterineKire-Eastern Kire's work recreates WWII using Naga storytelling traditions. After the crucial battle of Kohima, residents must pick up the pieces. Political upheaval and social changes have caused alcoholism and domestic violence. 45 years later, Khanuo informs her daughter about the past while underlining the present concerns. Khanuo's voyage reveals Nagaland's past and a changing society.

2.8 PROTEST LITERATURE

Protest is evolving with time. Protest is showing disapproval or opposing any concept. People have often protested economic, social, and religious injustice. It may be because man has an innate tendency to protest. Individual protest is often social protest. Protest is when a man faces an unjust and inhuman condition and decides to deal with it it by speaking out and taking action.

The Bhakti traditions and literature have influenced Indian society for millennia. On one side, they have expressed existential and social suffering in gendered terms. Injustice of class and caste happens to be a common issue. Vernacular poets from diverse castes, regions, and religions have developed a rich corpus of literature, songs, vachanas, bhajans, keertanas, and padams since the seventh century AD. As a varied group, they are distinguished by non-sectarian attitude, vernacular idiom, confidence in God, disdain of rituals and caste, and connection with the disadvantaged. According to Aijaz Ahmed, Bhakti democratised literary language, pushed cultural forms of caste hegemony in favour of craftsmen and peasants, and problematized the gender construction of all dialogic relations. The Bhakti Movement has roots in the ninth century BC, when Alvar saints of the South appeared. It is diffused across the subcontinent and supported regional movements. It sparked social, religious, and spiritual enquiry. It was spiritual, not religious. This democratising movement is marked by the emergence of several religious communities and movements with a revolutionary spirit. This new spirit was a result of the Muslim conquest, which established a more egalitarian faith, Islam.

Bhakti Movement as Protest Literature:

Bhakti Movement literature and Indian protest literature are intertwined. The Bhakti Movement Literature, India's first protest literature, explores voices of discord, rhetoric, and cultural contexts. It helps to examine and contrast distinct Bhakti poets' aesthetic moves in protest. Examining the protest spectrum, especially in regional and nationalistic literature, is very helpful and places Bhakti Literature in context with worldwide protest literature, ideologies. the historical connections between methods of protest in different Bhakti Poets in various regions of India and meanings of their individualistic literature. Bhakti movement literature in general

and Bhakti Poetry in particular has worked as Protest literature in India and provided a strong base for many other socio-political and religious movements to combat social injustices. Bhakti movement poetry was more spiritual than religious. Bhakti Poets did not just protest and their protests were similar in tone and passion. Different styles, expressions, times, regions, and religions. Several poet-saints in India chronicled and propagated the Bhakti Movement and literature till the 20th century. Their literature is unique in that each bears their distinctive imprint of a distinct idiom in their conversation with God, who is like any other human as He exchanges the roles of a lover, beloved, companion, benefactor, and guide.

The poets Ravidas, Kabir, and Nanak belong to the nirguna branch of mediaeval Indian spiritual saints. They claim that God, more than any other reality, exceeds the shapes human senses use to interpret the world, and that to move toward truth is to leave those senses behind, especially those that convince us the world is solid, distinct, and real. Taste and touch are examples, but sight is the best. In ordinary perception, seeing is a huge component of believing, especially in Hinduism with its great iconic push. The nirguna poets strove to resist this illusion. For if one trusted the senses, especially sight, one objectified God, saw him "out there," rather than understanding that the only real access is through the heart and soul. Nanak's understanding of faith is so inner that he hardly mentions God or Ram, its mediaeval north Indian equivalent. He encourages us to set aside our usual eyes to see the reality. Sansaguna The Bhakti family tree also includes saints of a different faith. The saguna group asserts that illusion in this world has less to do with our senses than with how we use them: we manufacture our dreams and delusions from the inside out, driven by appetite and desire. God restores proportion and direction by assuming a sensory manifestation, one that can be seen and visualised. Saguna poets and theologians think it is a marvel of religious life that what people see can permanently calm them, as similar visions emerge within. The Hindu temple collection of icons encourages this miracle since worshipers have 'sight' (darsan) of the divinities there. The saguna worldview holds that a major aspect of divine grace is God's approval to become available to human perception "with attributes," not merely in temple pictures but in full self-manifestations that have rescued and inspired history. No one doubts that God beyond what humans can imagine, but saguna thinkers find it more significant and surprising that God joins us in our world, broadening our understanding of what is imaginable. Surdas, Mirabai, and Tulsidas are saguna poets, or devotees linked with a personal form of God. Krishna's joyful childhood and romantic adolescence and adulthood fascinate Sur and Mira. As a newborn, Krishna performed amazing exploits against frightening demons; as a young man, he battled the evil king who had taken the throne of Mathura, a city in Braj south of Delhi; and as a mature figure, he played a vital advisor role in India's classic epic, *the Mahabharata*. Krishna's heroic character, however historically more venerable, acts only as a backdrop for Sur and Mira's main worries. Krishna's passionate playfulness attracts them.

All the poets discussed shared a common identity before God during India's long mediaeval period (500-1700 C.C.), notwithstanding their

regional languages. Singers tour, and then as now, people throughout India could speak more than one language, so it was no mystery that these Bhakti poet-singers and others who sang their songs after them could be understood. It states all the poets were knit together in a seamless fabric of shared identity. As they journeyed, they connected India's regions at the grassroots level. Bhakti emerges as an independent, living being that rides above power and prestige with its own agency — a persuasive, at times overwhelming presence that can influence history to its goals. To see things this way is to undermine a crucial way Hindus have understood their religious heritage: Santana Dharma, the belief that Hinduism is uniquely stable. Hindus want anything that moves, travels, and develops. In the Bhakti movement, we see organic, living Bhakti. It is changeable and has moved history.

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3

CRITICAL STUDY OF SONGS OF KABIR BY RABINDRANATH TAGORE

Unit Structure:

3.0 OBJECTIVES

1. To acquaint the students with the beauty of the songs of Kabir and his philosophy, Sufism and mysticism.
2. To acquaint and familiarize students with the beauty of the English translation by Rabindranath Tagore.
3. To acquaint the students with the finer nuances the lyrical quality, music resonance and assonance of the language and help them identify and learn the symbolism and imagery employed by Kabir and RN Tagore

3.1 ABOUT R.N. TAGORE:

Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) is also known as Gurudev, Kabiguru, and Biswakabi, among other titles. He is a prominent Bengali poet, playwright, novelist, short story writer, essayist, educator, composer of music, and painter. In 1913, he was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature for his work Gitanjali. Gitanjali is a collection of 103 devotional hymns by Patanjali. He composed our national hymn, 'Jan Gana Mana.'

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Tagore's poetic collections are well-known which are *The Gardener, The Crescent Moon, Fruit Gathering, Stray Birds, Lover's Gift and Crossing*, and *The Fugitive and Other Poems*. His works include plays *Chitra, The Post Office*, and *Sacrifice and Other Plays*, novels *The Home and the World, Gora*, and *The Wreck* and a collection of short stories *Hungry Stones*, and an autobiography *Reminiscences.*

Professor R.K.S Iyengar has righly remarked about R .N.Tagore which amply throws light on the great potential and importance of R .N Tagore as a writer and an Indidvidual .

"Tagore was a poet, dramatist, actor, producer; he was a musician and a painter; he was an educationist, a practical idealist who turned his dreams into reality at Shantiniketan; he was a reformer, philosopher, prophet; he was a novelist and short story writer, and a critic of life and literature; he even made occasional incursions into nationalist politics although, he was essentially an internationalist. He was thus many persons, he was a darling of versatility, and stil he was the same man, he was an integral whole, the Rshi, the Gurudev. His fecundity and vitality were amazing…Next only to Mahatma Gandhi and Sri Aurobindo, Tagore has been the supreme inspiration to millions in modern India".

Tagore's translation of Kabir's poetry, released in 1915, is well known in the West. The validity of the volume's 100 "Songs of Kabir" has been called into question, but there is no such thing as an authentic body of Kabir's words. Kabir employed a variety of imagery to portray concepts of religious ecstasy, but images of music and marital love are particularly prominent. Kabir was clearly a musician himself, and his poems were most likely sung rather than spoken. In 1900, there were approximately one million members of these "Kabirpanthis".

Tagore used Kabir as an example of how in India spirituality transcended community boundaries as early as 1910. Saints such as Kabir, Nanak, and Chaitanya preached similar lessons about their communities' relationship with the divine.

Tagore often cited Kabir while discussing the individual-divine link. In Personality, based on lectures he gave in the USA in 1917, he wrote that Man has also known direct communication of the person with the Person, not through the world of forms and changes, the world of extension in time and space, but in the innermost solitude of consciousness, in the region of the profound and intense."

Kshitimohan Sen influenced Tagores interest in Kabir (1880-1960). In Indian Mysticism, he told how Tagore encouraged him to publish Kabir lines he had been writing on when he arrived in Shantiniketan in 1908. Tagore's interest in Kabir as an example of Indian religious unity, he translated Kabir's poetry during this time.

3.2 ABOUT KABIR: KABIR'S BIOGRAPHY :

Kabir, a key figure in Indian mysticism, is regarded as one of India's greatest poets. a saint and a mystic poet. He is so well-known that he is regularly quoted. Legends surround Kabir's birth and death. Kabir was Born in or near Benares to Mohammedan parents in 1440. He is supposed to have lived for more than a century. He was raised in a Muslim weaving family, according to legend. Others, though, believe he was the son of a Brahmin widow. Kabir's mythology recounts his persecution by Muslim monarch Sikander Lodi and his initiation by a Hindu saint named Ramnand. The most renowned narrative of Kabir is his death and cremation in Magahar, near Gorakhpur in northeastern Uttar Pradesh . As Kabir was dying, two armed groups of his followers descended on Magahar, preparing to fight for his body. Kabir died in a tent and his body disappeared quickly. When Sant Kabir died, it is believed that his Hindu and Muslim disciples began fighting over the last rituals. According to folklore, Flowers were distributed between the two parties as they raised the shroud, they discovered flowers instead. The Muslims buried their half of the flowers and erected a cenotaph over it, while the Hindus incinerated theirs at the Kabr Chaur Mah in Banaras as they cremated their share and eventually built a samdhi. His tomb and samadhi are still located in Maghar. Kabir's popularity among Hindus grew afterwards. In an attempt to "Hinduize" the saint, worshippers said he was miraculously born to a brahman widow, who threw him into the Ganges. Julahas saved and raised him. Kabir married and had children.

He became a disciple of Ramananda who brought to Northern India the religious resurgence started by Ramanuja, a 12th-century Brahmanism reformer. This resurgence was a reaction against the increasing formalism of the orthodox religion and an expression of the heart's desires against the profound intellectualism of Vedanta philosophy and its exaggerated monism. In Ramanuja's preaching, it took the form of fervent personal devotion to the God Vishnu as the personal element of the Divine Nature: that mystical "religion of love" that creeds and ideologies can not kill.

Though such devotion is intrinsic to Hinduism and found in the Bhagavad Gita, its mediaeval resurgence involved a lot of syncretism. Ramananda, who powerfully influenced Kabir, was a man of great religious culture and missionary enthusiasm. At a time when the passionate poetry and deep philosophy of Attar, Sadi, Jalalu'ddin Rumi, and Hafiz were influencing Indian religious thought, he dreamed of integrating Mohammedan mysticism with Brahmanism. Some have viewed both of these religious leaders as influenced by Christian thinking and life, however competent sources hold wildly varied opinions on this. In their teachings, two or three apparently conflicting streams of high spiritual culture met, as Jewish and Hellenistic thought did in the early Christian Church. Kabir's genius was to fuse them into one in his poems.

3.3 ABOUT HIS POEMS ANDSTYLE:

Kabir's poetry is remarkable for its ecstatic feeling and rejection of both Hinduism and Islam in favour of a direct communion with the almighty. His poems exude a wonderful brilliant fire. His writings had a significant impact on the Bhakti movement. He had a huge impact on Indian philosophy and Hindi poetry. Kabir made masterpieces that are ageless and possess an element of universality and they are true at all times. People of various faiths have found his mystical and religious poetry to be uplifting. He used imagery from everyday life and universal experience. His poems have an appealing simplicity to them. He attempted to bridge the gap between Hindus and Muslims. Today, Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs all admire Kabir, and his melodies are beloved by people of all religions.

Kabīrvāṇīs , the "words of Kabīr." Have no authoritative version . Kabir was illiterate, and never wrote anything. His utterances were *doha* couplets or *pada* melodies . His language was Old Hindi, which might have served as a lingua franca for itinerant spiritual men of his time. His eloquence spread like fire from Bihar in the east to Panjab and Rajasthan in the west. the the "words of Kabīr." Were always mimicked and interpolated.

Kabir's style is rough, terse, and brilliant. His stunning images and rhythms move listeners. Kabir's voice was probably the greatest on Indian land since Buddha's. His negative view of secular life, scorn for sacred literature and gurus, and exhortation to inwardness are remembered. If "God" is a divine personality, his mysticism may seem godless. Kabir is an iconoclast a master of "interior religion."

3.4 KABIR'S PHILOSOPHY:

Kabir happened to be a religious reformer and creator of a sect to which a million northern Hindus now belong, lives for us as a mystical poet. His fate is like many Reality-showers. Hater of religious exclusivism and seeker of the freedom of God's children. His great melodies, spontaneous manifestations of his vision and love, endure, and it is through them, not the didactic teachings connected with his name, that he appeals to the heart.

Kabir's view on the world is a tragic one . In the domain of transmigration, life is ephemeral, fleeting and merely a brief period between two deaths. Family bonds are meaningless and founded on self-interest. Death embraces everyone; the living are compared to "the parched grain of Death, some in his mouth, the rest in his lap." There is no hope or escape for man save within his own heart. Man must look within himself, free himself of arrogance and egotism, and delve deep within to find the "diamond" buried within his own soul. Then, and only then, can the enigmatic, indescribable level be reached within the body itself .

Many of Kabir's "words" are comparable to those of liberal and unorthodox Indian Sufis. Modern Hindus and Muslims see him as the champion of Hindu-Muslim unity, yet he rejected the "two religions" and fiercely criticised their representatives. He dismissed all scriptural authority and warned against seeking knowledge in "holy books": "Reading, reading, the whole world died—and no one ever became learned!"

Kabir has condemned all of India's existing sects. He was opposed to dogmas in both Hinduism and Islam. He advocated for the practise of 'Sahaj Paths.' He was opposed to social and economic discrimination. He accepted the Vedantic concept of atman but condemned the Hindu caste system and Murti-pujan. The Kabir Panth is now carrying on Kabir's heritage. His poetry's ideological messages were directed for the impoverished and disadvantaged.

In his poems, mystical emotion ranges from lofty abstractions and otherworldly yearning for the Infinite to the most intimate and personal realisation of God, conveyed in homely analogies and religious symbols from Hindu and Mohammedan beliefs. Their creator was neither Brahman nor Sufi, Vedantic nor Vaishnavite. "I am both Allah's and Ram's son," he claims. That Supreme Spirit he knew and adored, and to Whose joyous friendship he sought to induct other men, transcended while He included all metaphysical categories; yet each contributed something to the description of that Infinite and Simple Totality Who revealed Himself, according to their measure, to the faithful lovers of all creeds.

3.5 DIGNITY OF LABOUR IN HIS POEMS :

Kabir was an illiterate weaver. The manual work background influenced Kabir's poetry, which uses family and environmental imagery to reveal deep puzzles and conundrums about the holy. Kabir pursued his trade even after embracing mysticism. In the introduction to Bengali poet Rabindranath Tagore's English translation of Kabir's poems, Evelyn Underhill wrote:

"Like Paul the tentmaker, [German mystic Jacob] Boehme the cobbler, [English preacher John] Bunyan the tinker, [and German religious writer] Gerhard Tersteegen, he knew how to combine vision and industry; the work of his hands helped rather than hindered the impassioned meditation of his heart." Other writers, however, have pointed to words ascribed to Kabir in which he appears to recount arguments with his wife, or his mother, over the problems a religious sage experienced in supporting a family. Kabir was married at least once, and had one or more children".

Other writers have cited remarks attributed to Kabir in which he appears to relate disagreements with his wife or mother concerning a religious sage's difficulties supporting a family.

3.6 SONG NO.1 MO KO KAHÂN DHÛNRO BANDE

O SERVANT, where dost thou seek Me?
Lo! I am beside thee.
I am neither in temple nor in mosque: I am neither in Kaaba nor in Kailash:
Neither am I in rites and ceremonies, nor in Yoga and renunciation.
If thou art a true seeker, thou shalt at once see Me: thou shalt meet Me in a moment of time.
Kabîr says, "O Sadhu! God is the breath of all breath."

EXPLANATION:

Regardless of the many methods of all religious and philosophical teachings, the all-pervading, omniscient, omnipresent element is ultimately God. We simply address Him by different names because of our cultures, traditions, and languages. Despite this awareness, we waste a lot of time arguing about God and trying to impose traits on Him.

This centuries-old phenomena was also recognised by Kabir during his time. And in the preceding verse, this great Master emphasises the basic premise that God is everywhere.

Kabir here outlines the numerous search techniques used by people. And each appears to be justifying his method of choice. Some argue that pilgrimages will lead to the realisation of God, while others argue that idol worship is justified. Some believe He is in the mountains, while others believe He is in places of worship. Some assert that prayers and meditation are the way to go, while others believe that fasting is the way to go. Many people discuss yoga exercises (activity) and renunciation.

Kabir asserts that God is not in any of these. But Kabir is saying that God is everywhere and so in all of these. His saying "No" merely implies that we should apply our faith to One and follow through on it truly. It means God is everywhere. It means God is within us. He lives in us. Rather than looking outside, we should look inside as we are his reflection and part. . We have God inside us not somewhere outside. This will result in an instant recognition of the divine inside ourselves. However, if we "switch" our approach from one road to another, we are merely performing a gymnastic. Kabir demonstrates God's omniscience in his normal mystical manner.

3.7 SONG NO. 5AVADHÛ, MÂYÂ TAJÎ NA JÂY

TELL me, Brother, how can I renounce Maya?
When I gave up the tying of ribbons, still I tied my garment about me:
When I gave up tying my garment, still I covered my body in its folds.
So, when I give up passion, I see that anger remains;
And when I renounce anger, greed is with me still;
And when greed is vanquished, pride and vainglory remain;

When the mind is detached and casts Maya away, still it clings to the letter.
Kabîr says, "Listen to me, dear Sadhu! the true path is rarely found.

Explanation:

Normally speaking, Maya conjures images of luxury and material possessions. Maya's lust for material possessions is well-documented. Maya, on the other hand, now contains considerably more, including everything the physical desires or humanweaknesses. There are many things that one must give up in order to attain God's grace, such as ego and conceit, as well as anger and jealousy. A person who is self-centered will never discover God. It is not an easy journey. In order to discover him, one might imagine that if he removes this or that from his body, he will be able to find God. He must go into this with an open mind and an unclouded conscience.

To ask God to move into an already-occupied space seems like a meaningless request especially when there would be no room for the Almighty if the heart is already occupied with self-love. It is also about the search for perfect being, the detachment from worldly distractions, and a seeking of the pure spirituality of being that is within each one of us. 'Know thyself' is the motto, then knowing oneself will be coming to know God in the true sense.

In other words, the poem by raising questions is suggesting the answers by implicature:

how can we escape ourselves?
how can we escape our bodies?
when we escape temptation our hopes remain
when we relinquish our hopes our fears continue
when fear is gone our thoughts are still deceiving
to allow the spirit to shine requires us to extinguish all of these
how difficult and rare this must be

In other words, we can also say that:

Is there a way out of this situation?

Is there a way to get out of our bodies?

We keep our hopes alive when we resist temptation.

Our concerns persist even when we give up on our hopes.

Even when the fear has passed, our minds can still trick us.

we need to extinguish all of these things in order to allow the spirit to shine

how rare and tough this must be

3.8 SONG NO.12 *HAMSÂ, KAHO PURÂTAN VÂT*

Tell me, O Swan, your ancient tale.

From what land do you come, O Swan? to what shore will you fly?

Where would you take your rest, O Swan, and what do you seek?

Even this morning, O Swan, awake, arise, follow me!

There is a land where no doubt nor sorrow have rule: where the terror of Death is no more.

There the woods of spring are a-bloom, and the fragrant scent "He is I" is borne on the wind:

There the bee of the heart is deeply immersed, and desires no other joy.

EXPLANATION:

In this poetry, Kabir conveys his belief that heaven will contain "... the fragrant scent... the woods of spring ... the bee of the heart... " Also, he opens this poem by speaking to the swan, which represents his soul, and asks it, "Tell me, O Swan, your ancient tale." The swan then proceeds to tell him about its history. Given that it makes reference to its age as well as its connection to the swan, this may be an allusion to heaven.

The "□WAN" which is both ancient and timeless, can be thought of as a metaphor for the "soul" The person who is speaking is curious about where it is headed, what it wants, and what its ultimate goal in life is. He asks our soul to follow him in knowing that "God" is "Us" and the answer to the question "Who Am I?" that was written on the wind of God's whim to know Himself that blew over His being at the beginning of creation. "Who Am I?" was written on the wind of God's whim to know Himself that blew over His being in the beginning of creation. And to connect to God consciously while on the way to understanding Him is the delight of loving Him, like a bee that will grow and end our miseries by ending desire. This joy comes from loving God. When viewed in this light, the existence of "God" and "His" throughout all of time is beyond any shadow of a doubt.

The lines also provide a magnificent description of the aspects of "Heaven" that can be as here —

"There is a place in the world where neither uncertainty nor grief are masters:

where the dread of death is no longer anything to fear.

There, in those forests, the flowers of spring have not yet appeared.

...as the enticing aroma of 'He is I' is carried on the breeze:

There, where the heart's worker bee is completely submerged,

and seeks no other happiness in life."

3.9 SONG NO.21 *GHAR GHAR DÎPAK BARAI*

Lamps burn in every house, O blind one! and you cannot see them.

One day your eyes shall suddenly be opened, and you shall see:

and the fetters of death will fall from you.

There is nothing to say or to hear, there is nothing to do: it is

he who is living, yet dead, who shall never die again.

Because he lives in solitude, therefore the Yogi says that his

home is far away.

Your Lord is near: yet you are climbing the palm-tree to seek

Him.

The Brâhman priest goes from house to house and initiates people

into faith:

Alas! the true fountain of life is beside you., and you have set

up a stone to worship.

Kabîr says: "I may never express how sweet my Lord is. Yoga and

the telling of beads, virtue and vice--these are naught to Him."

Explanation:

O oblivious one, lamps are burning in every house! whereas you are unable to perceive them.On a certain day, your eyes are going to suddenly be opened, and you are going to see: and the fetters of death are going to fall from you. Nothing can be said or heard, and there is nothing that can be done; it is completely silent. he who is alive but has passed away, who will never pass away again.

Since he does not interact with other people on a regular basis, the Yogi believes that his is a long way to get home. Your Lord is close, and yet you continue to search for him atop the palm tree. People are initiated into the Brahman religion by a priest who travels from home to home. into the fold:

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Alas! The real source of life is right there next to you, but you have turned your back on it, a stone as an object of worship. Kabir says: "It is possible that words could never do justice to how kind my Lord is. Yoga and the counting of beads, practising virtue, and engaging in sin are all meaningless in his eyes."

Kabir says in this song that every house has a light on, you blind person! you can not even see them. One day, your eyes will open all of a sudden, and you will see. Then, the chains of death will fall off of you. There is nothing to say or hear, and there is nothing to do: it is a dead end. He who is alive and dead at the same time, and who will never die again. Because he lives alone, the Yogi says that his mind is pure. It is far from home. Your Lord is close, but you are climbing a palm tree to find him. The Brahman priest goes from house to house and gives people their first initiations. into belief: Alas! The real source of life is right next to you, and you have set out to find it up a rock to pray. Kabir says: "I might never be able to say how good my Lord is. Yoga and He does not care about telling stories with beads or being good or bad."

3.10 SONG NO.38 *BHRAM KÂ TÂLÂ LAGÂ MAHAL RE*

The lock of error shuts the gate, open it with the key of love:

Thus, by opening the door, thou shalt wake the Beloved.

Kabîr says: "O brother! do not pass by such good fortune as this."

Explanation:

Kabir says: "O brother! Do not pass by such good fortune as this." We all love to hear songs that can teach us something from our surroundings and also inspire us to be better. This song of Kabir teaches us how we can open the door of error with the key of love ,so that we may wake up our beloved ,and thus prove that our lives are filled with abundance. “The lock of error shuts the gate, open it with the key of love:” and so, from the depths of my heart I wish thee all happiness in this world and in the other!

Kabir asks the reader to open a "gate" between the past and present and create opportunities for growth, freedom, and knowledge. This poem center around four basic points: trust (bhav), effort (dedication), service (love), and forgiveness.

3.11 EXERCISES:

A. Objective Type Questions:

a. When was R. N. Tagore born in?

Ans : 1861

b. When did R. N. Tagore die?

Ans 1941

c. When did Tagore receive the Nobel Prize ?

Ans : 1913

d. How is Tagore known as?

Ans: Gurudev

I. Which of the following statements given below are true or false?

1. It is a must to know the caste of a saint – False

2. The poet points to thirty six castes – True

3. The washer woman has not sought God – False

4. The end of Hindus and Muslims stands similar – True

II. Short Answer Type Questions:

1. What does the word " seeker of God" mean?

Ans - The meaning of the phrase " seeker after God" is that everyone can seek God.

2. What caste did Rishi Swapacha belong to?

Ans -Caste-wise, Rishi Swapacha was a tanner.

3. What is shared between Hindus and Muslims?

Ans - The End or death is a common concept in Hinduism and Islam.

4. What is the poem's message?

The poem's theme is that in God's eyes, all people are equal.II. Some important Words:

i. Saint – A person of great holiness

ii. Barber – Trimmer and dresser of hair

iii. Tanner – A person whose occupation is to tan hides

iv. Achieve – Accomplish

v. End – Terminus

vi. Carpenter – Repairer and builder of wooden structures.

IV. Give Meanings of the words given below and use them in your sentences:

Belong, folly, tanner, distinction, seek

Ans:

i. Belong - Do you belong to any political party?

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ii. Folly – It would be folly to ignore their warnings.

iii. Tanner – Swapacha was a tanner by caste.

iv. Distinction – There are no distinctions between the two designs.

v. Seek - Snakes seek the sun to warm their bodies.

Give the synonyms of the following words:

Needless, Alike, achieve, mark, end.

Ans:

i. Needless - Unnecessary, Useless

ii. Alike - Similar, Identical

iii. Achieve – Attain

iv. Mark – Blot, Spot

v. End – Finish

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4

A CRITICAL STUDY OF ARUNKOLATKAR'S*JEJURI* (1974) PART I

Unit Structure

4.0 OBJECTIVES

In this unit, we will examine ArunKolatkar's*Jejuri* (1974) as a landmark modernist experimental poem in the tradition of modern Indian Poetry in English.After a brief introduction to the poet and his work, we will consider its themes, in particular its attitude to faith and religion as it emerges through the perspective of its first-person narrator.

4.1. INTRODUCTION

Jejuri's creator,Arun Balkrishna Kolatkar, was born in Kolhapur, Maharashtra in November 1932 and died in September 2004. He was a bilingual poet who wrote both in Marathi and in English. Born into a traditional Hindu family, he studied at Rararam High School in Kolhapur, graduated in 1949, and then completed a diploma from the JJ School of Arts in 1957.He worked as a graphic designer in the advertising industry before he turned to poetry. Where Kolatkarhad a reputation for being a recluse as a person, as a poet, he was famousfor his keen eye for details and for producing work that was contemporary, critical, and incisive, in both Marathi and in English. His poetry is often described as experimental for its avant-garde influences, and as radical and shocking for its unconventional perspectives. Kolatkar is most well-known for works such as his Kala Ghoda Poems and *SarpaSatra* (2004), as also for *BhijkiVahi* (Marathi) for which he won the SahityaAkademi Award in 2004. *Jejuri*, perhaps his most well-known work, first appeared in the Opinion Literary Quarterly in 1974 and then in 1976, 1978 and 1982 as publications of Clearing House.It won the Commonwealth Prize in 1977, and is routinely anthologized in volumes of modern Indian Poetry in English.

Jejuri consists of 31 imagistic poems about Jejuri, a place of pilgrimage near Pune in Maharashtra, famous for its worship of Khandoba who is believed to be a manifestation of Lord Shiva.*Jejuri* is a long narrative poem but without a plot of any kind. Its poems vary in length and style but it is cohesive because it is located in a specific geographical location and is focussed on describing what the narrator sees during his tour of Jejuri.

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Although set in a place of religious pilgrimage, *Jejuri* presents a sardonic take on nearly everything the narrator sees. It is not long before the reader comes to realize that what is on offer is not a lively tour of Jejuri, but a journey of subversion of what its landscape and its people signify to the narrator. Few details, if any, can be taken only literally. For this reason, Bruce King sees *Jejuri*as a poem primarily about perception and alienation, and"less a poem of scepticism and a poem about a modern wasteland's loss of faith than a poem which contrasts deadness of perception with the ability to see the divine in the natural vitality of life" (170).Even the dry, arid landscape of Jejuri receives attention.In "Hills," the majestic hills are animated by a repeated reference to them as demons on account of their harsh surfaces dotted with sharp cacti and sedimentary rocks such as limestone and shale (28-29). The narrative point of view is able to energise all it sees even if it is something as plain as the hills or even an inanimate object such as a water pipe aided by energetic verbs that give it a life of its own:

a conduit pipe

runs with the plinth

turns a corner of the house

stops dead in its tracks

shoots straight up

keeps close to the wall

doubles back

twists around

and comes to an abrupt halt (18).

One understands then why King sees *Jejuri* as an unusual kind of bhakti poetry, "an ironic parody of a pilgrimage which while mocking institutionalized religion affirms the free imagination and the dynamism of life" (170).

There are many ways in which one can read and interpret *Jejuri* but, as Rajeev S. Patke says,"Perhaps it (Jejuri) is best read as a glass poem: what you think you see through the glass is the place, what you really see is your own reflection trying to look through"(qtd. in Datta).

4.2. *JEJURI* AS A CRITIQUE OF BLIND FAITH AND INSTITUTIONALISED RELIGION

The first-person narrator, who habitually refers to himself in the second-person, establishes his identity as a sceptic in the very first poem, "The Bus,"when he sets himself in opposition tothe old man who flaunts his religious identity through external signifiers such as the caste mark on his forehead. In a later poem, "Makarand," the narrator refuses to take off his

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shirt to perform the pooja, preferring to smoke a cigarette outside in the courtyard instead (43). The poems that conclude *Jejuri* are even more eloquent in their rejection and criticism of conventional religious rituals and practices. In the short poem "vows," one finds a caustic criticism on thetendency of the faithful to make vows or promisesabout what they will offer the gods if their wishes come true. Exasperated that no one on the railway station can tell him when the next train is due to arrive, the narrators is driven in desperation to make similar vows, althoughto no one in particular. In claiming that he is ready to carry out an animal sacrifice, make offerings in gold, or bathe statues (in this case, the station master) in milk, he mocks the methods dejected believers resort to in the conviction that such measures can convince the gods to deliver the miracles they desire.

Institutionalised religion is derided not just for the performance of the mandatory, perfunctory rituals but also for the priests who act as heads of religious communities. The eponymous priest of the poem that comes after "The Bus" is seen eagerly awaiting the busload of devotees in the manner of a cat anticipating its prey. Animal metaphors such as "lazy lizard stare" and a "catgrin" on his faceinscribe the priest as the absolute antithesis of a man of god. His thoughts are fixed on the possibility of the rich food (puranpoli) that the devotees might have brought for him, and his religiosity is severely undermined with the image of him turning,not a sacred mantra, but a betel nut over and over in his mouth. The unfavourable animalistic representation reaches its height in the concluding lines that firmly underscorehis predatory character:

A catgrin on its face

and a live, ready to eat pilgrim

held between its teeth. (15)

In "A Low Temple," the narrator is unable to convince the priest that the statue of the goddess inside the temple has eighteen arms. Not given to blind faith, the narrator keeps lighting matchsticks to see the statues more clearly, but the priest insists that she has eight arms despite the evidence to the contrary. Stubbornly ignorant and complacent in his unchallenged status, the priest chooses to stay in the dark, literally and metaphorically, even after the narrator has pointed out the obvious. On realising the futility of protesting, the narrator goes out into the sun, choosing to distance himself from the rigid, unyielding, and immutable stance of the priest and his concomitant disregard for the truth, preferring instead to bask in the sunlight outside the temple and in the lively sight of little children playing on the back of a 20-foot tortoise. In"Between Jejuri and the Railway Station," it is the licentiousness of the priest's son that is subtly critiqued by a veiled insinuationabout his association with the temple dancer. We are given to understand that heraffluence is probablythe result ofthe sexual favoursshe provides him, something he would (naturally) prefer to keep mum about(54).

Although the temples of Jejuri and its priests cut a sorry figure, *Jejuri* does not reject faith and belief altogether. The three poems dedicated to Chaitanya, the 15th century Bhakti saint, draw attention to what could be called a maverick spirituality considering that Chaitanya was famous for his impatience with appearances and decorum when it came to religious devotion, much like the narrator himself. In the first Chaitanya poem, the saint impatiently orders a stone to stop pretending it is a god by painting its face. He then reassures the stone that he will continue to adorn him with flowers even if it looks like the plain stone it is. The same droll tone and enigmatic texture characterises the second Chaitanya poem that tells of how the saint spat out gods after eating the stones of Jejuri. According to King, the poem "offers an ironic contrast between the decayed, commercialized-for-tourists temple complex and the astonishing, living faith of the saints and devotional poets" (168). For Dominico, Chaitanya's ability to find the stones of Jejuri as sweet as grapes gives us a "hint of the wondrous: only a Chaitanya can relish stones" (525). The third and final Chaitanya poem contrasts the lack of enthusiasm of the "herd of legends" who look up when Chaitanya makes an appearance on the hill side only to continue grazing once he passes by (53). Taken together, the three poems privilege an approach to religion that sees and values the sacred and the miraculous in its more grounded, non-pretentious forms.

Despite the critical attitude towards organised religion, *Jejuri*affirms the divine butin its own peculiar way. As Janet Powers Gemmill notes about *Jejuri*'s narrator, "His soul is urbane, sullied by the knowledge of too many contradictions, yet still willing to acknowledge the sacred as a possibility" (207). It is simply that for the narrator, the divine manifests itself not in the man-made temples or in the performance of what he sees as meaningless rituals (satirised most strongly in the last few poems in the collection) but in nature, animal-life, and children. The invigorating spirit of children is always a symbol of hope in *Jejuri*. In "A Low Temple," the poem concludes with the image of children playing on the back of the 20-foot tortoise, an image that provides a stark contrast to the stultified, inflexiblepriest all too comfortable in the darkness of the temple. The exuberance and vitality of the former reinforces the rigidity and spiritual inertia of the latter. A ray of hope is again inscribed in the priest's son who appears tohave evaded cultural and religious indoctrination, suggested by his uneasy looking away when asked about whether he truly believes the mythic story about the demons that Khandoba had apparently killed (30). Instead of the usual stories about the gods, his attention is taken up withthe butterfly fluttering around, indicating that he has retainedhis innocence and capacity for wonder in nature.

Like little children, animals also feature prominently in *Jejuri*. In "Heart of Ruin," the mongrel bitch who has made the temple of Maruti her home along with her puppies, and the dung beetle stand out against the backdrop of the lifeless crumbling temple they have made their home. As opposed to stray references to animal life in *Jejuri*, an entire poemis devoted to a description of the sprightly temple rat in "The Temple Rat."As it darts across the temple and the over the body of the statue of the god MalhariMartand, the narrative point of view follows the rat's movements

and adopts its gaze. If the young bride and the priest capture the attention of the narrator, it is only because he sees what the rat sees, such as "the trace of a smile on the priest's face" as he watches the young bride crushing the banana on the linga (45). In "Between Jejuri and the Railway Station,"the narrator is awestruck, not by the priests and the temples he has now left behind, but by the sight of a dozen cocks and hens jumping up and down in a jowar field. Transfixed, the narrator cannot take his eyes off this extraordinary "harvest dance" (55). Throughout *Jejuri*, one finds that the narrator exhibits an attitude that comes close to reverence when it comes to the world of nature and ofchildren, while conversely, an attitude of irreverence is reserved forthe temples and the priests of Jejuri. It is not surprising, then, that the poem that ends *Jejuri* is one in honour of earth's life-giving source—the sun. *Jejuri*had begun with "The Bus," a poem in which the narrator had noted how the rays of the rising sunentered through the cracks in the tarpaulin sheet covering the bus and lightened up the darkness inside, even if only partially. In the final poem in *Jejuri,* we return to the sun, although this time we are left withtheimage of the setting sun, "large as a wheel" (62). The poem pays homage to the sun as the source of all life on earth, reminding us itsomnipotence and omnipresence.

While children, animal life, and nature are valued for the divine that resides in them, the gods themselves leave the narrator unimpressed for the most part. No poem in*Jejuri* sings praises of the numerous gods whose statues adorn its temples—with the notable exception of Yeshwant Rao.The narrator's unconventional approach to religion ishere reflectedin his taste for unconventional gods such as Yeshwant Rao.Relegated to the status of a second-class god, Yeshwant Raois also a victim of the hegemonic structures that govern institutionalized religion. The poem illustrates howpreferential or discriminatory treatment,as the case may be, is meted out to the gods in accordance with the socio-economic status of the people who worship them. Little wonder that the gods of the poor and the marginalised are treated as lesser gods."YeshwantRao" takes a digat the manner in which religion is used to exploit the devotion of the faithful. The Hindu pantheon has a god for everything—a god who can who can "double your money/or triple your land holdings," or "put a child inside your wife./Or a knife inside your enemy" (49). All this for a price, of course, for there are "Gods who soak you for your soul" or "make you walk/ on a bed of burning coal" (49). As the faithful do their best to please them, the gods on their part "can barely suppress a smile" at the desperate lengths their followers will go to get what they want. The narrator expressesscant regard for such demanding or unforgiving gods; they are "either too symmetrical/ or too theatrical for my taste" (49). A god like YeshwantRao is his god of choice because heexpects nothing but gets the job done just as well: "If you're short of a limb,/YeshwantRao, will lend you a hand./and get you back on your feet." (50). His misshapen form and unattractive appearance, resembling an amorphous blob, is perhaps his biggest advantage; as a god who is himself ugly and broken, he can understand the pain of the broken, disheartened populace.

ArundhatiSubramaniumargues that if *Jejuri* rejects a certain kind of faith, it embraces faith of another kind:

I believe it is based on the faith – and one that I find inspiring – that an unwavering attention to the specific, the unremarkable, the marginal, the evanescent, will lead you eventually to revelation. And in Kolatkar's poetry, it always does. But the insight never arrives through flabby generalisation or creaky editorialising. A larger picture, you discover, is simply implicit in the quiet, determined and incisive documentation of detail. And so, while Jejuri does subvert the conventional notion of the pilgrimage, it does not leave you without a glimpse of the sacred—even if we find it in the least expected places. (21).

Jejuri's overall attitude of scepticism and irreverence is evident in its questioning and puncturing of the grand narratives of conventional religious practices rooted in temple worship, performances of rites and rituals, and reverence for priests who are anything but saintly and devout. If there is one thing that*Jejuri* makes amply clear, it is that the divine residesin the smallest and strangest of places and people, if only one is willing to see what most would rather not see—those hovering on the periphery of society and hence, of one's vision too. *Jejuri* sanctifies the ordinary, the marginalised, the dispossessed, the disfigured and the taken-for-granted humans and nonhumans of Jejuri, determinedlyturning the spotlight on them instead of objectifying them as they have always been. The old woman, the rats, the mongrel bitch, the mangy dog on the railway platform, the butterflies, the old woman, the broken doors, the 20-foot tortoise,the toothless singer and the pock-marked half- brother, all become focal points in *Jejuri*, worthy of respect and reverence.

4.3 CONCLUSION

We have seen how, from the first poem"The Bus"to the last poem "the setting sun," *Jejuri*takes delight in thwarting the reader's expectations at every turn. Its juxtapositions never fail to startle the reader into awareness about the nondescript elements that dot Jejuri'slandscape and the forms of life that give it shape and are shaped by it in turn. Its remarkable achievements notwithstanding, *Jejuri* has had its fair share of criticism. The Indian poet, Vilas Sarang, for example, appreciated it for its "rare sense of unity and completeness," its "fine naturalistic precision and detachment," and its "tantalizing play between the physical and the metaphysical"but claimed that it fell short to the extent that "the tensions between god and stone, priest and stationmaster, have not been explored with much rigor or anguish. Too often we are offered merely surprise and the play of intellect" (680).Marathi critics like RavindraKimbahune and BhalachandraNemade have claimed that it was written to humour foreign readers. However, in the light of *Jejuri*'s many strengths, as pointed out by Sarang himself, such flaws, whether legitimate or not,have not detracted from the pride of placethat *Jejuri*has earned in the body of modern Indian poetry in English.

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5

A CRITICAL STUDY OF ARUN KOLATKAR'S *JEJURI* (1974)

PART II

Unit Structure:

5.0 OBJECTIVE

After having examined ArunKolatkar's*Jejuri* (1974) for its critical approach to religion and its intendent rites and rituals as well as the commercial use it is put to in a place of pilgrimage such as Jejuri, let us now discuss its language, form, and style.

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Janet Powers Gemmil identifies the narrator of *Jejuri* as an "artist-poet" who has the eye of an artist singling out particular pieces of wood, stone, and conduit pipe for their grain shape, or whimsy. Like the imagists, Kolatkar causes us to see what he has seen and to experience Jejuri through the very quality of his vision. (208)

The narrator's point of view in *Jejuri* is conveyed in a tone that alternates between the comic and the serious, through the twin modes of irony and satire, and by intriguing experimentations in form and language. The interesting mix of these techniques makes *Jejuri* a work that is demanding but also rewarding to the extent that one is willing to rise to the challenge it offers to its readers.

5.2. SATIRE IN *JEJURI*

ArundhatiSubramanium commends *Jejuri* for its narrative voice, one she describes as "casually sophisticated, wry, colloquial, with a slyly dexterous ability to turn a line in all sorts of unexpected directions" (20). One of these directions Jejuri takes is a route where the sacred and the profane jostle and clash with each other. In "The Door," the reference to broken wooden door that hangs on its hinges as a prophet or a "dangling martyr," invokes the image of the battered body of Jesus Christ nailed to

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the wooden cross (19). While the stature of the ramshackle door is elevated by its implied association with Christ, it is similarly degraded as he was, except in this case, by the pair of shorts left to dry on it as also by the narrator's comparison of it with a local drunk leaning against an old doorway for support. The inversion of the sacred and the profane is even more conspicuous in the lexical choices that deliberately confuse registers. For example, the expletives in the line "Hell with the hinge and damn the jamb" are completely at odds with words like prophet and martyr which belong to the semantic domain of religion (19). Similarly, in "The Blue Horse," the local dance performance organised by the priest is referred to as a "bit of sacred cabaret" (52). Even more remarkable examples are found in the poems in "The Railway Station"—the description of the decrepit indicator on the railway platform as a "wooden saint in need of paint," the suggestion that the dog that lives there is probably "doing penance" for his sins, the reference to the boy who washes who the tea cups at the tea stall as a "young novice" who has taken a vow of silence, the comparison of his washing of the tea cups as akin to the performance of an exorcism ceremony, or the reference to the station master as a two-headed monster and a member of a particular religious sect given how he stares at the setting sun "as if the sunset were a part of a secret ritual" that could go wrong if he looked away—in all of these examples, the deliberate misapplication of religious vocabulary when speaking of the mundane shocks the reader into attention on the one hand, while simultaneously making the ordinary eventful and worthy.

Satire and irony are routinely deployed in *Jejuri*to mock the commercialisation of Jejuri as a religious tourist destination. The narrator sees how the people of Jejuri, whether religious or secular, seek to profit by exploiting the devotion or curiosity, as the case may be, of the visiting tourists. In "A Scratch," he tells it like it is—"there is no crop other than god that is harvested here around the year" (32). Selling religion is a favourite pastime and occupation in Jejuri considering how the line that separates god from stone is a thin one there because "every other stone/ is god or his cousin" (32). If it is possible to make people believe that natural phenomena are, in reality, physical manifestations of what the gods did in times gone by, then so be it. The locals survive by turning every aspect of an otherwise bland landscape into a minefield of stories and legends with some kind of religious signification to them: "scratch a rock/ and a legend springs." The story of the rock is a case in point:

that giant hunk of rock

the size of a bedroom

iskhandoba's wife turned to stone

the crack that runs across

is the scar from his broadsword

he struck her down with

once in a fit of rage (32)

In "The Cupboard," the narrator notices that golden statues of the gods are neatly lined up inside the locked cupboard. Commercial establishments such as barber shops and cafes are given holy-sounding names such as Gorakshanath Hair Cutting Saloon and Mhalsakant Café respectively to enhance their appeal through their association with the sacred.

The dilapidated condition of the temples and its gods in a place that thrives as a religious tourist destination is often underscored in a tongue-in-cheek, no-nonsense tone of voice. Noting the crumbled roof of the temple in "Heart of Ruin," the narrator is compelled to conclude: "No more a place of worship this place/is nothing less than the house of god" (16). Other examples of verbal satire include lines such as "The roof comes down on Maruti's head. /Nobody seems to mind.//Least of all Maruti himself" ("Heart of Ruin"), "A low temple keeps its gods in the dark" ("A Low Temple"), and "Are you looking for a god?/I know a good one./His name is YashwantRao/ and he's one of the best/Look him up/when you are in Jejuri next" ("YeshwantRao"). The casual, irreverent tone is sometimes comic and sometimes scathing but always with the intention of nudging readers out of their deadened perceptions and fossilized attitudes—once jolted awake, perhaps we can see again, see anew.

5.3.EXPERIMENTATION IN *JEJURI*

Bruce King categorises ArunKolatkar as an experimentalist along with other poets such as DilipChitre, JayantMahapatra, and A. K. Mehrotra in his seminal work *Modern Indian Poetry in English* (first published in 1987). He identifies Kolatkar's "tendency to play with vision or a scene for its abstract qualities, as a painter to designer might, and a tendency towards a cool, non-committal attitude in what is said" as two important characteristics of his poetry since the mid-60s (164). The presence of both these are easily noticeable in "The Bus," the first poem in *Jejuri.* This poem is significant because it not only sets the tone for the poems that follow but also because it contains some of the most noteworthy motifs that characterise *Jejuri* as a whole: the use of the second person narrative mode, the narrator's attention to apparently insignificant details, the dry, sceptical tone in which the narrator's perspective is conveyed, and a privileging of the natural world (the sun in particular) over the man-made one (the torn tarpaulin sheet that covers the bus and the bus itself). The reader's attention is drawn to details such as the tarpaulin flaps that cover the bus' windows, the cracks in the tarpaulin that allow the narrator to feel the wind blowing outside, the sun beams that filter through the holes in the tarpaulin, the caste mark on the forehead of the man sitting opposite, and the narrator's reflection in the man's spectacles. Such seemingly minor details could signify a more profound meaning that goes beyond surface appearances. That the narrator sees his face reflected back to him in his co-passenger's spectacles as a "divided face," for instance, could hint at an inner duality; the narrator's "search for signs of daybreak in what little light spills out of the bus" could signify a deeper motive for his journey to

Jejuri, one that goes beyond idle curiosity; while the concluding observation that when the narrator gets off the bus, "you don't step inside the old man's head" despite his face being reflected in the old man's glasses, could suggest the narrator's determination to retain his individual perspective no matter what his (outwardly) devout co-passengers choose to believe in.

Some of the poems are more in the nature of a fleeting observation or thought. Consider, for example, "The Doorstep":

That's no doorstep.

It's a pillar on its side.

Yes.

That's what it is. (17)

Another example is "The Reservoir"

There isn't a drop of water

in the great reservoir the peshwas built.

There is nothing in it.

Except a hundred years of silt. (40).

The extremely prosaic and pithy style of such poems defies conventional established ideas about poetry, and also makes difficult the task of interpreting them. The exceptionally cryptic nature of a poem like "The Pattern,"in which the narrator simply mentions the checkerboard pattern that some old menhave drawn on the back of a 20- foot tortoise:

a checkerboard pattern

some old men must have drawn

yesterday

with a piece of chalk

on the back of the twenty foot

tortoise

smudges under the bare feet

and gets fainter all the time as

the children run (22)

A poem of less than 4o words, "The Pattern" leaves the room wide open for interpretation, perhaps so wide that one is not sure quite what to make of it. A symbolical reading might work: the smudged drawing that gets fainter as the children run over it could signify hope if one interprets the

erasure of the old men's drawing by the play of children as a welcome trend where the old makes way for the new. However, although such poems pose a severe challenge to the usual efforts to decipher what they "mean," therein lies perhaps one of the most striking characteristics of *Jejuri* as a modernist experimental poem—its stubborn refusal to "mean" something at all times. It is possible that this is a deliberate effort on Kolatkar's part to do what Susan Sontag claims modern art and poetry sometimes takes recourse to in order to escape the interpretive trap. The effort of critics to continually dig for the 'deeper meaning' sometimes leads poets and artists to make their art parodic, abstract, or simply ornamental;or non-art, in other words(7). Like abstract painting which defies the interpretive effort by offering no content that can be interpreted, or Pop Art, which uses content that is so blatantly straightforward that it is exactly what it appears to be, modernist French poetry also sought to avoid interpretation by putting "silence into poems" in order to "reinstate the magic of the word" (7). Sontag claims that

it is possible to elude the interpreters in another way, by making works of art whose surface is so unified and clean, whose momentum is so rapid, whose address is so direct that the work can be…just what it is. (7)

In *Jejuri*, Kolatkar could have attempted a similar project.

Another kind of experimentation takes place when a poem begins as a literal description or narration of the landscape and the people that inhabit it, but quickly moves into the domain of the non-literal. "An Old Woman" is one such poem. The narrator tells of how he tries to rid himself of the pesky beggar woman who begs for a fifty paise coin to take him to the horse-shoe shrine. When she is undeterred by his refusal to take up her offer, the narrator decides to confront her instead of trying to avoid her. Things change, however, when the old woman anticipates his hostility and asks him, "What else can an old woman do on hills as wretched as these?" (25). Faced with the resilience he sees in her eyes, the narrator's stature reduces in proportion to his increased awe of her. This surrealistic moment is rendered through an irrational exaggeration: the cracks around the old woman's eyes begin to spread beyond the physical form of her body and embrace the contours of the larger landscape, causing not only the hills and the temples to crack but also the sky until it shatters and falls to the ground but miraculously leaves unharmed the tough, unbreakable woman. The visual image of the gradually expanding cracks and the sky finally shattering like a plate of glass make concrete the otherwise abstract idea of the old woman's tenacious ability to withstand the unforgiving landscape of Jejuri.The resulting devaluation of the narrator's status is ironically undercut through his own awareness that he is the one reduced to "so much small change in her hands" (26).

Another example is "the station master," the fourth poem in "The Railway Station" poems. The narrator finds himself increasingly vexed because no one on the railway platform is willing to tell him when the next train is due. In a final attempt to get an answer, he approaches the station master. Unlike the boy at the tea stall who had refused to even look up, let alone speak, the station master has a lot to say. Unfortunately, his speech is so

convoluted that the narrator is left as clueless as he was before the station master had spoken. The sarcasm of the opening lines—"The booking clerk believes in the doctrine/ of the next train"—quickly gives way to surrealism:

When conversation turns to time

he takes his tongue

hands it to you across the counter

and directs you to a superior

intelligence (59)

A different kind of experimentation occurs in "Between Jejuri and the Railway Station," which is a shape poem (also called concrete poetry) where the visual appearance of the poem mirrors its content. A well-known example of this type of poem is "Easter Wings" by the 17th century English metaphysical poet George Herbert. Where Herbert's poem visually resembles the shape of a bird's wings, in "Between Jejuri and the Railway Station," the words "up" and "down" appear up and down on the page several times as a way of mimicking the manner in which the dozen hens and cocks were jumping in the field. Instead of a describing the scene, the poem recreates (and effectively so) for the benefit of the reader what the narrator sees before him. In the same poem, one finds a similar attempt at direct imitation as a method of replicating the narrator's experience. The lengthy, garbled jargon used by the station master in answer to the narrator's query is presented verbatim for greater effect so that the reader can clearly understand how this gibberishobfuscates more than it illuminates:

all timetables ever published

are simultaneously valid

at any given time and on any track

insofar as all the timetables were inherent

in the one printed

when the track was laid (60)

While the sheer variety in theme and form of the poems in *Jejuri* is impressive, there is nonetheless a feeling that it is a somewhat disjointed work given its rather loose structure on the whole. If the poems are held together, it is partly because they are presented in sequence of the narrator's experiences while at Jejuri. According to Elizabeth Delmonico, "The poems are arranged in a way which suggests a lone observer meandering among sometimes tawdry priests and pilgrimage spots" (520). She also notes that while each of the 31 poems is discrete in itself, the individual poems do connect with the other poems in the collection to form a cohesive narrative (523). Emma Bird notes that most of the commentaries on Jejuri "share an implicit assumption that the meaning of the poems can be located in the events of the sequence" (232). She

believes that temporally and spatially, *Jejuri* precludes "the possibility of reading the poems as representative or allegorical in any way" (232).

If such is the case, one wonders how one can interpret a poem like "Ajamil and the Tigers," if not allegorically. As it is, the poem seems out of place in comparison to the other poems in *Jejuri*. It tells of the good-intentioned but naïve and bombastic tiger who is no match for the astute shepherd Ajamil. The sharp and savvy Ajamil knows how to strike the right balance between the needs of all concerned—the tigers, the sheep, and himself. If he is to have the freedom to play the flute all day long instead of continually fending off the hungry tigers who keep attacking his sheep, he must compromise and sacrifice a few sheep for the greater common good. Only then will he achieve the impossible ideal where "well fed tigers and fat sheep drink from the same pond with a full stomach for a common bond" (16). In Bird's view, some of the poems in *Jejuri* demand that it be read in its specific historical and cultural context. One such poem is "A Song for Vaghya" told from the point of view of a vaghya, or a male follower of Khandoba. Bird notes examples of cultural specificities in the poem such as the pouch of turmeric powder the vaghya carries or his one-stringed musical instrument, both of which are particular to the vaghya community (233).Further, his comment about knowing the word god backwards and forwards is a reminder of the vaghyas' historical association with dogs, something the vaghyas pride themselves on (233). In the light of this knowledge, Bird argues that "The cultural specificity of this reference thus calls into question the seemingly irreverent tone of the poet's inversion of God/dog, and unsettles any attempt to read the text as a straightforward reaction against religious hegemony" (233). But then, "Ajamil and the Tigers" occursan example of one of those poems in Jejuri that incorporates a range of contemporary images and international, trans-historical styles, unsettling the idea that the sequence should only be read as a locally situated text. Instead, the trans-historical range of the images suggests the unsustainability of analysing the poems in terms of fixed regional or national literary models.(234)

"Ajamil and the Tigers" can be situated "within a regional framework," because it is a representation of the vaghya community and tells of their origins, but at the same time, the fact that its images "refer directly to contemporary global culture: when the tiger people are given "gifts of sheep, leather jackets, and balls of wool", the anachronistic reference to "leather jackets" demonstrates that the poem is not simply a re-telling of a single, ancient story, but is instead a peculiar space in which the local and global, the historical and the contemporary, can co-exist" (Bird 234). It seems then that *Jejuri*seamlessly combines the local and the global within its bounds, in both content and in form, marking another feature that has given it the reputation of an avant-garde experimentalist work in post-independence Indian poetry in English.

5.4. CONCLUSION

As we have seen, the poems in *Jejuri* defy simplistic interpretations and neat categorisations. While some poems have a lyrical quality, some are

inordinately cryptic and prosaic. Some are almost romantic in their privileging of the beauty of nature and the innocence of children but also modernist in the dominant use of irony, experimentation in form, mixing of registers, use of symbolism and imagism, qualities which are accompaniednot by a sense of loss but of play. These features, once could argue, bring *Jejuri* closer topostmodernism than modernism. Subramaium puts it eloquently when she notes

Kolatkar's poetic preoccupation with the lowly, the incidental, the inconsequential, his ability to create an anthem to the everyday, a poetry of the prosaic, and to make the peripheral central to his art. Most importantly, this surfaces in his work not as a trite recycled certitude about the blessedness of the meek, but as an insight arrived at through the inner logic of poetry. (22)

This "inner logic of poetry" is, however, is especially elusive in *Jejuri*, given its stylistic range and linguistic dexterity. In her postcolonial reading of *Jejuri* as a work that poses a challenge to the usual methods of interpretation,Bird claims that while "Jejuri compels readers to continually re-orient and re-position themselves in relation to the text, and question their assumptions about the processes and methodologies of interpretation," it also "compels the reader to acknowledge that his or her own interpretation will never be comprehensive" (230). If, as Bird argues, the reader is central to Jejuri's interpretive dense artistry, it would be worthwhile exercise to make the effort, however daunting, to penetrate *Jejuri*'srich and dense artistry.

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6

INTRODUCTION TO DALIT LITERATURE

Unit Structure

6.0 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit the learners will be able to:

1. Understand the historical perspective of the Dalit movement
2. Explain the concepts of Dalit identity, literature and aesthetics
3. Examine the contribution of social reformers like Phule and Ambedkar to the Dalit movement and literature
4. Describe the various types of protest movements of the marginalized in India

6.1 INTRODUCTION

In this unit, the learners will study the concepts of Graded social system in India, Dalit identity, Dalit consciousness, Dalit literature, Dalit Movement, Dalit aesthetics etc., against the historical background of Dalit movement organized bythe social reformists like Jyotiba Phule, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and *Bhakti* poets. The culmination of the reformists' movement is found in the rich and varied forms of Dalit literary manifestations that document Dalit consciousness and experience of suffering, protest and anger registered against the vicious social system in India.

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6.2 GRADEDSOCIAL SYSTEM IN INDIA

The composition of Indian society is based on the graded system caste. Many western as well as Indian thinkers havepropounded their theories onthe caste system prevalent in India. The ancient*vedic* scriptures especially*Rigveda*proclaimed that the four Varanas existed i.e. *Brahmins*- the priests; *Kshatriyas*- the warriors; *Vaishyas*- the traders; and *Shudras* - the skilled or unskilled labourers. Initially, this social order was basically a class system and that it was a worldwide phenomenon. According to Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar those*vernas*/classes gradually becameenclosed later to be recognized as castes which were accessible only by birth. In the beginning *verna* system was strictly adopted by the Brahmins and slowly it spread across the other classes by way of the process called 'infection of imitation'. He further argued that, the development of caste system cannot be understood unless it is viewed as a part of the prevailing social conditions of time. The *verna* system, which later became the caste system, was given religious sanctity through religious texts written by the Brahmins. Brahmins spread the theory that they were born out of the mouth of the Brahma; the *Kshatriyas* from his shoulders; the *Vaishyas* from his thighs and the *Shudras* from his feet. Therefore, Brahmins were considered superior to others. Moreover, they put this theory in *vedas* which were claimed to be the hymns of the god or creation of the god.

The socio-economic and religious codes decreed by the ancient Brahmanical religious texts were implemented by the subsequent kings or warrior clans*as* the sacred duty of the *kshatriyas*. Thus, to follow the duties allotted to a particular caste became a religious sanction and obedience for all the *vernas*. As a result the *Shudra* class, the lowest rung of the society, was subjected to a lot of inhuman treatment and exploitation. In this connection, G. N. Devy opines: "The menial nature of the work, the exclusion from the forms and institutions of learning, the perverse notion of pollutions attached to the occupations in which the *Shudras* were engaged, and the perpetual economic inequality, all of which continued to exist for centuries, made the life of the *Shudras* relentless story of suffering and injustice."9

As a result of the *verna* system,*atishudras (avernas)* or untouchable communitiesin particular had no land to toil nor could they follow any profession. They did menial work ordered by the higher castes, come rain or shine. Treated like animals, they lived apart from the village, in the outskirts, and had to accept leftover food from the higher caste people in return for their endless toil. Their physical contact was considered to be polluting by the upper castes, and even their shadow was believed to have the same effect. The later scriptures like *Manusmriti* had forbidden them to wear good clothes or ornaments or even the footwear, and prescribed severe and humiliating punishments for violating the ordained commandments. Even for the basic necessity like water, they were made helplessly dependent on the higher castes' goodwill. At one point of time in the dark history of India during the Peshawa's regime, the most perverted practice of untouchability forced untouchables to tie earthen

pots around their necks so that their sputum should not fall on the ground and pollute it. Another was the compulsion to tie a broom behind their body so that their footprints would be erased before others set their eyes on them.

6.3 DEFINING DALIT IDENTITY

In the introduction to the second edition of her book entitled 'From Untouchable to Dalit: Essays on the Ambedkar Movement' Eleanor Zelliot,a prominent scholar on Dalit movement and literature, justifies the appropriateness of the term 'Dalit' in the following lines: "The Untouchables of India had themselves chosen a new identity, that of "Dalit"—ground down, oppressed—to indicate their lack of belief in being polluting, their sense that their condition was the fault of the caste system, and their inclusion in the Ambedkar movement of all those subordinated by their religious, social and economic status."10 As per the views of Pradeep K. Sharma11, the word Dalit is taken for Marathi or Hindi translation of English term called Depressed Classes. Dalits are also called *Harijans*, weaker section of the society, *Atishudras, Avaranas, Antyajans*, servile classes and scheduled castes.

The term 'Depressed Classes' refers to those castes, which belong to the lowest layer of the Hindu caste system and whose touch and proximity is considered to be polluting to the caste Hindus. Dalit Panther's Manifesto defines the term 'Dalit' in the following manner:

"Members of scheduled caste and scheduled tribes, Neo-Buddhists, the working people the landless poor peasants, women and those who are being exploited politically, economically and in the name of religion are called Dalits."12

This terminology is accepted by the community itself and even the English Press used the term Dalit without its translation. Eleanor Zelliot further argues that"none of the normal words untouchables, scheduled castes, depressed classes, Gandhi's euphemism *Harijan* had the same connotation. Dalit implies those who have broken, ground down by those above them in a deliberate and active way. There is in the word itself an inherent denial of pollution, Karma, and justified caste hierarchy."13

Gangadhar Pantawane, the founder-editor of *Asmitadarsh*, the majorliterary magazine of Dalit literature, defines the term Dalit in the following manner:

"To me Dalit is not a caste. He is a man exploited by the social and economic traditions of this country. He does not believe in God, Rebirth, Soul, and Holy Books teaching separatism, Fate and Heaven because they have made him a slave. He does believe in humanism. Dalit is a symbol of change and revolution."14

According to Dilip Chitre "the word Dalit is used in Marathi to mask the stigma inherent in the word *asprushya*. This is done in deference to political correctness; for *asprushya* means untouchable – and that category

of human beings regarded as loathsome by caste Hindus in India does not legally and constitutionally exist in the Indian republic."15

Before Independence, to project Hindu majority,M. K. Gandhi and his followers in Congress party also tried to appropriate Dalit community. Gandhi used the term *Harijan* as euphemism to refer to the untouchable community in India. However, these mere terminological alternatives neither extended any change in the pathetic condition of untouchables nor did they bring any mental transformation among the upper caste Hindus. Unfortunately, Dalits are still considered loathsome and continue to be treated badly even in the 21st century India.

Pradeep Sharma says that there are different views about Dalit community which struggled for its liberation and was exploited for centuries together. Despite these changes occurred at the definitional level of the movement, today the word Dalit is widely accepted and used in the socio-political system. Thushe writes - "Dalit consciousness is the political consciousness that is expressed politically during the course of the Dalit movement."He further pinpoints that Dalit literature is undoubtedly influenced by the Dalit movement which was evolved out of the vision of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar."Dalit consciousness is guided by the Ambedkarite ideology, programmes, leadership and organization and incorporates both institutionalized and non- institutional individual and collective actions initiated and adopted by the community to achieve desired goals. Leadership provided by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar had powerful impact on the community and subsequent course of Dalit movement draws inspiration and strength from his vision."17

For Ali Ahmed Khan, human identity is always transitory in nature, however, he emphasizes on the fact that in the country like India one's identity is constructed on the basis of his caste, religion and ethnicity. "Human identity is never been very stable... In a diverse society such as India, the problem of concretizing identity concerns relating to ethnicity, language, caste, religion, etc., involves consideration of intrinsic value of these identifications."18

He further maintains that the Hindu doctrine of the caste system in Rig-Veda draws a clear line between the *'Arya Varana'* and the *'Dasa Varana'* and that there are many hymns invoking Lord Indra to destroy the *Dasas* who are no other than the *Shudras*. Gradually, in later scriptures the *Shudras* were further divided into the touchables (*Sprishyas*) and the untouchables (*Asprishyas*). The untouchables subsequently recognised as *Antyaja* (the last born / living at the periphery), *Avaranas* (outcastes), *PanchamaVerna* (the fifth *Varana*), Dalit (the suppressed/oppressed), *Harijan* (men of God), Depressed classes and Scheduled Castes. But more frequently used terms are Scheduled Caste, *Harijan* and Dalit. The Scheduled Caste is emotionally and officially a neutral term used since the Government of India Act 1935, whereas the terms such as *Harijan* and Dalit have been casteist in flavour. After the Poona Pact, Mahatma Gandhi coined the term *Harijan* in order to refer to the untouchables as he wanted Hindus to accept them as a part of Hindu society. However, Dr. Ambedkar

rejected Gandhi's term as mere useless euphemism and maintained that the term *Harijan*for referring to his community was very insulting and abusing as it denoted that they were illegal children born out of the physical relationship between the *Devdasis* (the dancing girls) and the Brahmin priests of Hindu temples. Etymologically the term Dalit is derived from the Sanskrit word '*Dal'* which means to ground down / to break / to suppress / to crush. Perhaps it was used, for the first time, by Jyotiba Phule and that Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar may have revived it to defy the popularity of Gandhi's term *Harijan*. In 1970s, the Dalit Panther movement in Maharashtra popularized the term Dalit to 'describethe untouchables of India as a single and cohesive fraternity'. Dalit panthers believed that Dalits are the original inhabitants of India, constitute more than 20% of Indian population and that because of Dr. Ambedkar they have acquired a recognizable amount of socio-economic, political, educational and cultural identity in India.

The term 'Dalit' is now extensively used by both academicians and non-academicians in India and across the world. Today, Dalit movement and literature is studied, including the virtual Dalit Studies, from different viewpoints i.e. Dalits' struggle for socio-political equality, their battle for reservation, power, and equal status etc. Ali Ahmed Khan thus believes that 'Dalit is a perspective', "why should Dalit Studies be confined to studying Dalits? Instead of viewing Dalits as an object of study, the category Dalit can also be used as 'a perspective' for approaching the study of Indian / Hindu society and history, colonialism and nationalism, democracy, modernity and the larger world."

6.4 BEGINNING OF DALIT MOVEMENT

There are different views about the beginning of Dalit movement in India. Some scholars claim that Dalit movement is originated from Bhakti movement, while some others consider that *Mahar* movement of Maharashtra is an important event of the movement. However, Dalits' struggle againstthe inequality gained momentum after the arrival of Dr. Ambedkar on the Indian socio-political scene. Pradeep Sharma points out that "there is evident a consensus among scholars that Dalit struggle during the colonial period, particularly after the arrival of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar gained momentum where the main issues were gaining recognition, representation and power within the changing political order".

According to Ghanashyam Shah Dalit movement consists of two types i.e. i) reformative movement and ii) alternative movement. The Reformative movement tries to reform and eradicate the castesystem in India and attempts to resolve the problem of untouchability, whereas Alternative movement attempts to create an alternative socio-political and cultural structure, where equal social justice is ensured to every mankind and caste hierarchy is destroyed. Under the reformative movement there have been other popular movements like Bhakti movement, Neo-*Vedantic* movement and Sanskritisation movement. The Alternative movement can be further classified intotwo types i.e. Proselytization movement and Secular movement.

Reformative movements:

i) **Bhakti movement** (12 to 18th Century AD) fought against caste system and tried to purify Hinduism. After Buddhism this movement left a great impact on Indian society. It tried to create an egalitarian society. The great saints like Chokhamela and Eknath were the main catalysts in the social awakening of Dalit communities. Chokhamela was the only *Mahar* saint from Maharashtra state. Eknath was a Brahmin saint, who ate with untouchables, wrote about Chokhamela, and also allowed outcastes into his Bhajan sessions. Chokhamela followed traditional duties of Mahar community. Although his Bhakti songs reveal the traditional devotion and piety of the Bhakta, there is an inherent element of protest against untouchability. The central argument of Chokhamela's poetry was protest and questioning supremacy of the Brahmanical order, though he lived in his traditional role as a *Mahar* with its traditional limitations. The spirit of most of the *abhangas* is delight in the Lord, deliverance from suffering through devotion. Although there is expression of agony in his devotional songs, the central message is that even a *Mahar*could experience the grace of God.Saint Eknath wrote about three hundred *Bharuds*, poems and plays to be enacted out. Some of the poems create impression that their author is an untouchable. Some*Bharuds* called *Johar* poems have protagonists from the outcastes."In Eknath's *Bharud*, the *Mahar* preaches morality, necessity of a Guru, company of the Saint, and calamity of rebirth inevitable for those who do not follow the *Bhakti* path.

For Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar the Bhakti movement led by saint poets was concerned of the spiritual equality and not the worldly equality and therefore, they could not change the caste based character of Indian society. In his book 'Who Were Shudras?' Dr. Ambedkar writes-"though the saint-poets had a purely humanitarian agenda before them, and propagated the equality of beings, the basis of their world view was metaphysical rather than material. The *Bhakti* movement therefore did not succeed in reforming the Indian society and its caste based character."

ii) **Neo-Vedantic movement** tried to purify Hinduism and bring it back to its original position. For that purpose it re-interpreted the doctrines of Hinduism. This movement tried to eradicate untouchability and endeavored to absorb untouchables in the four-folds of the Hindu *Verna* system. Swami Dayanand Saraswati and Swami Vivekanand were the chief proponents of this movement. They believed that untouchability was not essentially a part of Hinduism and the caste system. On the contrary however, *Arya Samajists* were against the political movements of the untouchables. They went against any move initiated by the untouchables for their solidarity and integration.

iii) Under the **sanskritization movement** Dalits took over, as far as possible, the customs, rites, and beliefs of the Brahmins and the adoption of the Brahmanic way of life by a low caste seems to have been frequent, though theoretically forbidden. This process has been called sanskritisation. Through this movement the untouchables, who could improve their socio-economic conditions either by rejecting or continuing

with the age old traditional occupations, launched the struggle for higher status in the caste system.

Alternative movements:

i) **Proselytization movement**is an alternative movement. Under the magnetic leadership of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, who made announcement of conversion in 1935, Dalits converted to Buddhism in 1956. The conversion to Buddhism gave them new identity i.e. Buddhists. The conversion to Buddhism has been a remarkable event in the life of Dalits. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar strongly believed that the conversion to Buddhism was for him a kind of returning to home. The rise of *Magadh Mauryan* Empire was the 'Buddhist Revolution' which denied Vedic tradition of caste and gender inequality. Dalits were originally Buddhist people who had been made untouchables in the process of Brahmanical 'Counter Revolution'.

According toDr. W. R. Mujawar, Dalits' conversion to Buddhism was a kind of social rebirth. Thus he writes- "Conversion to Buddhism became one of the aspects of Dalit negation of the appropriation by the hegemonic forces of Brahmanism. Through conversion Dalits sought to counteract the imposed external definitions and have strived to assert their humanity as both the autonomous makers of their identity and contributors to the making of Indian society. Conversion has been a kind of social rebirth. Conversion was a form of escape from internal colonialism by the Hindu upper castes." The conversion movement liberated Dalits from the strong clutches of mental slavery of Hinduism which propagated caste system.

ii) **Secular movements**: Dalits have tried to propagate the ideas of equality, liberty, fraternity, justice, love and *maîtree* through literature in the form of Dalit poetry, prose, fiction and plays. Dalit literature became the major instrument of protest against Hindu intellectual tradition, Hindu religion and Hindu ethics. These movements also addressed economic issues and have witnessed Dalits' efforts to create an alternative socio-cultural identity for themselves.

6.5 IMPACT OF THE TRUTH SEEKER'S SOCIETY

The *Satyashodhak Samaj* is a social reform society founded by Jyotiba Phule(1826-1890) in Pune, India, on 24 September 1873. Its purpose was to liberate shudra and untouchable castes from exploitation and oppression. Through his writings and activities Jyotiba Phule condemned caste hierarchy and privileged status of Brahmin castes in it. He condemned inequality in the religious books, orthodox nature of religion and exploitation of masses, blind and misleading rituals, and hypocrisy in the prevalent Hindu religion. His aim was to establish ethics of human well-being, happiness, unity, equality, and easy religious principles and rituals. He started his reform movement by establishing schools for the untouchable boys and girls. His famous work *Gulamgiri*dealswith the caste system in India, *Shetkaryancha Asud*gives a vivid account of the ordeals of the peasants,*Sarvajanik Satya Dharma* teaches egalitarian

religion to the Indian masses. He also wrote a ballad which praises the deeds of King Shivaji. Throughout his life he tried to unite *Shudras* and*Atishudras* (untouchables) to protect them from the Brahmanicaloppression. He believed that Dalits are oppressed and exploited for many centuries because earlier they had fought against the Brahmin aggression with utmost bravery and heroism. He compared the exploitation of Dalits with that of Native Americans and black Africans in America.

Most of his writing deals with the wretched situation of women in India and their oppression in Hindu patriarchal system. In his later years, he was greatly influenced by the feminist radicals like Tarabai shinde and Pandita Ramabai. He argued that the miserable condition of women was not prevalent in *Bahujan Samaj* alone, but the pitiable condition of women was equally existed in Brahmins as well.His personal life strikingly differs from that of the other social reformers. He educated his wife Savitribai, encouraged her to become a teacher to teach girls and untouchable boys and adopted a child from a Brahmin widow. His life represented a role model for other radicals, reformers and revolutionaries in India.

6.6 DALIT LITERARY MOVEMENT

In the introduction to Sharankumar Limbale's autobiography called *Akkarmashi* (The Outcaste), G. N. Devy maintained that "Dalit literary movement has made Marathi society think afresh about religion, justice, dignity and a social relationship, the single most important concern on which it has expended its energy has been 'caste'." The literature which resulted out of Dalit consciousness is called Dalit literature. It seeks the freedom of human being and represents a sort of protest against subjugation, torture and humiliation suffered by Dalits in the Hindu social system which is regulated by the *Varna* system. Hence, Dalit literature is rebellious, optimistic and revolutionary as it attempts to bring about positive changes in the social consciousness.The nature of Dalit consciousness is not subjectivealthough the pains and pleasures are lived and experienced by individuals alone but suffering ofthe Dalit is common to the entire Dalit community because they have been subjected to the common predicament. Therefore, the content of Dalit literature is essentially social in nature.

According to Sharadchandra Muktibodh,the Dalit point of view constitutes a clear diagnosis of a particular social reality and a sanguine hope for its desirable transformation. The Dalit sensibility shows a deep concern for the Dalit point of view and an outstanding work of Dalit literature would be born if Dalit life isrepresented from the Dalit point of view. That means the Dalit artist should not merely possess the Dalit point of view but he must have an insight or the vision of his own. A great literary piece of work cannot be produced until it is written from the Dalit point of view which results out of the Dalit insight or vision of life. Therefore, Dalit literature without Dalit vision or Dalit point of view is obviously lifeless. A writer can be said to have Dalit insight only when he has experienced a Dalit view point in the form of various distinctive lives of individuals

which are full of pleasure and pain. He further asserts that the great work of Dalit Literature cannot be created by merely having the Dalit point of view and the Dalit consciousness. It would emerge only when the Dalit point of view isenvisioned itself through the concrete living experiences of Dalit life.

According to Ali Ahmed Khan Dalit literature is closely associated with the matter of Dalit identity; a political device for developing unity and organisation, that at times demands 'sharing of common culture' and 'harping on the separateness from others'. "Dalit literature provides critical insights on the question of Dalit identity. Emerging as a special stream in a literary landscape, it tends to cover a wide range of ideas and insights governing the social mindset of the Dalits. It also contains a critical evaluation of the prevailing social and cultural practices." Dalit literature is thus the result of Dalits' struggle for socio, economic and political changes. This literature has close affinity with the hopes for freedom of the untouchables who are the victims of vicious and unjust caste system in India that advocates socio-economic & cultural inequality.

The history of the Dalit literary movement goes back to the 11th century AD, to the first *Vachana* poet Madara Chennaiah who was a cobbler by profession. Dalit literary movement in India thus has a long history which ideally unfolds Dalits' secret struggle against the casteist traditions of India. While tracing the origin of Dalit literature many researchers have put forth their different viewpoints. Some scholars believe that it began during the Buddhist period, to some it was started by Chokhamela in 14th century AD. Some give credit to Jyotiba Phule (1828-90) while some others maintained that S.M. Mate (1886-1957) was the precursor of the Dalit literature. They argued that though Dalit literature did not exist during these periods, the concern for the untouchables did reflected in their writings, so logically they could be called the progenitors or the early creators of the Dalit literary movement.

In Maharashtra, however, Dalit literature got impetus due to the strong legacy of Jyotiba Phule, Prof. S. M. Mate and Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar (1891-1956). In Maharashtra with the advent of leaders like Jyotiba Phule and Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, who brought forth the issues of Dalits through their works and writings, Dalit movement got a forceful representation. They started a new trend in Dalit writing and inspired many Dalits to come forth with their writing in Marathi. In this connection, Arjun Dangle strongly argues- "while both Gautam Buddha and Mahatma Phule revolted against the unjust class (social) structure and while it is true their teaching and ideas are inspiring even today, a historical and objective examination of the situation reveals that it was Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar who was the enabling factor in Dalit literature because of his ideas, outlook towards life and his indelible struggle to achieve what he felt just… Through his struggle against untouchability and socio-economic inequality, he liberated the Dalits in India from mental slavery and abject wretchedness, thus giving them a new self-respect". Although Dalit literary movement started in an unorganized way, it gained momentum and inspiration from Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's

revolutionary ideology which stirred into action all the Dalits in Maharashtra. His statue in suit and tie, the dress of the most educated one, holding a book that represents the Indian constitution is a symbol of pride and inspiration for the present as well as future generations. He has inspired and initiated creative minds of India to bring about the socio-cultural revolution for the total emancipation of Dalits.

Today Dalit literature is growing rapidly in almost all the Indian languages. It emerged in Maharashtra especially in Marathi language. Though Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was born at Mahu in Madhya Pradesh, he was brought up and grown up in Maharashtra. Dalit community of Maharashtra has been very loyal to him. It strongly supported Dr. Ambedkar in his mission. The first generation of Dalit literature, social activists and revolutionaries was inspired by him. Therefore, it is obvious that the father of Dalit Literature is none other than Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar.

6.7 DALITAESTHETICS

There is an urgent need for Dalit aesthetics to evaluate and interpret Dalit literature. Dalit writers have been observing and experiencing from the very beginning of Dalit literature thatit has been neglected by the traditional criticism. The way the progressive upper caste nationalist leaders had neglected Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's movement, in the same manner, due to caste-based prejudice, the traditionalists and their aesthetics has neglected Dalit literature. The traditional aesthetics of literature is inadequate to capture the essence of Dalit life. So, Dalit or Ambedkarite writers demand for the separate theory of aesthetics to evaluate their literature.

Kanwal Bharati believes that the literature is not classified on the basis of language alone but it is classified on the basis of different isms and ideologies such as Marxist literature, Christian literature etc. So, there can be Dalit literature, which represents the voice of the majority people of this country. Like Sharankumar Limbale, he also maintains that only Dalits can write Dalit literature as they are the sufferers or victims of the multiple oppressions perpetrated by the unjust caste system. Therefore, he says that the sympathetic writing about Dalits by the upper caste authors cannot be included in Dalit literature because they have not experienced the trauma of untouchability. In this sense, Mulk Raj Anand's famous novel 'The Untouchable' does not fall into the category of Dalit literature as it is written by the elite and upper caste writer who is influenced by the Marxist ideology, though he was a great humanist. In this connection, Pradeep K. Sharma's point of view is worth to be noted-"The guiding force for the Dalit literature becomes the Ambedkarite philosophy that represents a comprehensive worldview different from the upper caste hegemonic philosophy and incorporates Buddhism, Bhaktism and other protest traditions prevalent in the Indian society... The guiding ideology of Dalit authors cannot be centrist, leftist or rightist not and even Dalitist but can only be the Ambedkarite vision."

He attempts to summarize the essence of Dalit aesthetics by quoting Sharan Kumar Limbale who sets the following tests for the formation of the Dalit aesthetics:

1. Author experiences be authentic
2. Author experiences be generalized/universalized
3. Those experiences should not be just region specific
4. Texts should instill inspiration for the egalitarian social system

Dalit aesthetics evaluates expressed cardinal values of independence, justice, equality and fraternity and therefore, Dalit literature must be studied with this perspective in mind rather than considering it just a 'caste literature' or that the literature which does not express itself in any sophisticated literary forms. Dalit literature represents real picture of community, its trauma and its struggle for social change. The discourse also recognizes the fact that literary aesthetics has been transcended from its sophisticated perspective to a more realistic one that attempts to demolish the supremacy of a structured form of literary aesthetics. In other words, Dalit literature is creating its own literary space with a high level of thinking which possesses the sense of freedom, essence of realistic aesthetics, constructive approach and highlights the ground realities of Dalit communities. Its reading and study makes us restless and leads for social change and solidarity towards the establishment of an egalitarian society.

6.8 CONCLUSION

Dalit literature is the outcome of Ambedkar'srelentless struggle for social equality. Therefore, it is inevitable to comprehend Dalit literature against the historical background of Dalit movement led by him. Moreover, there is an urgent need for separate parameters of aesthetics to evaluate Dalit literature because traditional criticism is inadequate to encompass its unique literary manifestations of agony, protest and suffering.

6.9 SUGGESTED QUESTIONS

1. Comment on the historical background of the Dalit movement in India.
2. Discuss the contribution of Phule and Ambedkar in the development of Dalit literature.
3. Explain the various types of reformative movements fought for the cause of social equality in India.
4. Explain the concept of Dalit identity with reference to the various definitions given by the intellectuals and literary scholars.

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7

CRITICAL STUDY OF SELECTED POEMS FROM ARJUN DANGLE'S *POISONED BREAD*

Unit Structure

7.0 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit the learners will be able to:

1. Understand the overview of the various Dalit literary genres like, self-narratives, fiction and poetry

2. Recall and understand the major Dalit literary writers and their contribution to the overall Dalit literature

3. Critically appreciate the selected Dalit poems prescribed in this unit

7.1 INTRODUCTION

Dalit literature records the historical trajectoryof Dalits' exploitation under the caste based social system of India for centuries and thereby documents their emotional responses of protest, anger and agony. In this unit the learners will closely study the select Dalit poems by the poets such as Yashwant Manohar, Keshav Meshram, Namdeo Dhasal, L. S. Rokade and Arjun Dangle.

7.2 DALIT FICTION AND SELF-NARRATIVES

Dalit literature was acknowledged by the mainstream literature in India with the appearance of the English translations of Marathi Dalit writing. 'An Anthology of Dalit Literature', edited by Mulk Raj Anand and

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Eleanor Zelliot, and 'Poisoned Bread: Translations from Modern Marathi Dalit Literature', originally published in three volumes and later collected in a single volume, edited by Arjun Dangle, both published in 1992, were perhaps the first books that popularized the genre throughout India

Dalit autobiography emerged as a category in the 1970s, along with a new kind of protest poetry. Many of these writings foregrounded the vicious history of caste prejudice. It was resistance literature, emerging out of and building on recognized traditions of political and intellectual resistance. The very titles of numerous Dalit life-writings indicate the history of stigmatization, oppression, and poverty.

According to Pradnya Daya Pawar, Dalit autobiographies or memoirs served two purposes. It brought to life a Dalit hero and bestowed upon him validity. At the same time, it established Dalit history and Dalits as dignified. No one was such a fool as to believe that the writing would liberate the Dalits but it was capable of giving an ethical underpinning to our socio-political movement. Following are some of the major Dalit narratives popular across the country.

Zhenva Mi Jaat Chorali Hoti (When I Concealed My Caste) by Baburao Bagul;*Baluta* (The Discarded Share) by Daya Pawar; *Upara*(The Outsider) by Laxman Mane; *Uchalya* (The Branded) by Laxman Gaikwad; *Jina Amucha* (Our Life) by Babytai Kamble; *Aaydan* (The Bamboo Basket) by Urmila Pawar; *Mazhya Jalmachi Chittarkatha* (The Kaleidoscopic Story Of My Life) by Shantabai Kamble; *Akkarmashi* (The Outcaste) by Sharankumar Limbale; *Aamcha Baap Ani Amhi* (Our Father and We) by Narendra Jadhav; *Joothan* by Omprakash Valmiki (Hindi); *Dohra Abhishap* by Kaushalya Baisantari (Hindi); *Ooru Keri* by Siddalingaiah (Kannada); *Karukku* by Bama (Tamil); *Sangati* by Bama (Tamil)

7.3 DALIT POETRY

The first generation of Dalit poets wrote revolutionary poetry. They were activists as well as poets. As a result of Ambedkar's constitutional safeguards and efforts towards the betterment of the downtrodden in India many of these poets acquired formidable education. The prominent poets like Baburao Bagul, Waman Nimbalkar, Namdeo Dhasal, Daya Pawar, Yashwant Manohar, Arjun Dangle, Raja Dhale, Pralhad Chendawankar, Keshav Meshram, J. V. Pawar strongly protested against the established unjust social system in India. Many volumes of Dalit poetry were published during this period such as Waman Nimbalkar's *Gavkusabaheril Kavita* (1973), *Mahayuddha* (1987); Yashwant Manohar's *Utthangumfa* (1977), *Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar: Ek Chintan Kavya* (1982), *Murtibhanjan* (1985); Namdeo Dhasal's *Golpitha* (1972), *Murkh Mhataryane Dongar Halavale* (1975), *Tuhi Yatta Kanchi?* (1981), *Khel* (1983), *Gandu Bagicha* (1986); Daya Pawar's *Kondwada* (1974), J. V. Pawar's *Nakebandi* (1976); Arjun Dangle's *Chhavani Halate Ahe* (1977); Pralhad Chendvankar's *Audit* (1976), Tryambak Sapkale's *Surung* (1976), Bhimsen Dethe's *Horpal* (1977), Ram Dotonde's *Rapi Jenvha Lekhani*

Banate (1978), Prakash Jadhav's *Dastakat* (1978), Nareshkumar Ingale's *Angara* (1972) etc. Dalit poetry was a new phenomenon in the world of traditional Marathi literature. It was very innovative literature with its consciousness of protest; its new content or subject matter; and its form of expression. It stirred the entire world of traditional poetry. In other words, Dalit literature successfully created a separate space for itself andhas enrichednot only theregional literatures in India but also the entire protest literature across the world.

7.4 CONTRIBUTION OF MAJOR DALIT POETS

Baburao Bagul

In Dalit literature, Baburao Bagul (1930-2008) is known as the great short story writer. His fiction is considered to be a turning point in the history of Dalit literature. As great Dalit fiction writer, he became the standard for overall Dalit literature. Though Baburao Bagul was known for his powerful short stories, basically he was a poet by heart. His poetry has undoubtedly provided a philosophical foundation for the entire Dalit poetry. In 1968, Baburao Bagul's fifteen poems appeared in the periodical called *Fakt* under the title called *Vidrohachya Kavita* (Protest Poetry). Some of his poems have also been published in the periodical called *Aakar* while few poems are lying scattered here and there. The peculiar quality of his poetry is the expression of anger against the practice of caste discrimination and untouchability. According to him the worst impact of *verna* system is evident in this country.

Waman Nimbalkar

Waman Sudama Nimbalkar was born on 13th March 1943. He was the president of the 9th*Akhil Bhartiya Dalit Sahitya Sammelan* held at Nagpur. His volume of poetry called *Gavkusabaheril Kavita* was published in 1973 and *Mahayuddha* in 1979. He also published non-fiction, books such as *Dalit Sahitya Swarup Va Bhumika, Ambedkari Vicharanchi Disha* and *Asmitadarshachi Navu Varsha*. In *Gavkusabaheril Kavita* Nimbalkar depicts the life of Dalits living in the outskirts. His poetry shows suffering, protest, anger and fury of Dalits. It reveals the sorrow and agony of Dalits who are living in the outskirts.

His poetry foregrounds the world which is filled with terrible hopelessness and melancholy. While depicting socio-economic, religious and political injustice and exploitation his poetry unfolds the delicate threads of Dalits' consciousness. For centuries together they have been forced to live as untouchables in the village outskirts. This blot of untouchability is a selfish and deceitful legacy of Manu. His poetry revolts against Manu'stradition as well as warns to the upper caste people that hereafter Dalits will not tolerate any injustice and exploitation. Now the life of Dalits is changing rapidly, they have acquired the power of expression; Ambedkar has shown them the new path towards enlightenment i.e. Buddhism. As a result ofconversion to Buddhism they have renounced the

life of slavery. Thus, Nimbalkar's poetry revolves around the man and it strives for his total liberation.

Daya Pawar

Daya Pawar's poetry has given a new dimension and strength to the Dalit literature. His volume of poetry called *Kondwada*(Blockade) was published in 1974.His poetry is more contemplative in nature and attempts to find answers to the questions such as- Who has created inequality amongpeople? Who was responsible for Dalits exploitation? His poetry remarkably depicts a newly acquired sense of revolt, protest and self-identity among Dalits.

Keshav Meshram

Keshav Meshram (1937-2007) was born in a very poor Dalit family in Akola, Maharashtra. His volume of poetry called *Utkhanan* (excavation) brought him the status of an important Dalit poet. In his most popular novel*Jatayu* he portrayed the anguish of a brilliant poor Dalit boy called Abhiman, who was marginalized despite being a highly talented student. His othertwo volumes of poetry are titled as*Jugalbandi* and *Akasmat* respectively. His poetry is centered on the Dalit agony and suffering both at individual and social level. The application of words with multiple meanings, emotional ups and downs and usage of the fresh imagery are the salient features of his poetry.He has also published the books on fiction and literary criticism.

Arjun Dangle

Arjun Dangle is one of the founding members of Dalit Panther movement. He has been active in social and political life since his college days. He wrote poetry, prose and fiction i.e. *Chhavani Halate Ahe* which is a collection of poetry,edited books like*Hi Bandhavarali Manas* and *Dalit Sahitya: Ek Abhyas* which later appeared in English translation under the title 'Poisoned Bread'. It is an anthology of the select Dalit poetry, prose and fiction. His poetry depicts the disgusting reality of Indian society. *Chhavani Halate Ahe* represents his anguish when Dalit Panther movement was broken into pieces. The title of this volume of poetry is symbolic. The title suggests that the traditional social system is being jolted and is increasingly getting weakened with every strike at its roots. His poetry seemsto be composed in the form of revolutionary slogans pronounced by the activists during the rising period of Dalit Panther movement which tried to emancipate Dalits from the vicious clutches of the upper caste aristocratic landlords and rulers.

Pralhad Chendawankar

Pralhad Namdeo Sonde Sultan – Chendawankar (born 1927) wrote two volumes of poetry called *Audit* (1976) and *OrderOrder*. He has also published fictional and critical writings. His poetic diction is sharp and penetrating since he has a first-hand experience of Dalit life. About his first volume of poetry called *Audit*, he writes that the world, the life and

the experiences which he had in his life are so horrible that as a poet he must write on them. He should speak of them openly, frankly and loudly. And he has done that through public speeches, gatherings and movements, yet, the fire in his burning heart is not appeased. His poetry effectively represents the sense of disillusionmentthat followed after independence among Dalit community. The common man is not happy even after independence and thathis life has been so degraded by the poverty.

J. V. Pawar

Jayaram Vitthal Pawar (born 1944) was graduated in Arts. He is one of the important activists ofDalit literary movement and founder member ofDalit Panther movement. He published his first volume of poetry called *Nakebandi* (translated into English as 'Blockade') in 1976. He edited acollection of poetry called *Utchhavas Yugandharache*. He also published a novel called *Balidan*. His poetry expresses strong faith in Ambedkar whose philosophyof life and the movement has the power to break all the vicious traditions in India.

His poetry depicts how everywhere Dalits' life has been blocked by the age-old unjust traditions in India. He strongly believes that Dalits should leave the tendency of surrenderingthemselves when injustice is incurred on them; rather he wishes that theirprotest against injustice should erupt like volcano.

Yashwant Manohar

Yashwant Rajaram Manohar was born in Nagpur on 26 March 1943. He completed his MA, PhD and taught Marathi in Nagpur University. He presided over *Akhil Bhartiya Dalit Sahitya Sammelan* in 1988. He was also the president of *Sahitya Sanskruti Madal* in 1989-90. He edited the periodical called *Samuchit*. His volumes of poetry are titled as: *Utthangumfa* (1977), *Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar: Ek Chintan Kavya* (1982), *Murtibhanjan* (1985) etc. He also published several books of non-fiction and literary criticism such as: *Swad Ani Chikitsa, Dalit Sahitya: Siddhant Va Swarup, Sahitya Ani Bandhilaki, Sahitya Bandhilaki Ani Vidroh, Bal Sitaram Mardhekar, Marathi Kavita Ani Adhunikata* etc.

A very few poets after Namdeo Dhasal have given a new artistic form to Dalit poetry and have taken it to the new level of competency. Yashwant Manohar's poetry is a significant milestone which has given an extraordinary tone of protest to Dalit poetry. His poetry is primarily an expression of Dalit consciousness which protests againstexploitation in the name of god, spiritualism and *karma-vipak* (Hindu concept of fruition of one's own deeds after his/her death).

Tryambak Sapakale

Tryambak Sapakale's volume of poetry called *Surung* was published in 1976. His poetry effectively expresses the strong rhythms of the outburst of inner mind. His poetry is militant in nature yet sensible; aggressive yet generous; and fierce yet poetic. His poetry is very authentic and truthful to

its experience. The poetry in *Surung* primarily depicts the sensitive and deprived mind of the poet who has been expelled by the society and rejected by this culture-loving country. His poetry is not only about his past experience of agony but also about his strong protest against social inequality. His protest is resulted out of an awareness of self-dignity and therefore, his poetry is at times muchthought provoking for its readers.

Narayan Surve

In 1926, Narayan Gangaram Surve was born in Mumbai. He completed his formal education till his primary seventh class. He worked as a mill worker, as a peon in the school and later as a primary teacher. He published his following volumes of poetry such as *Aisa Ga Mi Brahmha* (1962), *Majhe Vidyapith* (1966), *Jahirnama* (1975) and edited poetry collection called *Sanad* (1982). Moreover, he published his book of articles called *Manus Kalawant Ani Samaj* and has also edited books such as *Dalit Kavyadarshan, Kavita Sramachi* and *Gani Chalavalichi*. He was awarded by the Soviet Land Nehru Trophy and was also entitled to the chair of president at *Akhil Bhartiya Marathi Sahitya Sammelan*, Parabhani, Maharashtra

Narayan Surve was probably the first poet who depicted the life of labors and mill workers in Marathi poetry. His poetry depicts conflicts between oppressed and oppressor class. The various forms of emotions and difficulties of the working class (i.e. their suffering, poverty in city life, frailties, deprivation, tolerance and protest against capitalists etc) appear in his poetry. The conflict between the oppressed and the oppressor is age old and perpetual but it became very decisive and global in the twentieth century. Narayan Surve is the first poet who effectively as well as artistically expressed this conflict in his poetry.

Narayan Surve is essentially the poet who depicts life of the oppressed Dalits, labors and workers in his poetry. He strongly believed in Marxism and communism. In his poem entitled *Kavita Ani Mee* from his volume of poetry called *Jahirnama*, Narayan Surve writes that Marx and Engels are the great thinkers of this era. They gave us scientific perspective towards life. They answer the questions which are faced by us in life. He believed that the best art directs life. Similarly, Marxist philosophy directs and evaluates human life. Marx and Engels explain the abiding relationship between man, his physical situation and nature. They also inform us about the relationship between man and art.

Narayan Surve was an activist in the Communist Party Movement and at the same time he was also active in his poetic creativity. His poetic inspiration is Marxism which he accepts from a very thoughtful and broader understanding of life; therefore, his poetry is not extreme and bitter. Though the principles of Marx and Buddha were different, their final goal was same i.e. human welfare. Ambedkar converted to Buddhism for the welfare of mankind.

In his volume of poetry called *Aisa Ga Mi Brahma* there are 50 poems written during 1954 to 1962. This period is very close to the time of Indian

independence. It was the time when the Government of India had implemented its first Five Year Plan; China had waged war against India and the movement for *Samyukta Maharashtra* had gathered its momentum. At the same time the working class people, who had a dream of democracy and had actively taken part in the Indian freedom movement, were taking part in the Indian politics. Pandit Nehru, the first Prime Minister of independent India, had announced to form a socialistic social order. Narayan Surve was also a part of this process of change that was taking place. He was the active member of Communist Party. Shahir Amar Sheikh, Annabhau Sathe and Gavankar had stirred the entire Maharashtra with their patriotic songs. Narayan Surve acquired the art of writing poetry while he was writing songs in close association with these great singers.

Narayan Surve's second popular volume of poetry is *Majhe Vidyapith* which appeared in 1966. It consists of 40 poems. The revolutionary consciousness of protest against human exploitation and the contemplation of individual's identity are at the roots of this poetry. The aim of the poet with Dalit consciousness is to fight against both the social and economic inequality. His strong protest poetry reveals his experience of social and economic suffering. Owing to his humanitarian and progressive perspective, consciousness of protest and cosmic awareness his poetry is closely associated with Dalit experience. Though his poetic consciousness is nurtured on Marxism, his poetry is very close to Dalits and oppressed people for its humanistic and flexible attitude.

Namdeo Dhasal

Before his *Golpitha* (1972) was published he wrote conventional poetry. The decade of 1960s was the period of Baburao Bagul's *Vidrohi* (rebellious) poetry and Narayan Surve's poetry of the class consciousness. Their poetry appeared in Little Magazine.Namdeo Dhasal's revolutionary poetry is based on the foundation of the poetry of caste and class consciousness, the Little Magazine movement which revolted against the established elite literature, and the life he lived in his village and in Mumbai city. Most importantly, his consistent association with the revolutionary movements for the total change in established system gave impetus to his creativity. *Golpitha* is epoch making poetry in the history of Marathi poetry and literature. It had shaken the entire Marathi literary world from its roots. It was bitterly criticized and equally appreciated by the contemporary literary critics. According to Arjun Dangle, to understand his poetry we require a new dictionary and the new values of literary criticism. His poetry achieves a certain level of high point because of his unique poetic diction, vigilant and rich social understanding and the radical sensibility.

The publication of *Golpitha* brought a new wave of literature in the provocative language which swept and dismantled all the standards of aesthetics of the traditional Marathi literature. It took Marathi literary world by storm. As William Wordsworth advocated rustic language as the medium of creativity in 'Preface to Lyrical Ballads', Namdeo Dhasal's

Golpitha employs the language spoken by his own community from his village and other rural parts in Maharashtra. His poetic diction is a mixture of various vernaculars including Urdu, and is fully loaded with imagery, used in the red light areas as well as other suburban parts of Mumbai. *Golpitha* has been translated into many Indian and foreign languages. Most of the poems are translated into English by Dilip Chitre in his book called 'Namdeo Dhasal: Poet of the Underworld'. His poetry is also translated by Mulk Raj Anand, Eleanor Zelliot,D. B. Karnik, Jayant Karve, A. K. Ramanunjan etc. Namdeo Dhasal's literary enterprise consists of nine volumes of poetry, three scholarly volumes of essays and articles, two short fictions and memoirs. His published literary works are as follows: His volumes of poetry are *Golpitha* (1972), *Murkha Mhataryane Dongar Halvile* (1975), *Amchya Itihasatil Ek Apariharya Patra: Priyadarshini* (1976), *Tuhi Yatta Kanchi* (1981), *Khel* (1983), *Gandu Bagicha* (1986), *Ya Sattet Jiv Ramat Nahi* (1995), *Mi Marle SuryachyaRathache Sat Ghode* (2005), a collection of selected poetry called *Tuze Bot Dharun Chalalo Ahe mi* (2006), *Mi Bhayankarachya Darwajyat Ubha Ahe* (2007), *Chindhyachi Devi Aani Itar Kavita* (2012) and *Nirvanaagodarchi Pida* (2010). His published three novels are *Negative Space, Hadki Hadawala* and *Ujedachi Kali Duniya.* His published five non-fictional prose works i.e. *Andhale Shatak* (1995), *Ambedkari Chalwal Aani Socialist*, *Communist* (2001) *Sarvakahi Samashtisathi* (2006), *Buddha Dharma: Kahi Shesh Prashna* and *Dalit Panther Ek Sangharsha* (2014). He has also written a drama entitled *Andhar Yatra*.

Namdeo Dhasal's poetry deals with the wretched condition of Dalits' life which was never a matter of concern for the elite literature. His poetry is the strong voice against popular taste of the contemporary mainstream upper caste literature. He wrote poetry which imprisons the upper castes and condemns their poetical aesthetics. His poetry is not just a 'spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings', but a fearless expression of anger and protest against injustice caused by the age-old unjust social system in India. In fact, his poetry speaks the language of social reconstruction. His poetry is not limited to Dalit literature and Indian social system alone but it attempts to refer to the society at global level. His poetry is the voice of the voiceless, oppressed and the exploited and instead of generating negativity it always declares a battle for justice. On the one hand his poetry agitates the readers while on the other hand it makes them turn within for introspection. His poems are always fiery like the burning fire. Indeed, there have been very few writers in the world who have fought on the various levels at a time. Namdeo Dhasal did not sit within the four walls of his house and wrote poetry but his real battle was always fought on the streets and that makes him unique as a creative writer and the social reformer. He founded a militant *Dalit Panther* movement on the style of Black Panther movement in America. He gave new energy, new political awareness and new leadership to Dalit movement. Dalit panther neither exploits others nor does he tolerate injustice; rather he protests against injustice with full force. 'Tit for tat' was the motto of Dalit Panther movement.

7.5 ANALYSIS OF SELECT POEMS FROM *POISONED BREAD*

1

YASHWANT MANOHAR

An Ultimatum

See this row ofsunsets in the cracks of my eyes
Tell me how to live if at each moment one dies,
In this decisive darkness I seek for words, brother
like one enclosed in a forest offlames forever I smother
And what ifI raise a piteous cry
in this well-appointed cemetery
Or rage against this settlement
of leafless cannibal trees
On these accursed lips summer fires arise, brother
set aflame by stormy winds
And each vein is alight with lamps of deadly venom
Tell me what seas would cool this burn
Or tell me how to live as I die at each moment's turn.
The day attacks, a terrorist in the land of my brain
And nights never cease, the soul is aflame
Serried ranks of bone confront me at every step;
They surround me, laughing hideously,
throughout my generations.
Tell me what place of rest this barred breast can earn
Or tell me how to live as I die at each moment's turn.
The sky here owns not a spot
that would afford a shade
to my beheaded breaths
The roads look strange, brother,
and so is the air
The rains do not let me
break into a moonlight clear
What kinships should I dwell on for a moment
as I draw a covering of ocean over me
I feel a foreigner among the people

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Bearing the burden ofsuch a bastard life

Steaming lava has dashed against my lips

O tell me what answer I should return

Or tell me how to live as I die at each moment's turn.

Translated, by Charudatta Bhagwat

COMMENTARY:

Yashwant Manohar's poetry speaks fiercely against the caste based oppression of Dalits and upholds the ideas of equality, fraternity and liberty. He is a highly influenced by Ambedkar's life and works which gets reflected in his entire creative output. In the present poem 'An Ultimatum' the poet reflects on the sense of helplessness and disgust experienced by Dalits and also their persistent struggle for survival in the unequal society of India. The narrator represents the collective voice of the entire Dalit community. The poem seems to be a dramatic monologue in which the narrator addresses to both the readers as well as his friend whom he calls brother. Dalit life is filled with a lot of suffering and struggle that each moment for him is like the experience of death. He finds himself enclosed in the forest of flames to smother forever and struggles to find words to express his agony. The images like 'row of sunsets', 'cracks in my eyes', 'decisive darkness', and 'forest of flames' represent the piteous condition of Dalits' lives where 'each moment one dies'.

The agony of the Dalits is so tragic that the speaker feels as if his 'piteous cry' would go unheard in 'this well-appointed cemetery'. His life is a curse so even if he tries to 'rage against this settlement of leafless cannibal trees' or burn himself inside out with the protest against injustice 'nothing would cool this burn'. The imagery of 'Well-appointed cemetery' and 'settlement of leafless cannibal trees' represent an age-old unjust social system of which Dalits are victims for centuries together. So the speaker vents out his frustration helplessly by repeatedly asking to the other person rhetorically 'tell me what seas would cool this burn', 'tell me how to live as I die at each moment's turn'.

The Dalits are subjected to eternally insatiable hunger and poverty across their generations. The speaker is never at rest as his soul is constantly burning with fire come day or night. He is persistently confronted by 'the serried ranks of bone' at every step. The 'Day', the 'Nights' and the 'Serried ranks of bone' are personified to represent the difficulties the Dalits face in the form of discrimination, hunger and injustices. Hence, the speaker thinks that he is like a 'barred breast' who can never find a place of rest.

A sense of utter helplessness and deprivation prevails over the speaker as he finds no place of rest or solace as 'the sky owns not a spot' that can 'afford a shade to (his) beheaded breaths', the 'roads' and the 'air' look strange and the 'rain' don't allow him to 'break into a moonlight clear'. In other words, the speaker as a Dalit feels deprived, completely alienated and isolated in this land of his birth where he is constantly searching for

the kinship to dwell on at least for a moment. And even when he tries to cover him under the 'covering of ocean' he finds himself a stranger among the people. He feels that his very existence is like the burden of 'a bastard life'. Thus, in 'An Ultimatum' the poet depicts a very grim reality of a Dalit's subhuman existence in a society where there is no equality, liberty and fraternity. Yashwant Manohar addresses the themes of alienation, deprivation, isolation, helplessness, discrimination and rootlessness in Dalit's life.

2

KESHAV MESHRAM

In Our Colony

In our colony
the postman gets bamboozled
teachings get confused
civilization stumbles
The sun — even he is darkened.
Our houses stand
like footprints of cattle in the mud.
In the midst of it all is a soul
eager to swim along the current.
Our colony —
a roaring, foaming, riotous sea
of black bodies and black hair,
wearing away in the moulds of tradition
sinking in the soil
The people of this place —
carrying the loads ofsoft cotton on their shoulders,
their hands rough but weak,
the bangles jingling with the crooked sky
the kids perspiring all over in sweltering heat.
Some working on the open trucks
their veins swollen — eyes half-closed
Our colony — drowned in the pegs of 'country' wine
subsisting on the hot chillied pieces of meat —
floating in the spicy, hot gravy
living half-fed despite working full hours
Yet surveying closely in the mellow light of

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the candle the future of each coming new day.
Our colony gets stirred on hearing the footsteps
of the postman.
The postman —
he is simply harassed
in deciphering the name and address
scribbled out illegibly in purple
got by dipping the tip of the copying pencil in saliva
The postman frustrated in searching Ranu Narayan
surrounded by naked guides
groaning in agony as though hit on the knee
he keeps on wandering mutely in search of Ranu Narayan
bending and moving through mud and marsh
sweating in the clumsy livery.
The search is over.
'Ranu's granny has expired.'
The colony grapples with the message
like an eagle pouncing upon its prey.
In our colony —
Reforms get confused
paths are bruised, schemes stumble
now — only now have boys started learning.
They write poems — stories — Indian literature
The axes of words fall upon the trees of tradition,
the warm, experienced hailstones
of strange realities rain
on the dreams of literature
Once again begin
the rounds of the police and the postman
Darkness is sizzling swallowing the sun
In our colony the postman is
bamboozled — even now.
Translated by V.G. Nand

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COMMENTARY:

In the poem 'In Our Colony' Keshav Meshram portrays a very realistic and vivid picture of Dalit life and its settlement. The settlement of Dalit people usually lies in the village outskirts so that the upper caste people will have the least chance of getting polluted by them. Ambedkar proclaimed that if they want to liberate themselves from the caste discrimination, they will have to educate themselves and migrate to the cities. As a result many of them tried to escape the vicious caste bound works in the villages and migrated to urban cities like Mumbai. But in the cities as well they lived like worms in the gutter, swarming in the crowded slums of the cities.

In this poem the speaker very precisely observes a subhuman life of Dalit people in their colony of which he is also an integral part. He sarcastically says that 'in our colony the postman gets bamboozled, teachings get confused, civilization stumbles'. These words pinpoint the grim reality of Dalit life even after independence as they are miles away from the mainstream of society. In order to alleviate the gravity of his tone he says 'the sun- even he is darkened'. The sun is one of the recurrent images appear in Dalit literature as for Dalit people the sun symbolically represents a new life, light, enlightenment and hope. The theme of endless poverty and dark ignorance in the life of Dalit is emphasized in the beginning of the poem. He compares their houses with the cattle's footprints in the mud and imagines himself as a soul which is 'eager to swim along the current'. In other words he is struggling to overcome this pathetic life fallen to his lot. He continues describing his colony by comparing it with 'a roaring, foaming riotous sea of black bodies and black hair' which has been wearing in the moulds of tradition, sinking in the soil'.

The people of his colony work hard for their survival. He describes them with the help of vivid images like 'carrying the loads of soft cotton on their shoulder', 'hands rough but weak', 'bangles jingling with crooked sky', 'kids perspiring all over in sweltering heat', some people 'working on the open trucks (with) their veins swollen (and) eyes half closed' being exhausted etc. Besides other problems alcoholism is yet another problem his colony is grappling with. The people are surviving 'half-fed despite working full hours'. Nevertheless, the people of his colony are very optimistic about life as they kept 'surveying closely in the mellow light of the candle the future of each coming new day'.

The speaker highlights on a specific occasion when his colony is visited by a postman who 'is simply harassed in deciphering the name and address scribbled out illegibly in purple got by dipping the tip of the copying pencil in saliva'. While searching for Ranu Narayan, the postman is surrounded by the 'naked guides' which is yet another very common and vivid image of the naked children in the slums both eager to know and help the postman in his search. The speaker describes postman's agony very clearly before he finds her. 'Ranu's granny has expired', the entire colony 'grapples with the message like an eagle pouncing upon its prey'.

The speaker now focuses on the present time with all the problems in his colony still persisting like 'reforms get confused', 'paths are bruised', 'schemes stumble' etc. But 'now— only now have boys started learning. They write poems— stories— Indian literature', and this new learning has enlightened them. Now they are vehemently writing against the age-old traditions of inequality in India. The speaker is basically referring to the first generation of Dalit writers who are now destroying 'the trees of tradition' by 'the axes of words'. Now, the heinous traditions guarded by the upper castes are being jolted at the very roots and for the first time 'the warm, experienced hailstones of strange realities rain on the dreams of literature'. As a consequence of this new acquired sense of Dalit consciousness against the unjust social system in India, the so called guardians of the traditions are equally trying to suppress them therefore the speaker says 'once again begin the rounds of the police and the postman'. In other words, Dalits still continue to suffer even now as the 'darkness is sizzling swallowing the sun' which also means that Dalits are still victimized by the monster of unjust traditions.

3

L. S. ROKADE

To be orNot to be Born

Mother, you used to tell me
when I was born
your labour was very long.
The reason, mother,
the reason for your long labour:
I, still in your womb, was wondering
Do I want to be born —
Do I want to be born at all
in this land?
Where all paths raced horizon wards
but to me were barred
All of you lay, eyes fixed on the sky
then shut them, saying
calmly, yes,
the sky has a prop, a prop!
Your body covered
with generations of dire poverty
Your head pillowed
on constant need
You slept at night

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and in the day you writhed
with empty fists tied to your breast!
Here you are not supposed to say
that every human being comes
from the union of man and woman
Here, nobody dare
broaden the beaten track.
You ran round and round yourself
exclaiming YES, of course
the earth is round, is round.
Mother, this is your land
flowing with water
Rivers break their banks
Lakes brim over
And you, one of the human race
must shed blood
struggle and strike
for a palmful of water.
I spit on this great civilization
Is this land yours, mother,
because you were born here?
Is it mine
because I was born to you?
Must I call this great land mine
love it
sing its glory?
Sorry, mother, but truth to tell
I must confess I wondered
Should I be born
Should I be born into this land?

Translated by Shanta Gokhale

COMMENTARY:

The speaker in this poem addresses to his mother who belongs to the lower caste Dalit family. Being Dalit she is subjected to a subhuman life of utter poverty. The title of the poem 'To be or Not to be Born' reminds us of the famous opening phrase of a soliloquy given by Prince Hamlet in

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William Shakespeare's play Hamlet. In the speech Hamlet contemplates death and suicide, bemoaning the pain and unfairness of life but acknowledging that the alternative might be worse. Similarly, in the beginning of this poem the speaker is trying to justify his mother's long labour before he was born since as a fetus in his mother's womb he was wandering- 'do I want to be born… do I want to be born at all'. This justification throws a light on the stark reality of Dalit's life in India 'where all paths raced horizon wards but to me were barred'. The graded social system of India doesn't allow a lower caste person like the speaker to realize his potentials. Once born a Dalit always a Dalit in this country. The mother knows the hardships that lay before her child but she gives him birth hoping that 'the sky has a prop'. The sky represents a ray of hope for Dalits. The sky does not discriminate. This phrase also marks the Dalits' determination to overcome all forms of social, religious, and economic barriers on their way. The speaker says that his mother's 'body is covered with generations of dire poverty' which suggests that her poverty and suffering is eternal. The mother is constantly tormented by hunger and other basic needs. The women in India are deprived of education and rational thinking, so much so that the speaker's mother is 'not supposed to say that every human being comes from the union of man and woman'. The women have been subjugated by the patriarchal society and their hegemonic traditions prevalent in India. The social system in India doesn't allow individual to transcend the age old social and religious boundaries. The mother's world is so limited that it revolves around her struggle to fulfill her basic needs.

The speaker continues saying that this land with its water streams and lakes is belong to her yet she 'must shed blood… struggle and strike for a palmful of water'. Being born as untouchable his mother is not even allowed to exercise her fundamental right to drink water from the common reservoir. The speaker therefore registers his strong protest against this so called disgusting 'great civilization' and rhetorically questions his mother- 'is this land yours, mother, because you were born here? He continues his series of rhetorical questions asking his mother- 'is it mine because I was born to you? Must I call this (so called) great land mine… love it, sing its glory?

In the end of the poem the speaker concludes by revealing the truth, rather he confesses as to why his mother had to undergo a so much labor pain during his birth because he 'wondered… should I be born… should I be born into this land?

4

ARJUN DANGLE

I will Belong to It

That one should, at masturbating age,

sit twisting rope instead

And at the age of eternal gazing

upon a moonlike face

wander the town wearing down soles
At playing-with-grandchildren age
let disease play upon one's self.
Is this my life?
There, outside the village,
it is my blood that rots
Here in this lean-to I
am the city edition of that same blood.
To whom can I tell this?
To the soil here?
The soil which has not allowed
the footprint of my existence
to make its mark upon her yet?
To the sun and moon here
who wrench away the rays that fall upon my home?
To whom... to whom... shall I tell?
In this land of fifty-eight crores
this is how I must continue to live.
Who will listen to whose agony
in this density of people?
I want a life
that has the vital sap
I want a soil
that, smeared on the brow,
will bring tears to the eyes
I want a sun and a moon
who will with their rays lasso me to them and caress
I don't want mere crowds, mere land
I want for it a name whose meaning
may engrave itself upon my heart,
and gently blow upon my endless pain.
It will belong to me and I belong to it.
Translated by Shanta Gokhale

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COMMENTARY:

Arjun Dangle's poem 'I will Belong to It' is composed in the form of a subtle protest against the injustices practiced upon the people who have been traditionally branded as lower castes, Dalits or untouchables. The speaker attempts to discuss all the injustices that have been imposed upon the lower castes in India. In the beginning of the poem the speaker points out that how an individual in all phases of his life is restricted to a confined life. He can't even think beyond the boundaries laid down for him by the social and religious conventions. He spent his entire life, through all the stages of puberty, adolescence, youth and old age, following what society dictates to him. Hence, the speaker vents out his frustration against this constrained life.

The speaker mentions that his people are rotting in the village outskirts while his situation in the city is not different than them therefore he says that he is 'the city edition of that same blood'. But whom can he tell this? Can he tell this to the soil 'which has not allowed the footprint of my existence to make its mark upon her yet'? Can he tell this to 'the sun and moon here who wrench away the rays that fall upon my home'? At the same time he is aware that being born as a Dalit 'in this land of 58 crores this is how I must continue to live'. There is no one to listen to his agony and suffering in this densely populated country.

The ending of the poem is so thought provoking in which the speaker demands a life that has a vitality in it; he demands a soil that hugs him compassionately and when 'smeared on the brow' it 'will bring tears to the eyes'. He demands 'a sun and a moon who will with their rays lasso me to them and caress'. He doesn't want mere crowds and mere land but he dreams of the people of his kinship and the name for the land 'whose meaning may engrave itself upon my heart, and gently blow upon my endless pain'. The poem ends with the final punch line— 'it will belong to me and I belong to it' which suggests that the speaker desires a land where he can breathe freely and feel kindred towards his country and countrymen.

5

NAMDEO DHASAL

Hunger

Hunger

Unable to do this one thing and able

to solve or not solve theorems

Will hunger-fires forge a poem?

Will music die in the fire of hunger?

How difficult music is

to him who cannot count the beat of his own pulse.

Who hadn't thought that fees could be claimed

for singing songs of hunger.
Hunger
A fruitless thing
However hard you work
the reward is still stones
Ifstones cannot build a house
we'll not manage to live in it.
Hunger you are mouse, cat, lion in turn
How long can mere mortals like us stand
in this game that you've set up?
2.
Hunger
A shrewd peace is growing everywhere
This is the beginning of our new life sentence
Hunger forgive us that we cannot cut the tree of time
But even cut, the sky will still be blue.
To which market can we carry dumb hearts?
Where auction them
Where day sweeps life
Who will buy crushed hearts
Who will profit by the deal?
Hunger, tell us your game, your strategy
If we can muster guts enough
we'll fight you to the finish
Can't crawl and grovel on our stomachs
too long with you
How much can we wash the grime off hunger?
How much wash the dust off years?
How much scorn to the very ends ofscorn?
Hunger, if a bridge of iron will not join you to us
then let us fly free like unfettered birds
Hunger, your land, the thorns upon your land,
fester in the brain all night
till the brain itself freezes.
Hunger, when a thing is taken from the fridge

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is it still fresh?
Hunger your every blood drop is cold
Your every blood drop is mute
Order, let lightning course through the guts
Order, let life get charged
Wounded seas and the long moan of our demands
Hunger, say yes to our dreams
Don't snuff out the orphan huts upon the shore
We'll see later
the gold-threaded struggle
between the snail of pain
and the sea.
3.
Hunger
We have made our demand
Let you need us
Will we never grow?
Let us grow
The sun may blithely have forgotten dawn
The river may blithely have forgotten time
We wanted more from light
than mere life
But light turned false
Hunger
We will not allow a column of cloud to stand,
indifferent, at our door
How much more can we thank
Pain
The music in pain
If we have not made ourselves a tidy life
what right do we have to quarrel with the flowers?
How much can we excite pain
How much can we burn
How much can we catch the fire that burns forever?
If our words find no expression

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in this stream ofsun
we'll salute you like defeated soldiers
Whoever said that every soldier in the army
fights like a man?
4.
Hunger
There's not a single grain in our house today
Not a single clever brain in our house today
Hunger
If one sings till the last light of the innermost being
will it turn off hunger-light?
Hunger if one takes care of you now
will it darken?
Hunger, your style is your own
No other calamity comes our way
but you.
Hunger, if we cannot mate you
cannot impregnate you
our tribe will have to kill itself
Hunger we have all the aces
Why talk of the songs of the half-sexed jacks?
Here's our manhood before you now.
Let's see who wins this round
You or we.
5.
Hunger
Which came first, seed or tree?
Hunger you make things too difficult
Hunger just tell us what breed this monkey is
And if you can't
Then we will screw
Seventeen generations of you
Hunger, you and your mother...
Translated by Shanta Gokhale

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COMMENTARY:

Hunger is devoid of all sorts of romanticism and academic blanketing but not devoid of compassion. The speaker is addressing hunger only one thing one could or couldn't do be able to prove the theorem or fail to do so. Can't the fire of the hunger be turned into poetry? Will the fire of hunger destroy music? He who can't count his own pulse beats finds music inaccessible. Somebody that who is feeling the throbbing of his stomach cannot enjoy the music. Hunger, we didn't realize that a fee would be charged for singing a song for capital assets. Those who are dealing, those who are creating these capital assets have to pay a price to even look at them, so will music die in the fire of hunger? The speaker is talking about the basic denials to the right of life, a fruitless thing. However hard you work your wages you get in pain, in stones. If one cannot build a house of stones one cannot live in it. Hunger, at times you assume the form of a mouse, at times you become a cat and a lion sometimes. Look at the way the speaker is building on the adversarial position of hunger in his life and he is personifying it in degrees from a mouse to a cat and a lion sometimes. How can we, the weak ones face this game started by you, and dare to play it even. Those who have been denied their basic rights of life, those who have sacrificed their dignity at the altar of caste based society and have become puppets of systematic societal caste based persecutions, how can they even play the game that is given to them as hunger. There is a desire to satisfy this unquenchable hunger of the stomach and hunger is compared to a game which the poor have to solve in spite of their steady and sincere efforts they remain unable to defeat hunger.

In the second stanza, the speaker is trying to tell that the poor are unable to get rid of their oppressing situations as the economic dependence on the high caste people does not allow them to raise their voice against the severe injustice that they meet every day. Their circumstances of life have compelled them to learn the meaning of calm acceptance of their dream of social equality which is yet a nightmare for them. The speaker says if a bridge of iron will not join them, how this bridge of iron probably the independence that was promised to the entire nation which also promised equality will not join them. The democracy is mocked at here and because it is still owing to the attitude of the custodians the kind of equality that our constitution promised has not been offered and therefore there will always be a bridge between you and us. So they let us fly like unfettered birds, hunger, your land, the thorns upon your land festered in the brain all night till the brain itself freezes. Now it is the stomach that is directing the brain. When your stomach has not been fed your mind cannot work and that is why he says that even if they are allowed to behave like free unfettered birds the mind is only absorbed in perching and pecking because, hunger when a thing is taken from a fridge is it still fresh. It is also a hint at the fact that when food is taken from those who need it more does it gives the desired effects to those who have it. So this is the difference here. This is how the speaker's universe is different. It is still untouchable; it is still loathsome and nauseating. It is creating a difference between one journey and another, from sacred to profane, from clean to

dirty, from sanitized to unsanitary, from healthy to diseased, from the haves and have-nots, from two different sides of the bridge one that is gold threaded, struggle between the snail of pain and the sea. The speaker's universe is different. It is still untouchable. It is loathsome and nauseating. It is creating a difference between one journey and another from sacred to profane, from clean to dirty, from sanitized to unsanitary, from the healthy to diseased, from haves to have-nots, from two different sides of the bridge one that is gold threaded between the snail of pain and sea. Some people get everything whereas others are destined to stay hungry. The sunlight brings hope, light but for them even the light itself has let them down because there is another thing that is illuminating their life more, there is another thing that is yet not taken roots and that is hunger. He says we won't allow the clouds to stand at our door merely as indifferent pillars. How much longer should we be grateful to our sorrow for the music that our sorrow contains? What right do we have to fight with flowers? We have been even unable to set up our homes, how long should we go on trying to light the fuse of our sorrow? How long should we continue to burn ourselves? How long should we try to catch the flames of our fire? We shall salute you as defeated soldiers. If we can find our own cognition is the fiery flow of the sign who says all soldiers in the army fight as heroes do. These young men and women, who have been thirsted to live a life of abject poverty and wretchedness, how can you expect them to crave for hunger every day. Now this is why Dhasal's poetry is different. He once described in one of his interviews that he visited brothels, he went to *mujra* dancing women's establishments, to the houses of ordinary prostitutes. The whole ambience and the ethos of it was the revelation of a tremendous form of life. It was life according to them and then he threw all rule books out saying no longer rules of prosody for me, because he was very impressed by European writing but that day he decided that his poetry was as free as he was. He decided to write what he felt like writing and that is why he says that he prefers to call his poetry as container carriers, something which is filled with a message, and something which is sharp and hurting just like the hunger.

In stanza four he says we haven't got a grain of food left to eat, today there is not a single wise soul left in our house. Hunger, if one went on singing till one reached the last flickering of the soul; would the light of our hunger go out? Hunger, if we preserve you any longer anything will turn dark. Hunger, your fashion is unique; you are the last whore we can make love to. If we can't get laid with you, if we can't get you pregnant our entire tribe would have to kill itself. Hunger, we hold the ace. Nothing to say about the music eunuchs make, our virility confronts you. Let's see who wins, we or you. This is what we get, a sense of disgust, a *bhibhatsarasa* according to Dilip Chitre. Hunger, you are a whore, either we get laid with you or we get you pregnant. We kick you out of the way. We are not those eunuchs who will clap their hands and make some music. We are those masculine people who will confront you with our virility and we will fight you till our last breathe. Let's see who wins we or you.

This is how the political poems were given in the hands of the working class. Namdeo Dhasal says that the downtrodden will arise with renewed

rage after reading his poems. He was right because he meant that words are like bullets and not a pistol to be used in Diwali. They should be aimed at right place and used for the protection of friends. With this poem, hunger, Dhasal has given us a wide range of voices from the Mumbai's underbelly, he has written for the ugly and the savage, the criminals and the nefarious. He has given hunger a shape, a shape that comes back to us, that haunts us and gives us a feeling of being alienated and dejected. No wonder his work earned him the *Padmashree* award and the *Sahitya Academy Lifetime Achievement* award.

7.6 CONCLUSION

Thus, Dalit poetry reflects on the miserable condition of the marginalized section of Indian society. It highlights their indelible suffering, eternal cry of pain and varied forms of protest. After independence owing to the constitutional safeguards and affirmative action in the form of reservation the first generation of Dalits acquired formidable education and by 1970s many of them were recognized as Dalit poet-activists. They registered a strong protest against atrocities and unequal treatment afflicted by upper caste communities on them through literature and ground level activism. The examined select poems in this unit are representative of marginal voicesthat focus on the core theme of Dalit consciousness in Dalit literature.

7.7 SUGGESTED QUESTIONS

1. Critically appreciate Yashwant Manohar's poem 'An Ultimatum' by highlighting its major themes.

2. Why does the postman feel bamboozled in Keshav Meshram's poem 'In Our Colony'?

3. Critically comment on the title of the poem 'I will Belong to It' by Arjun Dangle.

4. How did L. S. Rokade depict the miserable and melancholic condition of Dalit life in 'To be or Not to be Born'?

5. Comment on the personification of hunger in Namdeo Dhasal's prescribed poem.

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8

CRITICAL STUDY OF MOHAN RAKESH'S *ONE DAY IN THE SEASON OF RAIN* PART I

Unit Structure:

8.0 OBJECTIVES

- To introduce Mohan Rakesh as a playwright
- To introduce his major contemporaries
- To famailiarise students with the cultural, social and political backgrounds of the country
- To elaborate the formative influences of Mohan Rakesh
- To help students understand Mohan Rakesh's contribution toliterature

8.1 INTRODUCTION:

Ashhad Ka Ek Din (One Day in Ashadh) is a debut Hindi play byMohan Rakesh in 1958 and is considered the first modern Hindiplay. The play received a Sangeet Natak Akademi Award for theBest Play in 1959 and has been staged by several prominentdirectors to critical acclaim. A feature film based on the play wasdirected by Mani Kaul and released in 1971, and went on to winFilmfare Critics Award for Best Movie for the year.

Before ***Ashhad Ka Ek Din*** Hindi plays, based on literarythemes, were either idealistic or didactic or devoid of connectionwith contemporary reality. And above all their language remainedthe language of literature, which was not suitable for stage. But***Ashadh Ka Ek Din*** proved quite suitable for film as it was deeply connected with contemporary reality of life, despite its highlySanskritised and well ornamented language. Mohan

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Rakesh wenton to write two more plays, and left one unfinished by the time ofhis death in 1972, but he had shifted the landscape of Hindi theatre.

8.2 AUTHOR:

Mohan Rakesh, whose real name is Madan Mohan RakeshGuglani, was born on February 8, 1925 at Amritsar. His father ShriDharmachand Guglani was an eminent lawer, who was deeplyinterested in literary pursuits. His mother was very simple womanwho was highly spiritual and committed towards her duty as motherand wife. Mohan Rakesh's father would invite scholars from everysphere and discuss thouroughly various aspects of art, music and

literature for hours together. This continuous parley with thescholars indirectly shaped the career of Mohan Rakesh as an artist.He post graduated in Hindi and English literature from PunjabUniversity. Initially, he started writing in Sanskrit, as he was astudent of Sanskrit and he practiced prose and poetry in Sanskritonly. But in due course of time, he realized that Sanskrit is not thelanguage to be commonly read and understood and he switchedover to Hindi as medium of his expression. He felt that hisexperiences will be better conveyed to people in Hindi, being acommon place language in India.However, this pleasant literary feast could not continue for along time, as his father died on February 18, 1941. He was just years old and had to shoulder the household responsibilities of looking after his aging mother and younger brother. In his words,"There *was no opotion left. I was fitted in the yoke of life at the ageof just 16. I had to adjust myself to the set frame of life.*" He startedcarrying out his duty as responsible head of the family by takingtuition and other ways which would fetch him some money to runthe house. During the days of mental and economic crises causedby the burden of responsibility, he was consoled and emotionallysupported by a girl of 17 years Premika Divya (which is perhaps notthe real name of the girl). Mohan Rakesh used to share thesufferings of life with her to distress himself from his routine goingson.To alleviate his mental agony, she used to come from Amritsarto Lahore to meet him at the cost her lectures.

At the age of 22, Mohan Rakesh had to face two tragedies inhis life – one was partition of India and the other one was suddendemise of his intimate friend, Premika Divya. The first was human tragedy and the second being the personal tragedy. He was lefttraumatized by the severity and grossness of the riots betweenHindu and Muslim and killings of innocent people who were noteven least concerned with any political agenda. On 15th August,1947 he was in Amritsar. From there he was forced to come toMumbai via Delhi in search of employment.In Mumbai, Mohan Rakesh led a miserable life as he wasnot equipped with the kind of life Mumbai demanded. He wasdeeply ingrained in morality and hence could not compromiseeverywhere in his life and this sometimes led him to quit his jobfrequently. However, after completing his Master's degree in Hindi,he worked as a lecturer in Sydenham College of Commerce,Mumbai, Elphiston College, Mumbai, Bishop Cottage School,Shimala, and D.A.V. College Jalandhar from 1947 to 1951. From1950 to1954, he had the worst

kind of life as he had neither job notmental peace. He was wrongly removed from his jobs as he wasnot complying with their terms and conditions demanded by the job.

Meanwhile, he was married in order to get involved himself in familylife in 1949, but it turned out to be quite unpleasant experience andin 1952 again he had to leave the job. He then was determined tolead life based on his writings but this adventure also proved a kindof day dream. He then again started looking for a new job. Quite surprisingly, he was invited by D.A.V. College as the Head of thedepartment where he was not confirmed and removed. Afterworking four years in D.A.V. College, he resigned from the job in1957. It was again a bad phase of his life, as his married life provedto be unsuccessful and thus the relation between them endedforever officially. Under the financial crisis again he was forced towork as lecturer in Delhi University in 1960. In 1962, MohanRakesh took over as editor of **Sarika** and standardized it to ahigher level, but in 1963 he left that job too.Mohan Rakesh's mother tongue was Punjabi but hiseducation was through Sanskrit medium. However he did not find either Punjabi or Sanskrit suitable to be a medium of his literaryexpression. He, therefore, switched over to Hindi and thuscontributed significantly to the growth and development of HindiLiterature. However, the impact of Sanskrit is reflected on hiswritings and his language turns out to be highly modified andstandardized expression of his lofty feelings. Despite hisassociation with Sanskrit scholars, he was familiar with the westernculture and literature and kept himself free from the shackles oftraditional practices in contemporary society.

Having reflected on his biographical details, it is reasonableto dwell upon the political, social, cultural and literary situationswhich went a long way in shaping his career as literary artist. WhenMohan Rakesh was born, India was entangled in the yoke of Britishgovernment and people in India charged with patriotic feelings weredetermined to throw aside the shackles of slavery of BritishGovernment from India forever. On the political portal, politicalleaders like Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Gandhiji emerged, who weretrying to reawaken the dormant feelings among Indians by blowingnew message of freedom among common people. By 1942, thefreedom movement came to be strong driving force resulting in thefreedom of India in 1947. This was the year when India was dividedinto two nations, Hindustan and Pakistan, and caused a lot oftraumatic situations across the borders.Though in 1947, India became free from the clutches ofBritish Government, the selfish politicians tried to elevatethemselves politically and did not accomplish the job which theywere supposed to do during post independence. It was commonlynoticed that so - called politicians have involved themselves in dirtypolitics of vested interest and departed themselves from thecommon goodness of common people who elected them to be theirrepresentatives for resolving their recurring problems in life. The trend shows that there was gradual deterioration in moral andhuman values which further endangered the unity and integrity ofthe nation. These unhealthy situations in the country compelled theauthor to express his experiences of life through literary forms.Twentieth century, which is characterized by the

scientificadvancement, has alarmingly affected the unity and integrity of afamily. It witnessed that people who preferred the ideology of jointfamily are now in the favor of unit family. Even the materialwellbeing and independence of wife gave rise to misunderstandingbetween husband and wife, which dismantled the aura of entirefamily bond and their children suffered painstakingly the barbs ofthe marital discord of the parents.

Besides the political and social conditions, literary situationsare credited to have substantiated his creative sensibility in art ofwriting. Perhaps, Mohan Rakesh experienced the dying age ofChhayavad (a literary Movement in Hindi literature) and humblebeginning of Pragativadi Yug (a literary movement in Hindiliterature). In 1935, the extreme imaginative Chhayavad wasannounced officially stopped and in the same year, the mostcelebrated Pragativadi writer, Munshi Premchand announced the manifesto of Pragativadi writing and stressed that literature shouldbe always written in the context of real life and literatiture should belinked with the realistic phase of life which is teemed both with joysand sorrows. He further stressed literature should not be the idealentity to be imagined but a realistic platform which gives full insightinto the real life led by common man. During this phase of literaryproduction, there emerged a literary movement in a context ofstories called New Stories. Prominent artist like Rajendra Yadav,Kamleshwar and others equally powerful story writers try to relateliterature with life. These writers did not believe in emptypresentation of ideas but rather switched over to facts of life. Manyregional writers like Phanishwar Nath Renu try to present the regional sensibility and common understanding of regional peoplethrough their works.

8.3 HIS CONTRIBUTION:

As far as the literary genius of Mohan Rakesh is concerned,it was not fed and fanned any particular political creed or ideology,but it telescopically captured the reality of common man in society. He also underlined the recurring disharmony and disagreementprevailing in the contemporary society and tried to give voicethrough his literary works. The external and internal conflicts in hislife shaped his career as a writer, playwright and his conflicts arefully reflected in his works.His novels *Andhere Band Kamare, Antraal and Na AaneWaala Kal* portray the mental conflicts - internal and external – andexplicate how existing contemporary milieus are responsible fororientation and disorientation of man's life. These novels bring outthe modern trends and tendencies of contemporary society, asmost of the characters of these novels are highly educated andsensitive of urban backgrounds. They are so self centered that theydo not go to the common people around and get entangledpermanently in their own problems. These novels underline therecurring problems and issues commonly faced by urban people incontemporary society.

He has three full plays and one incomplete play to his credit.Whereas his two plays, *Ashadh Ka Ek Din (One Day in Ashadha)*and *Leheron Ke Raj Hans* are based on historical perspectives, hisother play *Aadhe Adhure* underlines and focuses the incongruityand disagreement among the

members of middle class family overtrivial issues of daily life. For his historical novels, he has selectedthe plot from the history and tried to contextualse them in moderntimes. *Ashdh ka Ek Din* is based on the life of Sanskrit poet Kalidasand his imaginary beloved called Mallika. He has brought out thefact that Kalidas of past will behave differently in modern worldwhich is primarily set out for material pursuits and success.Through this play, he has tried to establish the fact that the innerurges one has, should be properly attended to get permanentsatisfaction and peace of mind, and not the imposed ones whichresult in shattered dreams and broken heart. *Leheron Ke Raj Hans*is also a historical play which is based on Ashwaghosh's*Saundernand*. The play is not completely historical as fewcharacters like that of *Ashadh Ka Ek Din* are imaginary, and areselected to fulfill the requirements of the thematic concern whichthe writer undertakes. The playwright has dramatically presentedthat the inner conflicts of Nand and Sunderi in the past were nolesser than the modern people who are confronted with the varied problems in life.

His last play *Paer Tale Ki Jamin* remained incomplete as hepassed away when he was half way through of its composition. Hehas also written One Act play and radio plays which are very fewand far between. His genius is reflected in excellent capability oftranslating Sanskrit dramas into Hindi. He has translated Shudrak's*Mrichchkatikam* and Kalidas's *Shakuntalam* into Hindi as he wasvery comfortable in Sanskrit language and literature.

8.4 CRITICAL SUMMARY OF *ASHADH KA EK DIN*:

Ashadh Ka Ek Din is such a perfect work of art of Mohan Rakesh that it keeps the audience spell bound from beginning to the end ofthe play. It is also important from the point of view of stage craft andnovelty of vision which it has envisaged through this play. Thoughthe title of the play indicates the happening of one day, it hassuccessfully entwined the events of a number of years in its plot. Ithas three acts and each act has a gap of many years betweenthem. However, they have one thing common in them, i.e. every act has the same scenic beauty of dense clouds and thunder in a rainyday.

Ashadh Ka Ek Din is a three-act play which is based on the life ofthe prominent Sanskrit poet Kalidas, sometime in the 100 BC -400BC period. In the first act, he is leading a peaceful life in aHimalayan village and is captivated by the biwitching beauty ofnature which enkindles the fire of his poetic urge resulting into thecomposition of his first play *Ritu - Sanghar*. During these days, hehas romantic involvement with Mallika, who recognizes his poetictalents and tries to promote it to the highest point. Her movementand love affair with Kalidas is not approved by her mother, Ambikawho treats him as a vagabond who cannot take care of hisdaughter being a resource less person. However, the creation of*Ritu Sanghar* catapulted the name of Kalidas far and wide and hebecomes very famous in Ujjayani. Looking to his unbridled poeticgenius, he is invited to appear at King Chandragupta II's court infar-off Ujjayini to be felicitated and is offered the designation ofnational poet. Torn between his current idyllic existence and loveon one hand, and the desire to achieve greatness

on the other, heleaves for Ujjayini in a conflicted state of mind. Mallika wants the best for the man she loves, so she encourages him to go toUjjayini:"Why don't you think that new place and position will offeryou better fertility than here? You have exploited whatevermaximum you could have done. At present you need a new pasturewhich will lead you to perfection".

In the second act, Kalidas enjoys the royal treatments andproceeds with literary excellence by writing other works such as*Kumar Sambhava* and *Meghdoota*, *Abhigyanshakuntala* and *Raghuvansha*. Mallika though does not directly get any informationfrom him, she happens to get information about his literary activitiesfrom dealers and from whom she manages to collect the copies ofhis works The emergence of Kalidas as a distinguished literaryluminary pleases Mallika who justifies the departure of Kalidas inthese words:

"I am happy that he is busy there. *Ritu Sanghar* is the only

work which he could do here. The traders who came here two

years ago gave me the copies of *Kumarsambhav* and *Meghdoot*.

They were telling that one more epical work is in news but copy of

which they could not get".

Kalidas has achieved fame and is married to a sophisticatednoblewoman, Priyangu Manjari. Besides her, he has the liaison witha number of women, dishonoring the pure love of Mallika. Mallika,on the other hand, does not sacrifice her love for trivial things andcontinues her affection intact for Kalidas whom she wants to shine as a poet of distinguished recognition.

Kalidas visits his village with his wife and a small retinue.While going to Kashmir, he avoids meeting Mallika, but PriyanguManjari does. Priyangu Manjari demandingly offers to help Mallikaby making her a royal companion and marrying her to one of theroyal attendants, but Mallika declines. Priyangu Manjari comes tomeet Mallika to know the assets which honed the poetic skills ofKalidas. She tells Mallika:

"No, I do not want to sit here. Want to see you and your

house. He has time and again reflected on this house and you.

During the creation of *Meghdoot*, he quite often recollected this

place".

The condition of Mallika's house is very bad as nobody isthere to look it after. Mallika's mother is suffering from illness andmental agony of young daughter to remain unmarried. Looking tothe bad condition of house and penury, Priyangu Manjari offersthem either to accompany or to get their house rehabilitated. Butboth of them gracefully decline both the options: "*You are very kindhearted.But we are used to live in this house, so there is no inconvenience here".*The third act starts with dense clouds and thunder

but nowAmbika is no more on the scene. Suddenly Matul brings the newsthat the people of Kashmir are rebelling and Kalidas being unableto suppress the rebellion has left Kashmir. He further informs herthat people tell that he has renounced the world, and instead ofcoming to Ujjayani, he has gone to Kashi. Mallika is disheartened toknow that instead of engaging himself in literary activities, he hasleft the world. This is a dishonor and gross injustince on her. Theecho of her inner conflict is reflected in her soliloquy:"I never said to go away from here for this. I also did not saythat you should go there to shoulder the responsibility of kingdom.Yet when you did so, I gave my best wishes- though you did notdirectly accept them. Even if I did not remain in your life, youalways remained in mine. I never let you wander from my side. Youcontinued to create and I believed that I too am meaningful, that mylife is also productive".

During this dejected mental maneuvering of Mallika, Kalidasreappears in the village. Mallika is now married to and has adaughter from Vilom, a kind of villain whom Mallika and Kalidasalways hated for questioning their relationship from a worldlyperspective. Kalidas tries to convince her that he has notrenounced the world but simply has transformed from the role ofMatrigupta as a king of Kashmir. He also expresses that his wishto start a fresh life with Mallika cannot be cherished as he hears thechild crying. He reveals to her that though he was away from herbut it is she who inspired him and that she has been portrayed invarious roles in his works:"Whatever I have written has been gathered from this life.

The landscape of *Kumarasambhav* is this Himalaya, and you arethe ascetic Uma. The Yaksha's torment in *Meghaduta* is my owntorment and you are the Yakshini crushed by longing. In*Abhijnanashakumtalam*, it was you whom I saw in the form ofShakuntala. Whenever I tried to write, I reiterated the history of yourand my life".

8.5 CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE PLAY:

Modernist Elements:

Ashadh Ka Ek Din contextualizes the modern sensibility despite the fact it is based on the historical theme of Kalidas's life,the most celebrated Sanskrit writer of Ujjayani. The play tends tounderline modern tendency which evaluates the person'scompetence and ability in terms of money. Kalidas who is anemerging writer is not appreciated in his village simply because ofthe fact that his writing does not fetch him any material wealth. Thisis the reason why Ambika, Mallika's mother does not approve herdaughter's name to be associated with him. It is her desire that herdaughter should be married to one who is financially sound and cantake proper care of her. But Kalidas is treated in village asvagabond who keeps on moving and looking at the pristine beautyof nature and does nothing to support his maternal uncle Matul. Hecomes into limelight when his work *Ritu Sanghar* is appreciated forits literary merits and he is gracefully invited to be the court poet ofUjjayani. Though he is not willing to leave his village for thishonour, he is convinced by others to go there

and accept the royalwish. He is further convinced that talent fully develops if it is takencare of by some patronage. Nikshep feels that:"Kalidas is forgetting out of emotion that he will loseeverything by disregarding this opportunity. Competence contributes to form one fourth of the personality. Remaining isaccomplished by regal honour. Kalidas must go to the capital

(Ujjayani)".In above lines, modern key to success is reflected. A mansucceeds to the fullest if he is well connected. This happens eventoday that a talented person may not necessarily excel at his ownbut it is ensured if he has royal patronizing agency to flourish histalent. Vilom who is always critical of Kalidas and Mallika expresseshis desire that Kalidas needs to enjoy royal honour. He craftilyadvises so because he knows that he may be able to wed Mallikaonly in absence of Kalidas. The other character Matul, maternaluncle of Kalidas, wants Kalidas to proceed to Ujjayani so that hemay be benefitted being a relative of Kalidas. He really enjoys thebenefit of this connection and gets his house well constructedthough the royal assistance of Priyangu Manjari. In modern times, itis generally seen that people establish their political and otherconnection so that they may reap the benefit of such connectionswhen they require. It is only Mallika who tries to persuade Kalidasto go to Ujjayani so that his talents may fully blossom. She has novested interest of her own. She loves him for his poetic talents andthis is the reason that despite his poverty, she craves to enjoy hiscompany as portrayed in the beginning of the play. Kalidas is alsotempted to material well being as he suffered the life of destitutionin his childhood. Although he is appointed as a national poet, heaccepts the position of a ruler to become rich and to take revengeon those who had humiliated him in his bad days. He admits toMallika when he comes back from Kashmir as an unsuccessfulruler:

"You were surprised that I was going to take over as a rulerof Kashmir. You might have felt it quite unnatural. But it does notappear unnatural to me. It was a natural reaction of a povertystrickenlife. Possibly it was the mood to take revenge on those whohad humiliated and made fun of me some times".The characters like Ambika, Matul and Vilom and Kalidas himself appreciate the material success in life as they understandthat wealth is essential for happy life. Thus, the playwright hassuccessfully exploited the historical event into modern context.

Feminist Perspectives:

The play can be also analyzed and discussed in term of Feminist perspective which is the major concern of the critics on thecritical portal in modern age. The main protagonist of the play,Mallika comes out to be a strong character who is singularly nottempted by the shining glamour of material success. She is adynamic character who tries to establish her own identityindependently and responds to the call of her inner soul. She isromantically in love with Kalidas, which is apparent when shecomes back home, all drenched in rains. Ambika, her mother, doesnot approve her love for him, as he does take work seriously. Shewants to control Mallika's activities as traditional mother does butMallika gracefully tries

to explain her about the poetic talents whichhe has. Whereas Ambika is a traditional mother who is alwaysworried about her daugher's marriage with a suitable person,Mallika, on the other hand, is a progressive and modern daughterwho wants to exercise her own conscience with regard to marriageand has given herself completely to Kalidas. She tells her mother:"*But I told you that there is no need of sending Agnimitra toanywhere. You know that I do not want to marry, then why do youmake efforts? You think that I talk unnecessarily"*. It is she who is able to convince Kalidas to accept the request of Ujjayani as apoet. She is least bothered about her happiness and sensualpleasure and encourages him to proceed to Ujjayani. She says toKalidas:

"Can you be away from me if you go there….? Where willyou get opportunity to develop your genius in this ruralsurrounding? Here people do not understand you. They evaluate

you on very simple scale".

He goes to Ujjayani and produces a number of texts. Thisgives immense happiness to Mallika and she manages to get thecopies from traders from Ujjayani. In Second Act, when Kalidasdoes visit her while going to Kashmir, she feels emotionally hurt butdoes not have grudge against him. The other female character isPriyangu Manjari, Kalidas's wife. While going to Kashmir, shecomes to visit the places and persons who are the driving forces ofhis creatively and quite often he recollects those things whilecomposing his works. She comes to meet Mallika and is surprisedto know that Mallika has all copies of Kalidas's works. She feels alittle bit upset:

"I can understand. I know through him that you are hischildhood companion. Your temptation towards his work is natural.He becomes forgetful of everything whenever he talks about the lifehere. This the reason some time he feel distracted from politics".

She tries to bait her that she along with her mother shouldaccompany her but she declines to do so. She also does not acceptthe offer of rehabilitation of her old house. In this respect Ambikaand Mallika both are similar and very self - respected as to notaccept any offer pathetically given by the queen. The queen wantsto orient Kalidas in politics but his natural talent lies in art, and thushe does not succeed in suppressing the rebellion of Kashmir.The basic difference between Mallika and Priyangu Manjariis that Mallika recognises his natural talent and promotes it at thecost of her happiness; on the other hand, Priyangu Manjari, despiteher knowledge that he is interested in creativity, pushes him intopolitics which he is not equipped with. She feels that Kalidas is aking, and she will enjoy all royal pleasures through him. This is thereason that she goes to Kalidas's village to bring everything whichKalidas used to appreciate. She feels that if everything comes there in Kashmir, Kalidas's mind will not be deviated and he will focus hisfull attention in administration.Thus, it is seen that there are three female characters whohave various dimensions. Ambika is a traditional woman who thinksfor the well being of her

daughter and to restraint her associationwith Kalidas, which is socially unacceptable. Mallika is the secondcharacter who is powerful, energetic, and self - respected and self -reliant. She is loyal and honest in her love towards Kalidas andtakes all positive measures to promote his artistic temperament.

Priyangu Manjari, the third female character, is very weak andselfish who wants to purchase honour of Mallika and Ambika, whichshe fails to do. She pressurizes Kalidas to be King but he cannotprove line up and becomes an unsuccessful ruler. If she hadpromoted artistic temper of Kalidas, she would have commandedour respect.

8.6 QUESTIONS:

1. Critically analyse *One Day in the Season of Rain* as a modern play.

2. Examine the portrayal of major characters in the play.

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CRITICAL STUDY OF MOHAN RAKESH'S *ONE DAY IN THE SEASON OF RAIN* PART II

Unit Structure:

9.0 OBJECTIVES:

To acquaint students with major and minor characters of the play

To analyse the sketching of various characters by Mohan Rakesh in the play

9.1 MAJOR CHARACTERS

Ashadh ka Ek Din is a unique play from the point of view ofcharacterization. Each character in the play is dynamic and self-assertive and different from the other as far as human traits andapproach to life is concerned. Thus the characters arecomplementary to each other and provide mobility, beauty andstrength to the plot. The female characters in the play are renderedperfect, determined and stable; on the other hand, male charactersare unstable, indecisive, and shaky in carrying out their assignedroles. Even the male protagonist of the play does not havecapacity to take right decision and is compolled to role on femaleprotagonist to directe his future action in life. The major characters are being presented below to facilitate the understanding ofstudents so that students by themselves can go ahead with theirown explanation and evaluation while analyzing the characters ofthe play. The major characters in the play are Kalidas, Mallika,Ambika, Priyangu Manjari ,and the minor characters are Vilom,Nikshep, Matul, Dantul, Rangini, Tarangini, Anuswar and Anunashik

Kalidas: Kalidas in the play is a replica of historical and culturedKalidas, but unique treatment of his character in the context ofmodern age makes him altogether different from historical Kalidaswho is known as the greatest poet of Sanskrit. If one reads theworks of Kalidas of the past, one fins him a great scholar, poet andgenius who is well oriented in spirituality

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even in the worldlypleasures. But the character of Kalidas rendered by Mohan Rakeshis quite controversial. Mohan Rakesh regards the classical traitsessential for an ideal hero and presents him having humansensibilities of modern age. This rendering offers the readers a newKalidas, who is not accepted to be hero of the play. Even readershave no sympathy for such Kalidas who is deprived of even basichuman traits.

Mohan Rakesh's Kalidas is portrayed as a young man who is alover of nature and appreciates its immaculate beauty and grandeurand composes poems on nature. Besides, he is very kind towardsthe animals and takes care of them. This is the reason that he picksup a wounded fawn and treats it with all care and affection. He isvery fearless and does not yield to Dantul, a royal official, whoclaims for the fawn. He wishes to have it from Kalidas even at thepoint of sword and he chases him but Mallika stops him from usingsword, as Kalidas does bother muscle power: "*Stop, royal officer!Don't insist for the fawn, for you, it is question of right, for himemotional feeling. Kalidas, without being equipped with weapon,will never bother weapon".*

The royal person feels apologetic to hear the name of Kalidas, as he is known to everyone being the author of *Ritu Sanghar* and tellsMallika:

"The king himself read Ritu - Sanghar and appreciated it.Therefore, the kingdom of Ujjayani wishes to felicitate him and givehim the designation of the national poet. Acharya Varruchi hascome from Ujjayani for this purpose".

Suddenly Kalidas is invited to have the honour of national poet ofUjjayani. He is unwilling to accept the royal invitation because it isnot possible for him to either leave the pristine glory of nature or todisassociate himself from Mallika. However, he finally gets ready togo to Ujjayani against his wish. There he is married to PrincessPriyangu Manjari and is lost in the dazzling splendor of capital andbecomes the king of Kashmir. There he misuses his kingly powerand has illegitimate relations with a number of women. But despiteall the luxury and affairs, he cannot remove the impression ofMallika from his heart and sometimes he craves to enjoy hercompany. He gracefully narrates her that how he was inspired by her for composing his work:

"Whatever I have written has been gathered from this life. Thelandscape of *Kumarasambhav* is this Himalaya, and you are theascetic Uma. The Yaksha's torment in *Meghaduta* is my owntorment and you are the Yakshini crushed by longing. In*Abhijnanashakumtalam*, it was you whom I saw in the form ofShakuntala. Whenever I tried to write, I reiterated the history of yourand my life".

While going to Kashmir, Kalidas does meet Mallika PriyanguManjari goes to have dialogue with Mallika and her mother Ambikaand discusses a number of issues regarding Kalidas's life and hisart. In Act III, he justifies the reason of his not visiting to Mallika,while going to Kashmir: *"I did not come to meet you because I hada fear that your eyes will make me more unstable. I wanted havemyself from this".*

Kalidas's talent does not suit to political affairs for which he is beingconstantly persuaded by his wife. Ultimately, he fails drasticallyquashing the rebellion in Kashmir and leaves the place to seekpermanent respite in the company of Mallika. But to his surpriseMallika is already wedded to Vilom.Thus, Kalidas of Mohan Rakesh is not the one who conforms to themerits and features of an ideal protagonist. He is modern andteemed with contemporary weaknesses like an ordinary man.Despite contributing to literary domain, he unnecessary getsentangled in the regal affairs and wishes to earn wealth tocompensate his childhood deficiency and to revenge on those whohumiliated and disgraced him for his poverty. He admits: "*It was anatural reaction of a poverty-stricken life. Possibly it was the moodto take revenge on those who had humiliated and made fun of mesome times"*.

Mallika*:* Mallika, though an imaginary character, is central to othercharacters – male or female. She emerges as a protagonist frombeginning till the end of the play, and spectators appreciate herendurance and balanced thinking even in adverse situations. In thewords of Matul, *She is most cultured, modest and innocent girl inentire village*. She is a round character who tells her mother aboutKalidas's talents openly, despite her mother being a traditionalwoman. Her mother does not like her moving along with Kalidas, ashe is not considered a competent man materialistically in moderncontext. But she is blessed with tremendous power of judging thecharacter and recognizes the poetic creativity of Kalidas and enjoysis company, despite people's disgrace and humiliation. She is notonly the beloved of Kalidas but also the promoter of his literarycreativity. Kalidas's emergence as a unique poet is consequentupon Mallika's devotion and dedication towards her sensualpleasure and worldly happiness. Therefore, least bothering abouther emotions, she persuades Kalidas to accept the invitation ofUjjayani to be a national poet. She fears that his romantic love for

her may blunt his poetic sharpness and hence advises him toproceed to Ujjayani immediately: *"Do you feel that I will be happy if you reject this royal invitation andremain here? I know that your departure will create blankness inme. Possibly external world might appear barrenness. NeverthelessI cannot betray you"*.

But Kalidas after going to Ujjayani forgets the role of Mallika in hislife and marries Priyangu Manjari and becomes King of Kashmir.Though his poetic work continues, he never bothers to send thecopies of his works to Mallika. Mallika is so concerned about hisworks that she manages to get their copies from the traders comingfrom Ujjayani. Kalidas, while going to Kashmir, does not meetMallika, which hurts her emotionally. She does not express herdispleasure to anyone. But she feels disappointed when she comesto know that Kalidas has renounced the world having failed tosuppress the rebellion of Kashmir and has gone to Kashi. Finally,having left no hopes from Kalidas, she is compelled to accept Vilomas her lifelong companion and has a daughter.Mallika is very self reliant and self respected character who doesnot expect any assistance from anyone. This is the reason that shefeels hurt when Priyangu Manjari takes pity on her

and offers helpsfor rehabilitating her old house. She quite gracefully turns down theoffer and tells: "*You are very kind-hearted. But we are used to livein this house, so there is no inconvenience here".* Priyangu Manjarieven hurts her by offering marriage proposals and alsoaccompanying her to Ujjayani along with her mother Ambika. Buther crafty devices do not work on Mallika and these offers are alsodeclined jointly by Mallika and her mother, Ambalika. She is not tied down to old tradition but is progressive characterwho exercises her right to select life partnership for her, despite theopposition and humiliation of the people. But nowhere is she foundto be rude with people and even with her mother. She alwaysconvinces her mother that Kalidas is a talented poet, has whoreceived invitation from Ujjayani. She discusses about hisextraordinary talent to her mother.Thus, it can be concluded that Mallika is the protagonist who liveson the portal of emotions and keeps herself away from the worldlyrequirements of life and sharpens the poetic sensibility of Kalidas tobe a great creative writer of Sanskrit literature.

Ambika: Ambika, the mother of Mallika, is an old woman who liveson realistic situations of life. Her bitter and factual experiences oflife make her critical of Mallika who loves Kalidas emotionally.Thus, it is found that whereas Ambalika lives on the facts of life,Mallika live on the planes of emotion. Ambika, thus, does notapprove Mallika's association with Kalidas as he is not worldly-wiseand can do no good for Mallika if both get married. Here, forAmbika, materialistic pursuits are essential for a married life. SinceKalidas appreciates pristine glory of nature and writes somethingwhich does not fetch him wealth, she does not consider himsuitable for Mallika. When Mallika explains her mother that she loves her own emotions, her mother gives her own experience oflife: "*What you say emotion is betrayal and self - deception"*.Ambika understands that Kalidas's refusal to go to Ujjayani is just apretension because he wants to promote his honor. Though sheunwillingly asks Mallika to propose Kalidas, she finds Vilom moresuitable for her. She is a proud woman who does not accept thehelp offered to her by Priyangu Manjari for rehabilitation of her oldhouse. After Priyangu Manjari goes away, she comments on theintegrity of Kalidas:

"But who is responsible for princess to come here? Undoubtedly,she has come not here without insistence of anyone. The royalartisans will repair the walls of the house. Today he is a ruler; hehas resources what better ways could have been other than this toshow his power and wealth".

Thus, Ambika is like a worldly mother, very simple and innocent,who is always worried about Mallika's marriage with some suitableman so that she may have quite good, peaceful and happy future.However, her presence in the play as a traditional woman, honesthe sharpness of Mallika as a protagonist who asserts her right inmodern context.

Priyangu Manjari: She is the princess who gets married to Kalidasand asserts her complete right on him. She is possessive in herlove, which is in compliance with the kingly stature. WhereasMallika's love is based on emotional and liberal background,Priyangu Manjari's love is born of

authoritative and tough reality oflife. She, unlike Mallika, writhes in jealousy. She complimentsMallika for her beauty and delicate modesty: "*Really, you are verybeautiful. You know, being stranger to me you do not appear to be unknown to me".* In spite of her knowledge that Mallika has beenKalidas childhood beloved, she hurts her by offering help to mendher house: "*I see that your house is in bad condition, its repairing isrequired. If you wish I can order for this work".*Besides, she offers her marriage proposals in Ujjayani, though sheknows that Mallika has emotionally given herself to Kalidas :"*Perhaps, you consider none of them to be suitable for you. But inthe state besides them a number of other officers are available.You accompany me. With whomsoever you wish….."*

But Mallika without hurting her requests her to keep away fromsuch discussions.

A comparative analysis between them will give clear picture of theirpersonality traits. As a matter of fact, there are two forces- Mallika and Priyangu Manjari in Kalidas's life. Mallika, though away fromKalidas helps in shaping him as writer and sacrifices her personalhappiness to build up his talent. Priyangu Manjari, on the other hand, being close to him, fails to recognize his genuine talent anddeviates him from literature to politics. She feels that politics willlead him to glorious path in life. Here she drastically fails in herestimation about Kalidas. Thus, in contrast, Priyangu Manjaristands minuscule as compared to outstanding character attributesof Mallika.

9.2 MINOR CHARACTERS

Vilom: Vilom is a male character who is temperamentally opposedto Kalidas. Though he is not a villain, he is always set to confronthim with all possible means to compensate his weakness andincompetence. He never tries to harm Kalidas physically, but doeseverything to hurt him mentally. This is why, he is alwaysconsidered as opponent of Kalidas. He always comments on theromantic relationship of Kalidas and Mallika. Ambika, Mallika'smother also finds him more suitable than Kalidas. It is a meaningfulstatement of Kalidas about Vilom: "*Nothing is unexpected fromVilom. Yes, not doing anything can be unexpected".* But ultimatelyVilom happens to wed Mallika and becomes the father of a femalechild.

Nikshep: He is one of the minor characters who always questionson the intimate relationship of Kalidas and Mallika, and is willingthat Kalidas should go to Ujjayani to accept the royal treatment as anational Poet. However, he is sympathetic to Kalidas andacknowledges his poetic talent. He knows about the self repectednature of Kalidas and tells Ambika: "*Kalidas is not pretending,Ambika! I am sure that he has no passion for the royal felicitation.He really does not want to leave this mountainous region".* He alsoknows that if anybody who can persuade him to attend to royalinvitation, it is only Mallika.

Matul : Matul is a minor character who is selfish and narromindedperson in entire village. He claims to be the custodian of Kalidasbeing his relative. He is quite unhappy as he does nothing whichcan improve his financial condition. He is displeased with him andimmediately announces that he is no more related with Kalidas. But when Kalidas is invited in Ujjayani as writer of *Ritu Sanghar*, it is hewho forces him to go there and accept the offer. He enjoys all kindsof regal benefits and finally gets his house reconstructed byPriyangu Manjari.

***Dantul* :** Dantul is a statesman and imbibed all qualities warrantedfor a statesman. The fawn wounded by him is taken away byKalidas to nurse it. Dantul demands that he should be given backthe fawn. But Kalidas makes him speechless by telling that huntingis prohibited in that vicinity. He wants to use power to snatch thewounded fawn, but when he knows that it is Kalidas, he feelsapologetic for his uncalled for behavior. He says to Mallika, *"I amsorry that I misbehaved with him. I must go to apologize him"*.

Anuswar and Anunasik: They are two officers of the king who come to make arrangement for Priyangu Manjari's visit to thevicinity of the mountain.

Rangini *and* ***Tarangini***: They are the research scholars who areset to learn the tenets which shaped and sharpened the creativetalent of Kalidas.

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CRITICAL STUDY OF VIJAY TENDULKAR'S *GHASHIRAM KOTWAL* PART I

Unit Structure:

10.0 OBJECTIVE

To introduce students to the Marathi playwright Vijay Tendulkar and his play *GhashiramKotwal.* By the end of this unit students would get a brief idea regarding the play and its significance; and playwright and his contribution to literature.

10.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE PLAYWRIGHT- VIJAY TENDULKAR

Vijay Tendulkar was born in 1928 and began his career as a journalist. He took up a job as a sub-editor of a Marathi weekly. He continued in this profession for a number of years, changing jobs and writing that he took up alongside. He began with prose but soon switched over to drama. Grihasth was his first play that appeared in 1955, followed by *Silence, Court is in session !,Shrimant,,Sakharam Binder and Safar* in 1992. He has also scripted for films giving stories of violence, power and repression in different forms in the contemporary Indian society.

Tendulkar's concern for machinations of power at various levels and the effects of oppression kept growing. *Sakharam Binder* (1972), a study in human violence and terror, amounted to a powerful dramatic statement. *GhashiramKotwal* turned out to be a musical play sated with sarcasm.

Kanyadaan is a complex play about the cultural and emotional upheavals of a family. It deals with the violence in the subconscious of a Dalit poet who is married to the daughter of an inexperienced and young socialist.

His plays present a fine blend of fact and fiction rather more appropriately he brushes reality in sharp colours that it becomes biting through an

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equally powerful dramatic persona. Tendulkar chose themes, created characters and situations which filled his plays with the vivacity of present-day life. The material for his plays came from his own observations of life, from newspaper reports or incidents narrated to him which he customized and tailored to fit his requirements as many dramatists do.

Tendulkar's contribution in modernizing the traditional theatre is immense. He has enriched Marathi theatre without completely breaking away from traditions.

Manyof Tendulkar's plays have been translated and performed in Hindi and a number of other regional languages, winning him appreciation and respect at the national level. In 1970, Silence, Court is in Session won the KamaladeviChattopadhyay Award. In 1971, he was given the SangeetNatakAkademi Award for his contributions to Indian theatre and in 1984, he was awrded the Padma Bhushan. The KalidasSamman award was conferred by the Maharashtra government in 1991.

Tendulkar was the first playwright of the new age.He discarded the nuances of the theatre of history, mythology and sentiments and converted the mundane speech into powerful dramatic tool. *Shrimant* paved way for new dialogues which were certainly different than the others of the time. Tendulkar did not allow himself to be swayed by the contemporary traditions of playwriting all together though he has never claimed to have changed in a radical way. His name was counted amongst followers of the new drama sect. He believed that the greatest importance lay with the subject of a play. The form came second. Any form that created the desired effect was welcome. He said that it was wrong to suppose that all departures from the established norms were bad or irrelevant as it was equally wrong to think that only that which is different is good or valuable.

Regarded as a pioneer or a forerunner of a new kind of drama his peers especially John Osborne of England were grouped under the 'angry young men slot'.

Realism served a unique purpose in the dramas of this age. It evoked response from the middle class perhaps exhorting the society to accept the conditions as they were and take steps to change them. Tendulkar's great strength lies in his dialogues. He seemed to be staging the play when he was writing it. He indicates every momentand it carries as much narrative force as speech, song and action.

Nana Padnavis speech after he had granted Ghashiram the Kotwali is known for its terseness,precision and shrewdness of a political mind.

NANA: Go Ghasya,old bastard. We made you,we made you Kotwal. Raise hell if you wish. But you don't know the ways of this Nana. This time, there are two bullets in this gun. With the first one. We will fell your luscious daughter. But with the second we will make the city of Poona dance. Ghasya, child, you're a foreigner. I have put you on Poona's back.

Why ?As a countercheck to all those conspirators. You'll not be able to join them; they'll never trust you even if you do. Because you're a stranger.you're an outsider. We just raised a dog at our door to the position of the Kotwali ! We are your sole support. Oh, you're a bastard. Ghasya. Your manner will be more arrogant than that of the Chitpavan Brahmans. You'll manage the difference.

Nicely. You'll create a court—and a half ! No worry about that. What'll happen is that our Kotwal pays for it. [clapping his hands] The opportunity comes in the shape of Ghashiram. And that luscious peach is at hand to be devoured by Nana. Excellent ! Yes, Ghasya, be Kotwal. This Nana blesses you !

GhashiramKotwal tried to expose the vulnerable segments of brave Marathi history. In *GhashiramKotwal*dance was reintroduced which had apparently disappeared. It was brought back as a powerful instrument along with songs, which were integrated with the narrative. They did not remain the adjuncts to indicate mood but provided criticisms, sometimes the sharp ones.

GhashiramKotwal was perhaps not written to offend the clergy or to make fast bucks or to entertain audience with a scandalous legend of a historical figure but perhaps to focus the serious pitfalls and shortcomings of our political system.

Modern or parallel theater is a more realistic reflection of the existing Indian environment. The parallel theatre has several ramifications and is performed in various regional languages. The beginning of modern Indian theatre was made in 1831 when Prasanna Thakur established 'Hindu Rangmanch' at Calcutta and staged 'Uttar Ramcharitam' in English. The plays of RabindraNath Tagore, D.L. Roy and a few others were the beginning of the parallel theatre. On the heels of Bengali theatre, theatres of Marathi, Gujarati, Kannada and Hindi were also developing. Marathi theatre found a great playwright in Vishnu Das Bhave. He was a forerunner and trendsetter in Marathi theatre. Vijay Tendulkar added a new dimension to not only Marathi but also the Indian theatre. In the middle of 19th century, Indian theatre was influenced by Western literature and feelings of nationalism and pride of the country. ' National school of Drama' founded at New Delhi proved to be a benchmark. Slowly and gradually a fusion of medieval folk and western theatre and techniques and styles continued from Sanskrit plays gave a new form and character to modern Indian theatre.

Tendulkar's Marathi play *GhashiramKotwal* with its brilliant use of folk forms in modern theatre made waves.

The onward march of the Marathi theatre has since been going on, enriching and growing and setting milestones. The contribution of many a learned playwright and talented artist is gloriously etched in its history.

10.2 INTRODUCTION TO THE PLAY- *GHASHIR AMKOTWAL*

*GhashiramKotwal*has been in the eye of the storm ever since its inception. It evoked adverse reaction from different classes of people,historians and intellectuals for distorting history. It was first staged on 16th December 1972. But after nineteen performances, it was banned by the President of its dramatic association. It was objected on the ground that the expose was anti Brahmin, the character of Nana Phadnavis as conjured up by the playwright was historically incorrectand there was fear of revolt in the audience and a strong possibility that the audience would publically abuse the play if it was allowed to be staged.However, most of the actors of the play resigned their membership from the association that banned it and staged the play under another association. It was subsequently performed a number of times not only in India but also abroad.

10.3 SUMMARY:

The play begins with the chorus on Holy Ganpati with tribute to Saraswati—the goddess of wisdom. Ganpati and Saraswati enter the stage dancing; the chorus pays homage and reverence by singing to their praise. Then enters goddess Laxami who joins the two in dancing and the chorus now seeks the blessing of the trio for the success of the play. The chorus attains tempo and reaches the climax and ends with GanpatiBapaMor—ya. The tone of chorus falls and it slows down. The Ganpati's dancing is relegated to the background and the chorus representing the Poona Brahmins bow and parade. The characters of the stage [the Brahmins] have been picked miscellaneously and they come from different places as Tanjore, Rameshwaram, Banaras etc. but they have sunk their nativity and identify themselves as Brahmins of Poona. One of the Brahmins from the chorus.who is also acting as a part of the human curtain stealthily tries to sneak off stage. But he cannot smart under the watchful eyes of the Sutradhar (the narrator). He calls out to him,

BhatjiBua Where are vou off to ? Hold your horses Must you The Brahmin misunderstands him and there is a comic scene between the two arising out of the homophonic pun in their conversation. The Sutradhar inevitably asks him where he was going he eludes an answer. But after continuous questioning he reveals that he is going to Bavannakhani, a red light area. The Brahmin disappears and the Sutradhar collides with a chubby Brahmin who appears on stage. They have an argument regarding this and the sutradhar makes many comments on the Brahmin mocking him. Thus the very exposition sets the tone and the mood of the play and makes a dig at the priestly class in general and the Poona Brahmins in particular.

The Sutradhar is still inquisitive about Bralunin's destination and asked him where he was heading for ?Although initially the Brahmin does not answer,Sutradhar tricks him into answering that he is going to Bavannakhani. After this, three Brahmins enter and on Sutradhar’s

enquiry tell him that they are going to Bavannakhani to see lavni. The human curtain now dissolves and the Sutradhar sings to the beats of the Dholki drum that nightfalls and Poona Brahmins go to the red light area.

The Brahmins once again make a curtain with their backs towards the audience and the curtain swings and sways.

Rama Shiva Hari ,

mukundamurari

RadhakrishnaHari

The street of Bavanna became for a while

The garden of Krishna.

The Sutradhar now plays the Mridinga drum and sings, 'Brahmins go to Bavannakhani and their wives stay at home, Oh !they stay at home. They wait. They cannot sleep.' In his song he asks the -people if they know what is happening in Bavannakhani, in the house of Gulabi, Gulabi the courtesan ? The Brahmins' answer is 'It is like Mathura.

The Brahmin curtain gets dissolved into a group sitting in Gulabi's hall in Bavannakhani. She is dancing erotically. Ghashiram—a Kannoj Brahmin and alien to the city is dancing with her. He is her counterpart and is described as 'sycophant and ludicrous'. The group is in erotic mood and attentive to her. They hum that the place is like Mauthura. After they have danced, they whistle and throw turbans in the air. Now they forward a request for a Brahmin-wife dance. In the end Ghashiram bows, retires to one side and they reappear as Brahmin and Brahmin's wife. They dance to the tune of a lavani—an erotic love song. The audience throws their heads in joy and laughter. It is late at night now but the Brahmins are still stuck up in Bavannakhani and their women are set in solitary confinement at home. The Sutradhar makes a sharp accusation on them and their wives. While the Brahmins have lost themselves up in the cemetery—a contemptuous term used by the Sutradhar for the Bavannakhani —a red light area, their women have entered into secret alliances with other Sardars and welcome them is the absence of their husbands. They make merry in the confines of their home with other men while their husbands have a gala time at Bavannakhani. The Sutradhar further saying that while here Brahmin women spend most of their: there are crowds waiting for the glimpse of Gulabi.

As night advances, Peshwa the chief minister and Nana of nine courts, Nana of wealth and power proceeds to Gulabi's place. He enters with a walking stick and a garland of flowers on wrist. Both dance. Ghashiram stands to one side dreesed as a Brahmin.Both dance. On the stage the Brahmin wives and their lover Maratha Sardars are also shown dancing. Nana joins them and then suddenly holds one foot while dancing. He cries and there is some confusion on the stage and the dance goes offbeat. Nana dances in the middle holding one foot and becomes the visual incarnation

of lechery. Ghashiram immediately swings forward and bends on hands and feet to allow Nana to rest his injured ankle on his back. Now all ask together his highness what had happened. Nana tells them that nothing much save he sprained his ankle a bit while still balancing himself on his stick with one foot on Ghashiram's back. He now notices Ghashiram and removes his foot though with difficulty and asks him to get up and further tells him that he is pleased with him. He gives him a reward but Ghashiram refuses saying that lie has already been rewarded when Nana put his foot down on his back. He asks his name. Gulabi intervenes and comes forward and tells Nana that he came four days ago and she gave him refuge. He was a foreigner to Poona and was going without food. He washes his utensils and does the house hold works. He also sings and dances with her. Before getting into the palanquin, he takes off his necklace and throws it to Ghashiram who deftly catches it. The night passes and the dawn rises on Poona. The Brahmins and Maratha Sardars go home. Ghashirambegins to leave with the necklace he got in reward but Gulabi blocks his way and demands the gift. Ghashiram refuses. Gulabi beckons her muscle men who take the necklace away by force and bash him up and throw him to the front of the stage. Ghashiram is utterly humiliated.

He stands on the road where the palanquin of an English man is coming. Three Brahmins come and speak to the Sahib and fught with each other for getting a commission to take Sahib to watch the royal ceremony going on.At last the English sahib sits on his palanquin and the first Brahmin nuns after him to place hint comfortably inside where the royal ceremony is going on. The Sutradhar in his interface tells the audience that the great dakshina ceremony is taking place in the park at the foot of the holy hill of, Parvati where the Peshwa will shortly honour the Brahmins. There 'will be a great feast and the Brahmins have already started fighting over the gifts.

Ghashiram looks at them with greedy eyes. Seeing him, the soldiers shout at him and mock him when he tells them he is a Brahmin from Kannoj. They ask him to leave the place. Meanwhile a Brahmin comes out and says that his pocket has been picked. Soldiers catch Kashiram and beat him mercilessly.Sahib tells others that it was someone else who had picked the Brahmin’s pocket and gives some coins to console him. Seeing this others also flock to him.

Ghashiram is imprisonedTheSutradhar now assumes the role of the fellow prisoner and asks Ghashiram how he was feeling.Ghashiram barely able to speak tells him that he is hardly alive and that he had come to seek fortune with his family to the city of Poona and he is not a thief. Ghashiram asks the Sutradhar now how did he get there. 'Because of a theft' he retorts_ And then he philosophizes about thieving and the role of the police He says that everyone is a thief and their only hope is the mercy of the police. They benefit from the thieves, as it is a regular source of income for them.

Ghashiram is now thrown out of the stage by the soldier with a warning that if ever he steps into this holy city of Poona he will lose his head. He

throws of his sash and takes a vow. He pledges to come back to Poona one day and take revenge. He has now forsaken his status of a Brahmin and has become a shudra.

Mridinga is played andGhashiram dances a boar dance. The Sutradhar now assumes the role ofKirtankar, a teller of religious stories.Ghashiram fades away and someBrahmins and women enter Iand sit on the stage. Nana sits on a high seat and men, women and girls' are sitting on the ground. Nana ogles, at the women and smells the flower. He leers at them while smelling the flower. The sermon reaches its end with the pronouncement of god's name. By now Nana has caught the glimpse of a pretty young girl and is lost in her. Sermon ends everybody in the audience falls at the feet of the Sutradhar. Nana now moves towards s the girl. She gets up and goes to Haridas'sfoot who isSutradhar in disguise. Nana tiptoes to her. In the meanwhile everybody leaves except this girl who prays before Ganpati. Nana gestures to a servant to close the door. Sutradhar now comes forward on the stage. Nana now left alone asks the girl lustfully, addressing her as child what does she want. To this address, she is astounded. He puts his hand on her shoulder. She draws back but Nana is not to be cowed down so easily. He persists in his shameless effort and declares, 'Oh, don't be shy. This is our house. This is a private hall. No one will see. No one in Poona today has the audacity to watch the great Nana Phadnavis !' The girl resists saying, pointing towards Ganpati that He will see. Nana says mockingly, That idol of holiness ? That all holy Ganpati '? The maker of Good ? Look, he has two wives. One on this side, one on that side. If You sit on our lap, he won't say anything !' The girl tries to ward off his advances taking refuge in the fact that he is like a father to her.The girl is still very scared by his advances and runs away. Nana is mad for her and runs after her.

Nana in his lust grabs the hand of a servant (Ghashiram dressed as a servant). On knowing that the girl has escaped, he becomes furious. Ghashiram promises to bring the girl back.Nanaviews sex as a part of power. He associates it with his majesty and greatness. He makes it a prestige point to have the girl otherwise his respect would be gone. He makes certain disgusting comments about the girl. Ghashiram is angry on hearing this but does not show.He promises to bring the girl. The chorus sings religious songs and Nana comes in and the girl he had spotted makes sensous gestures. Nana gets her and both disappear from stage. Ghashiram appears on stage and it is revealed that the girl is his daughter.

For a few days Nana is lost into Gauri and thinks of nothing else and does nothing else. Alter a few days, Ghashiram appears and is ready to leave with his girl. Nana pleads with him to let her stay but he does not agree saying that it is time for her to get married. And if she stays here, people will point finger at them. Nana insists and Ghashiram comes out with his trump card. He suggests Nana that there is only one way if his highness agrees. He be made the Kotwal of city of Poona. If he has the power no one can dare point an accusing finger at him..Ghashiram does not relent unless he has his order is signed and sealed. Nana immediately calls for a

servant and gets the order, signs it indifferently and hands it out to Ghashiram.

As he leaves the palace, the true facet of Nana emerges. He gives the order to Ghashiram appointing him the Kotwal of city of Poona not only to procure his daughter but also to keep the revolting Brahmins in check by appointing an alien as Ghashiram. He knows pretty well that Ghashiram would be a very suitable person to keep them in check. He cannot join them, as he is a foreigner. They will never trust him even if he wishes to join them and as such both will check each other. By this he has killed two birds with one stone.

The play now plunges into the second act. The Sutradhar proclaims to the People the arrival of Ghashiram to the city of Poona as itsKotwal. He also informs that Nana is greatly smitten byGauri and is dancing to her tune. He has become blind to his duties of administration and Ghashiram's reign is there. Ghashiram as a Kotwal means his business and has passed an order that all his rulings should be taken in letter and spirit and those defying the law of the land would be severely punished. They also know now that a permit raj has descended on the city of Poona, and nobody can indulge in any activity or business without a permit. Henceforth no cremation without a permit, no inter-dining without a permit and similarly to kill a pig, to do an abortion, to be a king, to steal, to remarry, to hide one's caste, to commit suicide etc without a permit is a grave sin. A good woman may not prostitute herself; a Brahmin may not sell without a permit. Ghashiram takes up his job seriously and begins to make rounds at night randomly checking people and subsequently whipping on arresting them if they were on the wrong. As a result the strength in the State's prison began to swell.

Ghashiram enters stage along wit two policeman and two lamp bearers.On seeing the Kotwal, Suthradhar tries to escape but is caught. Upon enquiry he says that he had ventured out at night to find a midwife for his wife. The Kotwal doubts if the woman is actually his wife and if he is found to be lying, he asks the policeman to punish him accordingly. Ghashiram’s atrocities against the innocent people increases.

It is rang panchami and everyone is enjoying. Ghashiram along with his policemen keeps a close eye on anyone enjoying too much so that they can be punished accordingly. A woman runs on stage and complains to Nana that her husband and brothers in law have been handcuffed by Kotwal for no fault of theirs. He would not let them have a funeral. The complaints of the woman falls on the deaf ears of Nana who asks her to speak to the Kotwal regarding such matters and not interfere with his pleasure.

The Sutradhar comments on the life in Poona. The Poona gentry has gathered in special garden for royal favours. Suddenly a Brahmin yells that his money is gone and the Brahmin behind him runs. Kotwal catches him and punishes him by placing a heated red hot steel ball on his hands. The Brahmin curses Ghashiram.

Ghashiram believes that he has straightened the people of Poona and the only task that remains is to get his daughter married to a good man. Nana prepares for his seventh marriage and Gauri is dead. Nana had bought the bride with gold and by grant of land. While ceremony is going on, Ghashi appears shouting for his daughter. When Nana moves towards his new bride, Ghashi appears and threatens him to divulge information regarding his daughter. Terrified, Nana reveals that she is with Chandra- the midwife. Chandra reveals that Gauri has been buried. When Ghashi encounters Nana regarding this, he pacifies him through his smart words. When Ghashi leaves, Nana asks his servants to throw the body of Gauri in a river. Ghashiram becomes a complete animal and starts enjoying human suffering.

Few Brahmins come to Poona to try their luck but unknowingly they steal some fruits from Kotwal's garden. He imprisons them and some of them die in the prison due to suffocation. Next day a powerful Maratha Sardar breaks them free and takes them to Peshwa. Peshwa asks Nana to look into this matter. The Brahmin mob demands beheading of Ghashiram and Nana passes an order for the same.

The mob shaves his head and puts vermillion over it. He is seated backwardly on a camel and taken around the city. The mob throws stones at him. He is tied to the leg of an elephant and stonned to death. Nana appears on stage and passes an order to let Ghashi's body rot and be torn by cannines. He orders all relatives of Ghashi to be expelled from city and a three days festivity to be celebrated. Everyone dances and enjoys in the end.

10.4 CONCLUSION:

The play depicts the rise and fall of the main character Ghashiram. It is through power politics that this happens. The play happens to be a strong commentary on Politics and its nuances. Ghashiram uses his daughter as a means to ascend to power but in the end his daughter gets sacrificed in the process. Nana happens to be a shrewd minded politician who makes use of Ghashi for his personal and political achievements and the moment he sees an opportunity to shun him, he does that. He even celebrates the death of Ghashi due to mobbing by declaring three day festivities for the same. Vijay Tendulkar has distorted historical facts to represent the politics of power which is universal.

10.5 QUESTIONS:

1.Ghasiram is the glaring example of evils of politics of deputation. Discuss.

2. Describe the role of Gauri in power politics.

3. Write a note on the women characters of the play.

4. Describe the role of Sutradhar in this play.

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11

CRITICAL STUDY OF VIJAY TENDULKAR'S *GHASHIRAM KOTWAL* PART II

Unit Structure:

11.0 OBJECTIVE:

The unit intends to give students further insight into the play *Ghashiramkotwal*. Students are given brief character sketches of the characters of the play and a critical analysis of the play is also given for their detailed study. Important features of the play (innovations used and themes) are also discussed.

11.1 CHARACTER SKETCHES:

Ghashiram

Kotwal of Poona city is a stern, uncouth and ruthless official. He is appointed by Nana as a quid pro quo for his daughter LalitaGauri. Ghashiram turns out to be a devil incarnate after he assumes the charge. He has taken a vow to set Poona right and he adheres to his words. But in the process he causes a lot of blood letting and despotic measures. He is a bad diplomat and lacks intrigues of power. He falls a victim to superior machinations of Nana. Finally he is stoned to death by the mob on the charge of murder of twenty-two Brahmins.

Nana Phadnavis

The chief counselor and administrator of Poona. The wily politician is well acquainted with the intricacies of power. Has a great weakness for women. He has numerous wives. Kotwali of Poona is granted to Ghashi by him on a condition that he would surrender his daughter LalitaGauri to him.

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LalitaGauri

A sexually attractive, sixteen year old girl who comes to the city of Poona with her parents but ends up falling a victim to Nana's lust. Her father unscrupulously hands her over to Nana in return for Kotwali of Poona city. She remains the favourite of Nana for sometime and tastes power herself. She is abandoned and left to the mercy of an abortionist after her role is over. She gets an unceremonious burial in the play.

Gulabi

A nubile and wily courtesan of Poona.A great erotic dancer who knows how to make fast bucks in Poona. The whole city flocks to her for treacherous pampering and fondling. She enjoys special favours of Nana as he visits her brothel quite frequently and she is summoned on all royal ceremonies. She gives patronage to Ghashi when he is new to the city. Incidentally Ghashi also tastes his first humiliation at her hands.

The Sutradhar

An important character and the Narrator of the play. He assumes many-roles and keeps the audience abreast with the goings on and the background of the play. He provides the information about the things happening on stage and off stage as well gives the criticisms. His satires are sometime very biting.

BhatjiBua

The sacrificial priest. He is the Brahmin who gives the first hand information about the decadence of Poona city while he surreptitiously tries to move to the red light area and the latest marriage of Nana Phadnavis. The interaction between him and the sutradhar is a valuable source of information on the current state of affairs in Poona city.

Peshwa

Peshwa of Poona city is the titular head. He is just the rubber stamp and the de facto ruler is Nana. He makes his appearance just once when he orders inquiry into the deeds of Ghashiram. Nana unquestionably follows his order and hands over Ghashi to the unruly mob.

11.2 CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE PLAY:

GhashiramKotlwal raised many an eyebrow on its stage performances primarily because it had dealt a severe blow to a valiant chapter of Maratha history. It also came under severe criticism for distorting facts and manipulating history . Nana Phadnavis has been portrayed in dark shade who as per the chroniclers was an able administrator and shrewd politician who with his presight kept the' Maratha Empire integrated for more than 20 years. His potency as an administrator can be gauged from the fact that even British could not make a dent on the Maratha Empire in his lifetime.Shortly after his death the Maratha kingdom broke up and the major portion was engulfed by the British.

GhashiramKotwal has also tried to sketch the vices and corruptions rampant in those times and the haughtiness of the Brahmins. The play is replete with instances of schemings, treachery, violence, brutality and the machinations of power at different levels. The defences have been put up by the playwright as well as some historians in reply to the onslaught on the play. Vijay Tendulkar the Playwright states that *GhashiramKotwal* is not a historical play though it is set in an historical era. He has tried to get across to the audience that that likes of Ghashiram are the product of the socio economic forces which transcend the boundaries of time and space. He has also stated that he does not intend to bring out the loopholes either in Nana Phadnavis or Ghashiram or even the Peshwa. He has simply used these historical men as his characters and the morals need not be derived from them *GhashiramKotwal* is a strong portrayal of the bitter truths, which come very close to our society here and elsewhere. That likes of Ghashiramand Peshwa and Nana Phadnavis, as depicted in the play, do grow in the modern society cannot be negated.

The religiosity, sex and power often go hand on hand. Nana purchases sex by dissipating power into the hands of a humiliated man. Ghashiram procures power by making available the sex where it matters little that it comes from his own extension(daughter). In the parlays of power such vital relations are often ignored. With power in hand people often think that they can purchase anything. As Ghashiramdid.He felt that after wresting the power of kotwali and begetting the fear of rod, he can get a suitable groom for his daughter who is an illegal mistress of Nana. He even thinks that he can stop the people from gossiping, pointing an accusing finger either at him or at Gauri by his authority. But it happens not so. Before he can venture out to arrange the marriage,Gauri dies at the hand of a greater evil and people do talk about. Money and power do not come to Ghashi's rescue. The fact remains that the duo are lethal force when in combination with its third partner. It depends upon the guile of people like Nana who are expert in using them to fulfill their objectives and rule over people the way the, want. Nana is a cut above the rest in this aspect.

Morality and God are the strengths of the weak. The strong need them only to further their ends. They are thrown to the back burners if the situation so demands and taken into purview if their use becomes imminent. Nana ridicules lord Ganeshaas an idol of holiness when Gauri, points out that he is watching the misdemeanor of Nana. Immediately comes the reply. 'he will not say anything if you sit on our lap. He has got two wives.' The chant of the holy' hymns continuesthroughout the play whether it is the selection of a girl or a lavni dance or erotic gestures by the courtesan or the march of Brahmins, to the red light area or the perpetuation of violence by the guardians of discipline.

The play is also a portrayal of an average man taking to the life of vices and crimes. The circumstances and the behaviour of the fellow mortals coerce one to either take the law into his hand, or connivance with the power to break the hell loose to avenge himself. People like Ghashi suffer because they have a tragic flaw. Others pass as successful adventurous

sorts escaping the law and the good Sex has come to occupy such a place that no conquest is full without it. It is sometimes associated with one's chauvinism also. Nana says. 'ourgrandeur is gone if she is not had' and 'this nine court Nana will conquer the whole Hindustan if you get her to me'.

Sorrowfully it is the women who suffer and continue to do so. Throughout the play the women have been the suppressed lot. Gauri is handed over to Nana without her volition by her father to satisfy the desires of an ageing man. She is forced to be the mistress of this man who is already married six times. She does so even without a faint prospect of getting married to him. She loses her reputation, compromises her honour and finally dies a shameful death. They cannot prevent Nana from getting married the seventh time to a very small girl and is forced to become partners in his merry making. Gulabi the courtesan is rewarded for pleasing Nana and dancing erotically. She is called to functions for dancing to the tunes of this Nana. Ghashi's wife has no say in the matters in which he has taken a decision even if it means to hand over her girl to a beast. Women lot remains subjugated throughout the play.

Sexuality especially the female sexuality has been used to represent loss and destruction in struggle for power. The Poona Brahmins who represent the different places of India are degenerated and morally bankrupt. They are hypocrite, clever schemers and brutal. Instead of treading the path of spirituality they visit the prostitutes. They do not see the difference between a Kirtan and a lavani. For them it is invariably the same. The Sutradhar in his lampoon describes the gardens of Krishna at Mathura descend on to Bavannakhani..Nana with his insatiable desires for sex and with his numerous wives parodies lord Krishna. It is a cutting satire and monstrous smile. The filthy squalor is compared with spirituality to highlight the moral depravity of Poona.

Historically incorrect though GhashiramKotwal may be, it exudes a universal theme which actuallv transcends all boundaries dissolving time and space. The theme fits Indian context to a great extent and can be applicable for many other countries as well. The combination of power and sex has always been very deadly to the corridors of power which are not sacrosanct. Tendulkar's *GhasjiramKotwal* had evoked a good viewer-ship and the performance has run into several hundred shows worldwide. It has stunned, astonished, set the souls to introspection and won laurels.

11.3 FEATURES OF *GHASHIRAM KOTWAL*:

GhashiramKotwal is a fiction woven out of history. Like many other plays *GhashiramKotwal* also finds its structure on history but unlike them, it is often stated as presentation of distorted facts and sketching a Maratha patriot in contradictions. The folk drama with its elaborate use of facial expression, mime, song, dance and symbolic use of stage technique makes the play unforgettable. It is appreciated for its production, design music and colourful choreography. Tendulkar's assertion that the play though based on historical legend, does not comment on morality or immorality of

Peshwa Nana Phadnavis or Ghashiram however does not find many buyers. It is a mere statement of degeneration of society, which will find universality, he avers. The Sutradhar becomes an important character in the play who adopts several roles and slides into each one of them very smoothly. He is also the narrator and the chief commentator. He keeps the audience abreast with his interjections and interposes. He slides in one role after another and the curtain does not fall. It is to the ability of the Sutradhar who makes it happen with ease. He teases and ridicules Bhatjibuwa feigning respect. The conversation between the Sutradhar and the Brahmin is facetious, the short rhyming sentences are delightfully crisp and superficiality is the essence of the scene. The play of words and repartee sets the mood for a comic encounter between him and the Brahmin.

Sutradhar is an important tool in the hands of the dramatist to satirize the contemporary society, Brahmins and Nana amongst othes, which is the main aim of this play. Sutradhar mocks and baffles the Brahmin into confession that he was going to Bavannakhani. The other Brahmins are also accosted by him as 'Oho gentleman ! Moneyed men !Mansionedman ! Where are you going ?'The three.handsome Brahmins tried to hoodwink him saying that they were going to a kirtan. They finally relent and come out with the information that they were going to Gulabi's place. The seriousness of the offence is conveyed through comic overtures. The play has been able to strike at a very vulnerable point of the contemporary society and has been able to bring out the ugly connections between power, sex and religion. Sex and religion have acquired the status of 'institution' in power. Whether it is Ghashiram or Poona brahmanary or Nana, they acquire and delegate power to the institution of sex and religion. The association though murky, continues to gain an upper hand nevertheless.

The human wall in the play is another unique feature. It comprises twelve brahmans whose function is to comment on the proceedings, act as stage props, dissolve into the various requirements of the play. When they turn their backs to the audience they are supposed to play no part. It also serves as a mechanism of secrecy and revelation. It hides the characters, the scenic developments and other things when the dramatist wills so, to focus on the other side on the stage and exposes the dramatic movement when it is so required. It thus prevents the fall of curtain rapidly and is novel in itself.

The Sutradhar is sometime part of the human curtain. The human curtain sometimes temporarily acts as individuals and sometimes function as a unit. As the play opens twelve Brahmans are seen on the stage invoking Lord Ganesha to shower the blessings on the Play. Ganesha is said to be the remover of hurdles and all religious ceremonies begin with invocation to Wm. The Sutradhar in his conversation with the Brahmin introduces them to the audience. He starts the singing and fills up the gaps by his intervention.

Efficacious and powerful language becomes a vehicle of powerful communication. Tendulkar s strength lies in dialogues which are shoet and powerful. Writing such language.for the purposes of theatre involves an understanding of not only the sense and sound of words but also of the tone and rhythm of sentences. Sometimes the placement of words in a sentence or juxtaposition of word withanother word or a line with another line makes a powerful dramatic speech.Language is the vehicle of emotion, mood and wit.

In *GhashiramKotwal*, the playwright has been successful to indicate every movement precisely and in a telling way. The movement has lent a great narrative force. It is equivalent to the force provided by speech, song or action. The human curtain is central to the creation of an environment of intrigue, hypocrisy and greed. It is against this backdrop that the story line Ghashiram opens up.

GhashiramKotwal is a musical historical. The folk form in which it is cast is an important feature. The form, which was used in Ghashiram, was not again used by Tendulkar in his other plays. The use of music, song and dance has blunted the seriousness of the play. It has however, not gone against the play. In one of its Hindi versions, there is less use of music and song and the result is that the content of the play came through more powerfully. That turned out to be a stronger play. Tendulkar has himself averred that music is a joyous thing. It is capable of giving deep pleasure. If it is used as a vehicle to say what one wants to say then, however, serious that may be, it is the impact of music that endures. The music is attractive but it is the words and visual component that carry the theme. Anyway the present folk form used in *GhashiramKotwal* does not undermine its strength and adds to its Popularity.

Another feature of the play is that it is historical though the playwright refuses to accept this brand. A historical play seems to be a contradiction in teens. History requires truth to the events of the past, but art requires imagination and concentration on the needs of art. This means in other words that the writer of a historical play, must use the facts of history with discretion to suit the needs of his drama, while maintaining overall truth to history, he has to deviate from the facts of history, and even introduce new characters in the interest of dramatic effectiveness.

Tendulkar has used the prominent characters of Maratha history and woven a story around them. The story revolves around the contemporary Maratha polity.There has been a distortion and deviation and accusations have come plenty. The playwright's intention has been to reveal the individuals playing the game of politics and taking advantage of the situations to rise to power and cling to it.

The play very succinctly and pertinently brings out the connection between sex, religion and politics. The play is full of violence. Soon after Ghashi's entry in the play, violence begins. It is Gulabi, the weaker sex ironically who gets him kicking and abuses. Very soon Ghashi is to be treated roughly again and this time it's the soldiers who abuse and make

fun of him.He is put behind bars.Thereafter, the violence continues unabated. It is now Ghashi who get, into the driver's seat and lets loose the hell.

Apart from the physical violence, the verbal violence continues well. Whether it is Nana.Ghashi.and soldiers,Sutradhar or the holy Brahmins the choicest abuses are used by them. Nana after appointing Ghashi being left with no choice rakes after him

Go. Ghasva you bastard.we've made you, we've made You Kotwal. Go have a ball. But you have no clue to Nana's moves. Both barrels of this political gun are loaded full. With the first shot. I'll lay your luscious girl.

Similarly after being disappointed with the golden city of Poooa and coming at receiving end, Ghashiram throws his sash on the ground and takes a vow. 'but I will come back, come back to Poona it will Cost you !— I have become a shudra, a criminal—now I am a devil.

The mridanga starts a forceful beat and Ghashi dances a war dance, banging his fist in the dust. And then he storms out to the audience. Just before that the soldiers have addressed him as thief and monkey. A Brahmin affronts calling him 'a shapeless piece of shit' and to get aside. In the company of an English man he regards himself no less than him. Numerous other instances can be cited from the play.

Another important feature of the play is that brings out the theme of politics of deputation. After religion and ceremony, deputation constitutes another device of power. Deputation is used as a camouflage, an instrument through which power can be exercised. Power is delegated to a second person who carries the wishes of his master. So if the master is corrupt he will serve his end through the deputed persons who will act as a shield and the blame will also come through him. In case of tumult or problematic situation, this deputed person can easily be sacrificed which is what happens with Ghashi. Such deputation hides the perpetrators from the eyes of the public.

'Go Ghasva— child, you're a foreigner. I have put you on Poona's back. We just raised a dog at our door to the position of the Kotwali '— What'll happen is that our misdeeds will be credited to your account

GhashiramKotwal fits into the framework of a realistic play. The play comments on the contemporary Maratha society with its vulnerabilities. The prevalent corruption, degradation and erosion of moral values are truly echoed in the play.

The title of the play has gone after Ghashiram—the central character whose story is the play. The title is apt and suggestive. The rise and fall of Ghashi enfolds the theme, the salient features and other on important happenings. They end with the end of the character. However, something lives after him, only is the machinations of wily politicians, which however is the aim of the playwright.

11.4 CONCLUSION:

The play *GhashiramKotwal*is a commentary on the pitfalls of politics which is universal. The play shows how the waywardness of people in power leads to corruption in the society through the character of Nana Phadnavis. The character of Ghashiram represents how being stringent without any logical reason leads to the suffering of the common man. In both the cases, authorities meant to protect the common man become their enemy. Vijay Tendulkar makes use of innovative techniques of dance, music, human curtain and Sutradhar to convey his theme emphatically. The play also touches upon the theme of power, female sexuality, corruption and status of women. Thus, although the play is set in a historical era, the themes of the play are universal.

11.5 QUESTIONS:

1. Describe the role of Nana Phadnavis.
2. Write a critical analysis of the play *GhashiramKotwal*.
3. Explain the role of human curtain and music in the play.
4. Discuss some of the themes of the play.

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12

CRITICAL STUDY OF ISMAT CHUGHTAI'S *MASOOMA*

PART I

Unit Structure:

12.0 OBJECTIVES:

1. To introduce a very well-known and prolific writer in Urdu IsmatChughtai to the readers.
2. To analyse Chughtai's novel *Masooma*
3. To study the journey and struggle of a young girl in order establish her identity and place in society

12.1 INTRODUCTION:

Ismat Chughtai is considered by many to be the fourth pillar of modern Urdu fiction along with Saadat Hassan Manto, Rajendra Singh Bedi, and Krishan Chandar. In terms of notoriety and fame, controversy and popularity, she is ahead of any other Urdu novelist. Her personality and her writings are complementary to each other and consist of rebellion, compassion, innocence, and sincerity. She made a name for herself in the world of Urdu fiction and novel writing due to her startling themes and realistic style of writing. The microscopic incidents of human life are the subject of her works, but she presents these events with such dexterity and artistry that a complete and vivid picture of daily life comes to the fore. Through her characters, she tries to expel the evils of society and make them a symbol of beauty, happiness, and peace.

IsmatChughtai was associated with the progressive movement of Urdu, but unlike other communist writers of her time, she made internal, social, and emotional exploitation the subject of her stories instead of external, social exploitation. In her writings, Ismat tries to both understand and make her readers understand the issue of carnal desires with respect to

human psychology. She has also raised the issue of equality between men and women which goes beyond domestic equality. Her stories have an air of a middle-income Muslim household where the everyday woman can be felt by the reader, but Ismat emphasizes on the point that this everyday woman, too, is human, and isn't merely an object of copulation, she has her own physical and emotional needs which need to be understood and fulfilled. Ismat's rebellious and fiery tone often leaves our established social construct high and dry.

IsmatChughtai was born on August 21, 1915, in Badaun, Uttar Pradesh. Her father, MirzaQasim Beg Chughtai, was a high-ranking government official. She was the youngest of nine siblings, all her sisters had been married until she gained awareness, thus, in her childhood, she only had the company of her brothers, and she continuously challenged their supremacy. Whether it was playing street football or horseback riding and climbing trees, she did everything that girls were forbidden to do. She studied up to the fourth standard in Agra, and till the eighth standard in Aligarh, but her parents were not in favor of her higher education, instead, they wanted to train her to become a decent housewife. But Ismat wanted to get further educated at any cost, she threatened to run away from home and become a Christian and enter into a missionary school if her education was not continued. Eventually, her father had to kneel in front of her stubbornness and she went to Aligarh and got admission in the tenth standard. In Aligarh, she met Rashid Jahan, who in 1932 together with SajjadZaheer and Ahmad Ali, published a collection of stories called "Angare" which was confiscated by the Britishers upon the charge of obscenity and mutiny. Rashid Jahan was a liberal and highly educated MBBS doctor and women's rights activist, with a communist ideology, who acquainted Ismat to the basics of communism, and Ismat decided to follow in her footsteps by making her her guru. Ismat later reflected, 'I hated moaning women, who bore illegitchildren. Fidelity and beauty, which are considered a woman's virtues; I condemn them. Love is a burden on the heart and nothing else. I learned this from Rashid Aapa.' Ismat blamed illiteracy for the plight of women. After FA, she enrolled in an IT college in Lucknow where her subjects were English, Polity, and Economics. After arriving there, she got the opportunity to breathe in the open air for the first time and was freed from all the shackles of middle-class Muslim society.

IsmatChughtai started writing stories at the age of eleven or twelve but did not publish them under her own name. In 1939, when her first story titled 'Fasadi' published in the distinguished journal Saqi, people thought it was her brother, a well-known writer, Azeem Beg Chughtai had written this story under a pseudonym. Later, in the same year, her stories like Kafir, Dheet, Khidmatgar, and Bachpan stirred the literary circles, and Ismat became known as an eminent author. In 1941 and 1942, two collections of her short stories came out titled 'Kaliyaa.n' and 'Chuntii.n'. But her most talked-about work came in 1941, 'Lihaf' which explored the intimate relationship between two women, and caused havoc in the preserve of Urdu literature. Ismat was tried for obscenity and such the story became the focal point of her life's work, so much so that it overshadowed all her

remaining works like 'JoDa', 'Genda', 'Nanhi Ki Nani', and 'Bhool-Bhulaiyan', which were equally well-written.

After completing her graduation from IT college, teaching in different places, and some well-talked affairs, Ismat moved to Bombay where she got a job as an Inspector of Schools. There was also ShahidLatif in Bombay who used to write dialogues in Bombay Talkies for Rs. 225. Ismat had met Shahid in Aligarh while he was doing his MA. Arriving in Bombay, their stormy romance began and they got married. Ismat's attitude towards the idea of love was quite unconventional. She said, 'I consider love to be a very important thing; it's the very strength of heart and mind, but a person should not become stingy in it, one should not become suicidal for its sake. There is an innate bond between love and sex, gone are the days when loved used to be a pious thing.' That's why when Shaid proposed her for marriage, Ismat, owing to her thoughts, replied 'I am not an ordinary girl. All my life I've cut the chains that fettered me, I won't be able to take up another shackle. Obedience, chastity, and other virtues expected of a woman do not suit me. Lest you repent in the end.' But Shahiddidn't heed to her admonition. About her relationship with Shahid, Ismat later reflected, 'A man can offer love, respect, and even prostrations toa woman, but he can't give her an equal status; Shahid gave me an equal status'.

ShahidLatif had also introduced Ismat to the film industry. He had turned from a screenwriter to a producer. Ismat used to write stories and dialogues for his films which include Ziddi, Aarzoo, and Sone Ki Chidiya. After that, his films began flopping. Even after the death of ShahidLatif, Ismat remained associated with the film industry. 'Garm-Hawa', the famous film made on Indo-Pak partition was also written by Ismat, she had also written and played a small role in ShyamBenegal's famous film 'Junun'. Other films that saw Ismat's writing grace their stories include 'Chhed-Chaad', 'Buzdil', 'Shikayat', 'Shisha', 'Fareb', and 'Lala-Rukh'.

Ismat's signature skill in her writings is her unique style of expression. Language is not only a means of expression in her stories but also an abstract truth in itself. Language can be seen as an animate object in many of her novels, including 'Masuma', 'Dil Ki Duniya', 'EkQatraKhun', 'Saudai', 'Jungli', 'AjibAdmi', and 'Kabutar'. She considered 'Dil Ki Duniya' to be her best novel.

In return for her literary services, Ismat received many important awards and prizes from government and non-government organizations. In 1975, she was awarded the Padma Shri by the Government of India. In 1990, the Madhya Pradesh government awarded her the IqbalSamman, the Ghalib Award, and the Filmfare Award. After illuminating the realm of literature for half a century, she left the world on October 24, 1991, and according to her will, her body was cremated at Chandanwari Electric Crematorium.

12.2 *MASOOMA*:

Thosewere the days when women were not expected to even think, let alone speak or write, on social-political issues. A privileged few could, at the most, indulge in inane versification or perfunctory reading within the four walls of their homes. This was especially true of Indian Muslim women who remained veiled, walled and voiceless. But IsmatChughtai broke that mould in a manner that shocked the conservatives and stirred up the slumbering, shackled feminine populace like never before. Of course, her *Lihaaf* scandalised the traditional litterateurs as much as the extant patriarchal hierarchy. In the process, she created a new literary template that tore apart the layers of societal hypocrisy; raising issues that were, later on, fashionably labelled as feminist.

Masooma is a novel that delineates its protagonist Nilofar's brutalisation in a male-dominated society. Born in an aristocratic family, her childhood was a protected one. But, one day, her father and brothers migrated to Pakistan leaving her and her siblings, along with her mother, behind with no income to sustain them, forcing them to leave for Bombay to seek an acting career for Nilofar in the movies. But good looks alone were not enough. They fell into the trap of pimps and seths; and the nubile and na`EFveNilofar metamorphosed into a high-class call girl – skittish, foulmouthed and amoral. The narrative is gripping, taking one on an emotional rollercoaster along with the protagonist, who goes through soul-sapping vicissitudes. The translation is so good that you would think that you were reading the original. Of course, readers would miss some of the flavours of the Urdu language, including the highly wrought greetings and graphic *gaalis*. Fortunately, the sensibility remains intact.

Ismat wrote voluminously till she was diagnosed with Alzheimer's Disease in 1988. Her formidable body of work comprises several collections of short stories, novels, sketches, plays, reportage, radio plays as well as stories, dialogues and scenarios for the films produced by her husband ShahidLateef as well as others. Much of her non-film writing was autobiographical; if not directly related to her own life, it certainly stemmed from her own experiences as a woman, especially a middle-class Muslim woman. Some critics, like Aziz Ahmed, have viewed this as a flaw rather than strength, objecting to the constant, overwhelming presence of Ismat herself in all that she wrote. Regardless of Ismat's own larger-than-life persona, while it is true that her interest was primarily in women, it is also true that she saw women in the larger social context and not merely within the confines of the *zenana*. She wrote stories (such as *Jadein*) and plays (*DhaaniBankein)* on other issues such as communal tensions, issues that did not concern women alone, but issues that can be viewed from a unique perspective because they come from a woman's pen.

Like many of her fellow-travellers in the progressive writers' movement, Ismat proved over and over again that she was a progressive more by inclination than indoctrination. We see evidence of this in almost her writings; in *Masooma* too we see Ismat depicting the effects of a world cleft by social and economic injustices upon the life of a young girl. The trade of women and the commodification of a woman's body, she seems

to be saying here, is a direct consequence of human frailty and lust but also of poverty and inequality.

However, *Masooma* – written in 1962 when the influence of progressivism had considerably waned and the core group within the PWA no longer held its members in thrall -- differs from her other writings in several notable respects. One, the overwhelming presence of Ismat herself – noticeable in her early works – is absent here. Yes, she draws upon her experiences in the film industry; yes, her impressions are refracted through the prism of her own experience; and yes, she continues to be more interested in women than in men. But here, she has managed to camouflage her presence. The story of Masooma, a girl from a wealthy and respectable family from the erstwhile state of Hyderabad, takes centre stage. Also, in the telling of this story of a girl's descent into prostitution, how innocent Masooma is sold by her aristocratic mother to keep the home fires burning and how this girl from a decent family turns into Nilofer, a mistress who changes hands till she becomes no better (or worse) than a common prostitute, and her mother too is transformed from a haughty begum to a seasoned madam, Ismat sheds her coyness and her tendency to use allusion rather overt descriptions.

While Ismat had always written bold stories that challenged traditional morality and worn-out notions of a woman's 'place' in society, till *Masooma* she had not written anything that can be described as overly 'sexual' – not even in *Lihaaf*. Given her interest in sexual matters, and the fact that both she and the original *bête noir* of Urdu – Manto – had been hauled up by a Court in Lahore on charges of obscenity, comparisons between the two have always been inevitable. Noted writer and critic Intezar Husain has drawn an interesting parallel between these two *enfant terribles* of the Urdu short story:

'Where Ismat moves away lightly after making a passing reference to (such) a subject, Manto is like the naughty boy who flings open the door, claps his hands and say, 'Aha! I have seen you!'

In *Masooma*, Ismat is flinging open that door with a vengeance. We have far more references to 'such subjects' here than in any of Ismat's other works. If anything, we see an Ismat deriving an almost vicarious pleasure when she depicts the debasement and moral descent of Masooma, with insouciant references to trysts in seedy hotels where people watch French films and perform unimaginable acts of abomination! The incorrigible gossip in Ismat causes her to leaven her narrative with generous dollops of spicy snippets about real film stars and real events. Having worked in the film industry herself and known at first hand the seedy goings on between needy starlets and avaricious hangers-on and the unsavoury nexus between producers, directors, financiers, she flavours her story with a robust realism.

'What a strange place this world is!' she mock sighs and then embarks upon a rambling digression about Mazhar, the son of a degenerate nawab who, like so many other young men and women with stardust in their

eyes, had flocked to Bombay but with his money robbed and youth faded is now a peddler of young girls, supplier of every whim, 'indentured to the fancies of an ageing heroine'. Somewhere, this seemingly rambling tale hides a stinging observation, sharper than the sting on a scorpion's tail:

'When someone who has been the object of toadyism himself has to turn around and become a toady, then there's no more to be said. He was now well versed in the subtle craft of toadyism.'

And, elsewhere, the mock-sermonising hides a sardonic realism:

'So many avatars and prophets struggled, lost, and relinquished their lives while trying to teach lessons of goodness; evil is interesting and exciting while goodness is like chewing tough metallic marbles…But this was not the fault of evil or goodness. The fault lay with the artificial society in which she had been raised. There was fasting, namaz, Haj, and zakat – but there was also whoring and vice carried out in secrecy.'

Ismat's language – always her strength as a story teller – is different too in this novel. Here, she uses biting satire as a tool to sharpen her depiction of social realities and give an extra edge to her pithy, flavoursome, idiomatic language, the *begumaatizuban* that she herself knew so well. In her hands, Urdu had acquired a new zest, a special zing that made it more readable than ever before; in *Masooma* she shows how it is also better equipped to reflect new concerns, concerns that had been hitherto considered beyond the pale of literature. Also, her Urdu is full-bodied and vigorous, redolent with the flavours of Bombay, its sights, smells, sounds so different from the genteel world of chaste Urdu speakers of Upper India.

As we witness a revival of interest in Ismat with several translations into English crowding our shelves, we must pause to take note of the translator's role in the continued popularity of a writer. Ismat is particularly blessed in having in TahiraNaqvi a devoted and able translator. With several Ismat translations behind her, Naqvi is emerging as the most faithful voice for Ismat in English

12.3 ISMATCHUGHTAI AND THE PLACE OF URDU IN POST-INDEPENDENCE INDIA:

During Chughtai's lifetime, the venues for publishing and the size of the Urdu-readingpublic decreased dramatically, in part due to the large-scale emigration to Pakistan of literate,Urdu-speaking North Indian Muslims. While actual estimates vary, official statistics count morethan seven million individuals, almost all Muslims, leaving India during the four years after Partition. Nevertheless, Urdu authors like Chughtai who remained in India began to find newaudiences through translation into English and transliteration into Devanagari script.

Already in the pre-colonial period, Chughtai expressed a desire to have her workstranslated into English. "Gaindā" (1938) was translated in 1940 by Ahmed Ali, contributor to*Angāre*and writer of *Twilight in Delhi,* as "The Little Mother" and published in the Englishliterary digest *Folios of New*

Writing. Here, Chughtai was published alongside new short storiesfrom George Orwell and Virginia Woolf. Next, "Liḥāf" was translated in 1944 by Khwaja Ahmed Abbas and published in the Bombay journal *The Sound*. Notably, these twoearliest translations of Chughtai's writing into English were done by fellow Progressive writers,and fit well with their attempts to disseminate Urdu literature to new audiences.

Indian government agencies also played an important role in the translation anddissemination of Chughtai's works. The mission of the SāhityaAkademi, India's national academy of letters (est. 1954) is in part to oversee the creation of a national literary canon. Since its establishment, the SāhityaAkademi has published representative literary works from each ofthe scheduled languages of the Indian Constitution. In 1957, Chughtai's short story, "NanhīkīNānī," was translated as "Tiny's Granny" by the literary scholar Ralph Russell for the firstvolume of the SāhityaAkademi's publication of *Contemporary Indian Short Stories*. Her stories were also included in the Urdu volume ofthe SāhityaAkademi's*Kathābhāratī*project, which was published simultaneously in several ofIndia's regional languages, making Chughtai's work available to a wide swathe of the Indianpopulation.

As Chughtai's fame as a writer grew, her short stories and novels began to appear inHindi. Owing to the mutual intelligibility of Urdu and Hindi, adaptations of Chughtai's work intoHindi are, generally speaking, closer to transliterations from Urdu into Devanagari script than to independent translations. Many of the early translations of Progressive Writing into Hindi werepublished by Nilābh Publications in the city of Allahabad. The owner of the press, UpendranāthAshk, had begun his career as an Urdu author before he began publishing in Hindi in 1932 on the advice of the author Premchand. Ashk had worked closely with several Progressive authors atAll-India Radio. In 1948, Ashk moved to Allahabad, where he founded the publishing houseNīlābhPrakāśan. The introduction to NīlābhPrakāśan's 1960 Hindi publication of Chughtai'snovel *Ziddī*expressed the publisher's desire to bring out more Urdu authors' works in Hindi sothat they could reach a broader audience, stating, "After Partition, the publication of Urduliterature received a major setback. Because they do not know Hindi, only with a very long delaycould Urdu authors' compositions come into Hindi in collected form."38 The editor goes on toassert that one of Chughtai's greatest qualities as a writer was her ability to capture dialogue insimple colloquial language, a feature that no doubt made her work relatively easy to convey inHindi.

manovaijñāniksatyoṉkobebākī se aṉkitkarnekealāvā,
Ismatkākamālunkībolchāl

kīpravahmānbhāṣāmeṉhai. Ismatkitābībhāṣānahīlikhtīṉ.unhoṉ-neyū.

pī. meṉjanmaliyā, jahāṉurdū-hindīdonoṉjanmīṉ, palīṉaurparvāncaṛhīṉ, islie

Ismatkībhāṣāmeṉkuchajīb-sīsaraltā, anāyāstā, pravāhaurmohinīhai.

> *In addition to fearlessly recording psychological truths, Ismat's excellence was her dialogue which is in colloquial language. Ismat does not write in bookish language. She was born in U.P., where both Urdu and Hindi were born, brought up, and developed. For this reason, in Ismat's language, there is amazing simplicity, spontaneity, flow, and charm.*

By emphasizing the common link between the two languages, the editor points out thefamiliarity of Chughtai's speech to his readers—a notion very close to Chughtai's own description of her language. Also worth noting is his claim that her writing is characterized bysimplicity and charm rather than bookish erudition. Such a claim can be read in two ways. Onthe one hand, singling her work out as possessing charm (*mohinī*), a word which refers to theenchanting power of female beauty, engages in a gendered reading of Chughtai's work. Such aclaim mirrors Urdu criticism on Chughtai that highlights her usage of *begamātīzabān*(ladies'language). At the same time, the idea of writing in simple rather thanbookish language was advocated by in the various manifestos of the Progressive Writers'Movement as a way of overcoming individualist conceits in literature.Although the colloquial nature of Chughtai's language might have lent itself to Hindiadaptation, translators still altered the language of the text. Reading the same story side-by-sidein its Urdu original and its Hindi adaptation is a revealing enterprise, one that can tell us muchabout the perceived boundaries of the two registers. In the case of Ashk'sHindi ublication of*Ziddī*, my comparison of the texts revealed that the enterprise of translation resulted in a fairlyunobtrusive rendering of the original text. While the changes from Urdu into Hindi occurred primarily in words of Perso-Arabic origin, less than one in ten words had been changed,including such minor phonetic differences as Hindi *tab* for Urdu *to*. This leads me to conclude that at least in the editor's eyes, Chughtai's work was generally comprehensible to educatedreaders of Hindi with only very minor alteration.

After 1947, very few of the Urdu-language literary journals in which Chughtai hadpublished in during her early career remained in operation in India. During this period, Chughtaiincreasingly sent her works to journals published in Pakistan—*Nuqūsh*and *Qāfila*in Lahore,

NayāDaur, Afkār, and *Naqsh*in Karachi. Sometimes her stories would only appear in India after they had been collected in edited volumes. Yet increasingly, Chughtai also began to have herwork published in Hindi translation. The translation of *Ziddī*(1960) was followed bypublications of a collection of Chughtai's short stories entitled *Kumārī*(1960), *Ṭeṛhī Lakīr*

(1967) and *AjībĀdamī*(1972). According to Ralph Russell, Chughtai would have her storiespublished in Devanagari even before they appeared in Perso-Arabic script through Hindi journalslike the Allahabad-based journal *UrdūSāhitya*.

During the Bangladesh Liberation Movement and the lead-up to the Indo-Pakistani Warof 1971, debates concerning the relationship between India's Muslims and Pakistan ragedthroughout the Indian and Pakistani press. In particular, the loyalties of the Urdu press were openly called into question on the Indian side of the border. In this context, Chughtai began to write about the role of Urdu in India and started to advocate for script reform, echoing olderProgressive efforts to encourage writing Urdu in Roman script and to transliterate Urdu in Devanagari. In 1971, Chughtai published a provocative article entitled "Urdūkārasmal-khaṭṭbadaldiyājā'e" (Urdu's script should be changed), in the Karachi journal *NayāDaur*(New Era).

Publishing such an article in a Pakistani journal at the time implicitly cast ironic criticism on theefforts of the Pakistani government to impose Perso-Arabic script on the Bengali-speakingcitizens of East Pakistan, which had in part led to the Bangladesh Liberation Movement. In it,she writes, "Urdu is dead in colleges. It has been buried in schools […] but it still remains ontongues; it is still spoken and understood in every corner of the nation. The blame or credit forthis should go to either Hindi films or singers of Qawwalis." Chughtai introduces here acritical distinction between Urdu as a written language, which in her perspective is essentiallymoribund in India, and Urdu as a spoken heritage, which is alive and well in the Indian culturalsphere. Chughtai likens the 'death' of written Urdu in India to the decline of Persian—thoughPersian itself is no longer written in India, expressions borrowed from the language are still aliveand well in many of India's languages.

In her account of Urdu, Chughtai does not address the disestablishment of the language,or for that matter, the other vernacular languages, by the postcolonial Indian state. Yet, theselection of English and Hindi in Devanāgarī script as the languages of the federal government had a demonstrable impact on the opportunities available to speakers of those languages vis-à-visother Indians. As political scientist Paul Brass argues,the relationship between possible language choices and life chances in Indiapresents us with three broad levels: 1) higher level elite speakers of either Englishor Hindi; 2) intermediate level elite speakers of Hindi only, or a regionallanguage; 3) lower level non-elite, poorly educated or even illiterate speakers of aregional language and/or a local 'mother tongue.'

When asked about the relative privilege of Hindi, Chughtai demurred by claiming that the realpower belonged to elite speakers of English while the rest of the population was equally unableto access positions of privilege and power.

Her lack of attachment to the Urdu script puts Chughtai in direct conflict with proponentsof Urdu who strongly identify the language itself with the script. Yet, script and language are notthe same. A clear example of this difference is the case of Turkish, where the script was changedcompletely and yet the language continues to thrive. Yet, as Brass argues, for those who aredogmatically attached to the Urdu script, there may be an attachment to the privileges that Urduliteracy had bestowed during the colonial regime. Brass writes that many of these proponents ofUrdu script

"came primarily from upper class Muslim families of landlords and governmentservants, in search of government jobs, for whom the defence of Urdu against the claims of Hindi served the purpose of maintaining their privileged access to those jobs." Writing morebroadly about the passionate attachment some people have to language, particularly when thelanguage is seen as being endangered, he continues, "It is one's sense of self that is at stake,one's self-respect, one's sense of importance, the loss of the sense of centrality of one's person ina world of communication. When a person says, 'I love my language,' what is meant is, 'I lovemyself,' a statement that cannot be uttered aloud in society." In this light, it appears that Urdu,or at least Urdu in Arabic script, was not central to Chughtai's definition of self and thus she didnot feel the need to defend Urdu.

Chughtai's apparent disregard for Urdu script could also be understood as an attempt todemonstrate her national allegiance. Arabic script is a visible marker of difference; among the most extreme Hindu nationalists, it is a marker of Muslim communalism rather than Indian identity. Thus, script becomes a site for the minority to prove its allegiance to the state. When speaking of the minority dilemma among Pakistani Shias, Akbar Hyder writes, "Having assertedits separatist identity at one level, the minority carries the onus of constantly proving its fidelityat another level." In the case of Chughtai, though she is identified as Muslim and Urduspeaking, she does not attempt to assert this difference. Yet, she may indeed be res ponding to thecontext in which Muslims are marked as different due to the nationalist histories of India andPakistan and the link between linguistic and religious nationalism among some Muslim groups.

There are also contextual reasons why Chughtai would not be as interested in the conflictbetween Urdu and Hindi. Chughtai was removed from the conflicts and changes in North India, and was focused on the context of Bombay. As far as she was concerned, state patronage ofHindi had not helped the language. Anyone who could afford it, including her family and thoseof other prominent Urdu writers in Bombay, sent their children to English-medium schools.Thus, the real issue for Chughtai lay in the increasing hegemonic status of English as thelanguage of privilege over the 'indigenous' languages of India.

For Chughtai, English, unlike other Indian languages, could not properly capture Indian culture. As a vociferous anti-imperialist, English remained the language of the colonizer, a language which had evolved in an alien context and which was imposed on India's subjects. Asan author renowned for the colloquialism of her dialogues, capturing the idiom and humor of herstories in English is particularly challenging.

The reason for the decline of Hindi and Urdu compared with English, as Chughtai saw it, was that the languages had become irrelevant in the job market. Neither language was a serious competitor for the secular status of English. Rather than diminishing in influence after Indian and Pakistani Independence, English actually became more influential in both countries.

12.4 QUESTIONS:

1. Critically examine the novel Masooma as a take on the condition of women in post-independence India.
2. Trace the painful journey of the protagonist as presented in the novel.
3. Evaluate the themes used by Ismat as portraying what is still considered to be tabooed and obscene to civil society.
4. Evaluate IsamtChughtai's take on sexuality.

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CRITICAL STUDY OF ISMAT CHUGHTAI'S *MASOOMA*

PART II

Unit Structure:

13.0 OBJECTIVES:

1. To introduce a very well-known and prolific writer in Urdu Ismat Chughtai to the readers.
2. To trace Chughtai's contributions to Progressive Writers' Movement of India.

13.1 INTRODUCTION:

Masooma, published in 1962, may well be regarded as a work that celebrates all of Ismat Chughtai's talents as a writer. Perhaps her darkest novel, a narrative of lost hope and endless cycles of corruption and injustice, it traces the journey of *Masooma*, a young woman from a respectable Muslim family who becomes embroiled in a game of exploitation and treachery and becomes Nilofar, a commodity that can be easily bought and sold. In telling *Masooma's* story, Chughtai cuts open the underbelly of India's political landscape and the underpinnings of the Mumbai film world to reveal their shadowy and unsavory side.

13.2 CHUGHTAI AND THE INDIAN PROGRESSIVE WRITERS' MOVEMENT:

Communism and progressive movements played a major role in Chughtai's intellectualdevelopment. Though she was not an economist, Chughtai did comment in her writings that she thought communism was the most ethical economic system. In discussing her early involvement with the Progressive Writers, she wrote:

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I learned the ups and downs of class, and for the first time, I was aware that the enemy of my joys was not my *dādī* [paternal grandmother] or *nānī* [maternal grandmother] but the system of government. At that time I learned of communism in great detail and I was convinced that the peace and safety of the world and its happiness could only be achieved through a socialist system and there is still no crack in that belief. (quoted form an interview)

Indeed, it was through communism that Chughtai came to support the Indian National Congressbecause, "I had faith that when the country obtained freedom, Congress would imposecommunism because Gandhi was a leader of the common man. He would secure rights for*harījan*s [untouchables]." Like many intellectuals of her generation in the late colonial period,Chughtai had grown up in the wake of the Russian Revolution, and was an ardent believer in the potential of communism to bring about social and economic justice. Communism was seen to bethe best antidote to colonialism.Chughtai claimed that progressivism had been alive since "the world's first mancried out when surrounded by the curse" of "inequality" (*nā-barābarī*) and "injustice" (*nāinṣāfī*).She also claimed this movement would included premodern authors such as Kabīr andMīrābāi. The Indian Progressive Writers' Movement emerged in the 1930s, comprised of Indiansbased in the subcontinent as well as Indian students studying abroad. It was one of the mostimportant developments in 20th-century Indian intellectual history before Independence. While Chughtai was a student at Aligarh Girls' School, authors Sajjad Zaheer, Ahmed Ali, Rashīd

Jahān, and Maḥmuduẓẓafar published the short fiction collection *Angāre* (*Embers*). Notably,Sajjad Zaheer, Rashīd Jahān and Maḥmuduẓẓafar were involved with the Communist Party of India and Sajjād Ẓ ahīr was Joint-Secretary of the All-India Congress Socialist Party at the time,eventually taking on the position of Secretary of the Communist Party of Pakistan.

The publication of *Angāre* provoked a strong reaction across North India, especially bythe *'ulamā.* In particular, it was the mixing of sexual and religious imagery that caused the most severe reaction. For example, the story "Nīnd Nahīṉ Ātī" (Can't Sleep) by Sajjad Zaheerdiscusses God stroking his beard with desire and his story "Jannat kī Bashārat" (A Vision ofParadise) depicts a *maulavī* [religious teacher] dreaming of naked *houris* [heavenly nymphs] in paradise only to be found by his wife clutching his Qur'an on his prayer mat, having fallen asleep doing prayers on Laylat-ul-Qadr. In February of 1933, the Central Standing Committee of the All India Shia Conference condemned the text with this statement:

The Central Standing Committee…at this meeting strongly condemns the heartrending and filthy pamphlet called Angarey compiled by Sajjad Zahir, Ahmed Ali, Rashid Jehan, Mahmudul Zafer which has wounded the feelings of the entire Muslim community by ridiculing God and his Prophet and which is extremely objectionable from the standpoints of both religion and morality. The committee further strongly urges upon the

attention of the U.P. [United Provinces] Government that the book be at once proscribed.

(Girja Kumar, *The Book on Trial: Fundamentalism and Censorship in India* (New Delhi:Har-Anand Publications, 1997), 120–121. [cited in Snehal Shingavi, "Introduction," in*Angaaray* (New Delhi: Penguin Books, 2014), viii.] See also Geeta Patel, *LyricalMovements, Historical Hauntings: On Gender, Colonialism, and Desire in Miraji's UrduPoetry* (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 2002), 90–100.)

The ire that the book aroused led to its being banned in the United Provinces by the British government in March of 1933. The wounding of religious sentiments was a major concern in the late colonial period, and riots and murders often occurred based on such assumed injuries.

The publication of *Angāre* grabbed the attention of a number of young Indian writers. In1934, the Progressive Writers' Association was formed in London, and in 1936, the first all-India meeting of the Progressive Writers' Association was held in Lucknow. In the same year, theAssociation's first manifesto in English was published in the *Left Review*. Munshī Premchanddelivered the inaugural address at this conference and the writer Rabindranath Tagore sent aletter of support. These events are widely seen as the catalysts to the birth of the nationwideProgressive Writers' Movement. With a sharp critique of the romantic idealism that they feltcharacterized literature of the past two centuries, the Progressive Writers believed that writingwas a tool that could be used to instigate social reform. Though the definition of what constitutedprogressive literature changed with time, in its early phase, progressivism is described as thatwhich examines issues reasonably and critically, and enables a fundamental reorganization andtransformation of the self. Though the Progressive Writers' Movement found adherents fromauthors writing in various regional languages, its most prominent writers wrote in Urdu.The work and influence of Rashīd Jahān had a great impact on Chughtai's development.

She wrote one of her earliest articles in the Aligarh University school newspaper in support ofJahān. As a student, she attended the first Progressive Writers' Conference in 1936, along withseveral others who were still students at the time, but who would become major literary figuresin the coming decade: Ali Sardar Jafri, Jan Nisar Akhtar, Khwaja Ahmad Abbas, and ShahidLatif, her future husband. Writing much later about Chughtai's association with the ProgressiveWriters' Movement, the author Qurratulain Hyder noted: "Ismat *apa* was very much in itsvanguard. In their enthusiasm, the progressives sometimes went too far and thus created a strongopposition for themselves in the literary world. On the whole, they were dubbed as atheists andcommies who were out to destroy all moral and social values. It was worse for Ismat Chughtaibecause she was a woman." Chughtai was a part of the movement from its early days and shecame to be regarded as the most prominent woman writer of the organization.

Inspired by *Angāre*, Chughtai attempted to publish essays about social issues relating towomen's rights, but without success. Chughtai's submission of an essay entitled "Bachpan" (Childhood) to the women's journal *Tahz̲īb-e Nisvān* met with rebuke from the editor. Her brother, 'Az̤īm Beg Chug̲htā'ī, who by that time had already begun to publish works of fiction,advised her that she would be allowed to write more freely and powerfully about the issues thatmattered to her through the medium of fiction than through non-fiction essays. 'Az̤īm Beg had published several of his own stories in the literary journal *Sāqī* (Cupbearer), edited by ShāhidAḥmad, and it was here that Chughtai published her first story, "Kāfir," (Infidel) in 1938. Thefriendships and networks of patronage to which Chughtai was privy due to her brother's literaryconnections certainly played a role in the start of her career.

In 1939, a year after Chughtai published her first story in *Sāqī*, she received herBachelor's degree in teaching and began a job at the Rajmahal School in Jodhpur. In the sameyear, she completed her first Urdu novella, entitled *Ẓiddī* (*Headstrong*)*,* which was published asa book by *Sāqī.* In 1941, Sāqī Book Depot published the first collection of Chughtai's shortstories under the title *Kaliyāṉ (Buds)*. Yet her life was in the midst of a period of turmoil. In1941, her brother 'Az̤īm Beg, the family member to whom she was the closest, died in the city ofJaora, where he had been made Chief Justice of the court of the Nawab. In the same year, Chughtai left her job in Jodhpur to take a new job of Inspector of Schools in Bombay. She briefly stayed with her brother Jasīm Beg Chug̲htā'ī, an engineer for the Tata Corporation. Within six months of her arrival in the city, she married Shahid Latif on May 2, 1942. After a stint working on Maulavī 'Abd al-Ḥaqq's Urdu dictionary project for the Inhuman-e Taraqqī-e Urdū (Society for the Promotion of Urdū) in Aurangabad, Latif had moved to nearby Bombay to work in the nascent Hindi cinema industry.

In Bombay, Chughtai came to meet many of the progressive Urdu writers who hadmigrated from North India and Punjab. Authors Khwaja Ahmad Abbas and Mohsin Abdullah were witnesses to her marriage. Soon after, the couple became acquainted with Ali Sardar Jafri,editor of *Qaumī Jung* (People's Newspaper), the Urdu newspaper of the Communist Party of

India, and Saadat Hasan Manto, who would be tried with Chughtai for obscenity in 1946. During the 1940s, Bombay had become an intellectual hotbed as writers and artists flocked to thecity.

Despite the fact that Chughtai worked extensively with her husband Shahid Latif, shecontinued to emphasize her individual autonomy in her writing and interviews. Chughtaidepicted her decision to get married as one of necessity. Since she had fallen out with her brotherJasīm Beg and her parents over her cancelled betrothal to her cousin Dr. Aṯhar Ḥusain Us̲mānī("Jugnū"), Chughtai claimed that she needed her own place to live in Bombay. In a 1983interview in the journal *Manushi*, Chughtai was asked to discuss her marriage to Shahid Latifand how she had been able to get out of an engagement to her cousin. She answered,

Once I was earning, they could not impose anything on me. I met Shahid when I was staying at my brother's house in Bombay. Shahid proposed marriage. At that time, I was inspector of schools for the whole Bombay area, but I could not find a place to stay. No one was willing to rent a house to an unmarried woman. I was not willing to spend my life in a hostel so I thought I would have to marry somebody. Here was Shahid pursuing me. Why not marry him? […] In fact, I told Shahid that I was willing to live with him without marriage. He said: 'No, you will leave me and run away.' I said: 'why should I run away? I need somebody, some friend, some man. It doesn't have to be a husband.' But since he insisted on marriage, I agreed.

Nowhere in her writings or interviews does she mention feeling love for her husband; rather shedescribes their partnership.The attitude Chughtai expressed towards her own husband in her interviews andautobiographical writing is a far cry from the romanticism of the classical Urdu literary traditiontoward the beloved. Practicality and attending to her own needs rather than romantic love areparamount in her account of her marriage. This disavowal of romantic love was in line with heradvocacy of absolute equality between the sexes and a response to familial norms that wouldmake a husband the center of a women's life. Such an attitude is found throughout Chughtai'swriting.

It was not only in her own life that Chughtai ridiculed ideas of romantic love. In a piecereporting on the Progressive Writers' Conference of 1949, Chughtai mocked the Progressive poet Majrūḥ for his betrothal in an arranged marriage to a woman from the village, which she termed "a regressive (*raj'at-pasand*) act." Particularly negative is the idealization ofsupposedly innocent and uneducated village girls among the male writers of her circle. Rather than romanticized and idealized relationships, Chughtai wrote about what she saw as the realistic needs of human beings, prominent among them economic and sexual needs. Though the Progressive Writers' Movement was premised on presenting realities and social disparities, itwas her integration of sexual justice with a woman's needs that made her a controversial figure.

13.3 CONCLUSION:

The 1930s and 1940s were a time of great change and efflorescence in Urdu literature.With the advent of the Progressive Writers' Movement inspired by the banned short fictioncollection, *Angāre*, Ismat Chughtai and writers of her generation struggled to understand and combat systems of injustice and explore the significance of literature for progressive social change. Chughtai was a sometimes-controversial member of the Progressive Writers' Movementdue to her treatment of sexuality, termed by her detractors as sex-worship (*jins-parastī*). Yet,close readings of her stories including "Liḥāf." "Do Hāth," and the film *Ẓiddī* elucidate that herdiscussions of sexuality were not an end in and of themselves: they were in the service of aprogressive social agenda.

Rather than a prurient obsession with sexuality or a celebration of alternative lifestyles,her discussions of sexuality was one that called into question assumptions about women andmen, children and elders, servants and landlords. In her literary and intellectual universe, nounderstanding of the economic hierarchies and injustice could be understood without an investigation of the role of sex and sexuality. Chughtai aimed to bring the tacitlyunacknowledged issues within Indian households the forefront so that they could be addressed.

For contemporary Indian activists struggling to find precedents and foremothers for their movements, Chughtai provides a compelling and convenient focal point. Women's rights and sexual rights activist in particular consistently turn to Chughtai for inspiration, even if sometimes based on the reputation of her literary celebrity rather than close engagements withher texts. Sexual autonomy and woman's freedom from the structure that binds her to the homeis essential for woman's participation in the modern, secular state because of the notion ofequality of citizenship irrespective of gender identity and the connection between Chughtai'swork and issues of gender and sexual justice remains at the forefront of progressive social activism in India.

13.4 QUESTIONS:

1. Evaluate the language used in the novel by Ismat.
2. Discuss Isamt Chughtai's take on Urdu and Hindi language.
3. Discuss the controversial works of Isamt Chughtai.
4. Examinethe contributions of Ismat Chughtai to the Progressive Writers' Movement ofIndia.

13.5 REFERENCE:

1. Jaffer, Sadaf. 2015. Ismat Chughtai, Progressive Literature and Formations of the Indo-Muslim Secular, 1911-1991. Doctoral dissertation, Harvard University, Graduate School of Arts & Sciences.

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14

CRITICAL STUDY OF *SAMSKARA: A RITE FOR A DEAD MAN* BY U.R. ANANTHAMURTHY

PART I

Unit Structure:

14.0 OBJECTIVES:

- To view the growth of the Kannada novel and identify the chief concerns and themes of Kannada novels.
- To update your knowledge of Kannada literature and also help you to get a comparative perspective.
- To enable you to get to know the thematic preoccupations of the writer in Samskara.

14.1 INTRODUCTION:

Samskara, originally written in Kannada in 1965, sheds light on the caste system and ways of Brahmanism in a contemporary world. The word 'Samskara' has several meanings: rite of passage, ritual, transformation as well as death rites. In this short novella, it refers to the death rites of a man as well as the personal transformation of a renowned man living in a community that refuses to change with times.

Samskara begins with the death of a sinful Brahmin, Naranappa, in Durvasapura, a close knitted community of Brahmins. Naranappa has renounced brahmanical ways and spent his time with Muslims; enjoying his time drinking, fishing in the temple pond and eating meat. The most

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apostate of his actions, however, was breaking up with his lawfully wedded wife to take a lower caste woman, Chandri, as his concubine. Despite his blasphemous ways, the Brahmins never excommunicated Naranappa, and he remained one of their own. In death, this becomes a problem because only a Brahmin can perform his last rites and nobody is willing to do that.

Modern Kannada literature begins with the arrival of English language through colonial administration. This literature is called NavodayaSahitya. Navodaya literally means a new birth. This indeed was the reincarnation of Kannada literature in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, after a period of dormancy in the face of the British occupation of India

Navyottara (Postmodernist) Kannada literature in the last 50 years has been closely related to social aspects. The oppressions of the caste system gave rise to the Bandaaya and Dalit genres of Kannada literature.

14.2 LIFE AND WORKS OF ANANTHA MURTHY:

UdupiRajagopalaAcharyaAnantha Murthy was born on December 21, 1932 at Melige, a remote village, in Shimoga District of Karnataka State. Anantha Murthy had his early Sanskrit education in a traditional pathashala. He completed his B.A. Honours from Maharaja's College, Mysore and Post-graduation in English from the University of Mysore in 1956. Later in 1966, he earned his Ph. D (English & Comparative Literature) from the University of Birmingham, U.K. He began his career as a Lecturer in English in 1956 and continued as such till 1963. Later he joined the Regional College of Education, Mysore, as a Reader in English and served there till 1970. During the period 1970-80 he was Reader in English at Mysore University. He was Professor of English at the Department of English, University of Mysore during 1980-92. He became the Vice-Chancellor of the Mahatma Gandhi Dnmeraiyy, Kottayam, Kerala in 1987-91.

Awards U.R. Anantha Murthy has received numerous awards both from the Government and also Akademis and other academic institutions for excellence in different fields. These include the Masti award in Literature, Jnanpith Award in 1994, and the Padma Bhushan.

U.R. Anantha Murthy wrote the novel in 1964, when he was in England doing his Ph.D.He was 32 at that time. Anantha Murthy recalls how as a child of 13 he had met a former army man and had come to know of his romance with one of the loveliest dark girls fromthe untouchable huts and of their elopement and how he had written a storyabout it.

I told Malcolm that I have begun to write a novel and I did. I finished it within a week. Being away for nearly two years from my ownland and people, the language Kannada with all its richness and the peoplewhom:I knew came back to me and I found myself rewriting the story, which Ihad written at the age of 13. But with a lot more in it than I could grasp in mytender years.' This was how Samskara was born in England.

14.3 TRANSLATED FROM KANNADA BY A.K. RAMANUJAN:

Samskara, originally written in Kannada in 1965, sheds light on the caste system and ways of Brahmanism in a contemporary world. The novel was Translated from kannada to English by A k Ramanujan.

14.4 SAMSKARA - THE TITLE:

- Samskara means religious purificatory rites and ceremonies for sanctifying the body, mind and intellect of an individual so that he may become a full-fledged member of the community.
- A rite of passage or life-cycle ceremony; the realizing of pastperceptions.
- In trying to resolve the dilemma of who, if any , should perform the death-rite (a samskara), the Acharya begins a samskara (a transformation) for himself.
- Praneshachar undergoes the process of purification. He shiftsfrom a hardcore ritualistic Brahmin to a realist.
- A rite for a dead man becomes a rite of passage for the living.
- In life as in death, Naranappa questioned the Brahmins of the village, exposed their Samskara (refinement of spirit , maturation through many lives) or lack of it.

14.5 THEMES:

Caste system

The narrative takes place in Hindu society.The castes deal with the status and conduct of its people. In the novel, the author dwells on the aspects the caste system affects from identity, and marriage to death. The protagonist belongs to the Brahmin caste but no longer practices Brahmanism in any way. However, the reality of everyone in the community is attached to the system, thereby, Naranappa faces criticism from the people. The main message of the narrative is to highlight the restrictive nature and sometimes oppressiveness of the caste system.

Self-Discovery and Transformation

Naranappa and Praneshacharya act as the foil to each other which accentuates their individual characters. Both have a moment of transformation that at some point through a different path. Naranappa chooses to embrace all the earthly things that are prohibited by the Brahmin principles. While Praneshacharya, a devout leader, represents the righteousness that aligns with their values. Akin to the former, the leader mistakenly indulges in some vices that lead him to reassess his devoutness. The narrative highlights a community that has stuck to its ways and rejects the changing world. However, personal transformation is at its core since even a devout leader reconsiders his beliefs and mistakes.

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Greed

Though the Brahmin community is run by strict rules and values that every individual abides by, Naranappa disrupts the status quo. Since no activity can take place until the death rituals are performed, the people become desperate. Praneshacharya lacks the answers since a non-Brahmin cannot conduct the cremation and no Brahmin is allowed or willing to participate. Chandri puts her jewelry on the line as the price for conducting the death rituals for Naranappa. The men in the community have to grapple with their beliefs and greed but succumb to the latter. It demonstrates their fragile faith since earthly possessions corrupt their minds despite their initial reservations.

14.6 CHARACTERS:

• Praneshacharya - learned scholar and priest of Durvasapura

• Naranappa - a Brahmin who leads a non-Brahminical life

• Chandri -a dalit woman who lives with Naranappa

• Garudacharya -a relative of Naranappa

• Lakshmanacharya- a relative of Naranappa

• Dasacharya- -a poor Brahmin of the agrahara

• Durgabhatta - a Smarta Brahmin living in Durvasapura

• Anasuya - wife of Lakshmanacharya

• Sitadevi - wife of Garudacharya

• Bhagirati - wife of Praneshacharya, an invalid

• Putta - half caste young man belonging to Malera community

• Padmavati - She is a beautiful young woman belonging to the half-caste and has good relation with putta.

Praneshacharya

Praneshacharya is the protagonist of the novel. He is a very learned and orthodox man belonging to the community of Madhva Brahmins. He has had his Vedic education. He is living in village of Durvasapura in Mysore. He is the leader of the agrahara in all matters of religion, ritual and conduct. His life is a model of self-sacrifice and religious conventions. He married an invalid girl, Bhagirathi in order to get salvatiron. As advised in the Gita, he practices Nishkama Yoga, performing his duty without any expectation. He believes that the merciful Lord has put him to this way of ascetic life to test him.

he accidentally experiences the touch of Naranappa's concubine Chandri's breasts. He tastes sexual pleasure for the first time in his life. This changes the course of his life. He tells the Brahmins of his agrahara that he cannot guide them and asks them to do what their hearts dictate as right. His wife dies of plague. He cremates her and goes after looking for Chandri. He meets one Putta, a young man from Malera community. He initiates the Acharya to the world of sensuous pleasures.

Naranappa

He is a Madhva Brahmins. Though he is a Brahmin himself, he openly defies Brahminhood by taking a low-caste woman Chandri for his concubine, by eating meat in the company of Muslims, by desecrating the pond of Ganapati temple and by abusing the ways of the agrahara Brahmins and their ridiculous Brahminic ways. As the story begins, he dies of plague and the problem of cremating him poses a problem to the village Brahmins as he has openly broken from Brahminic culture and denigrating its sanctified conventions and codes. Naranappa poses a great threat to the agrahara both when he is alive and is dead.

Chandri

She is the concubine of Naranappa, the reprobate Brahmin of Durvasapuraagrahara. Though the orthodox Brahmins of the agrahara take issues with Naranappa for sleeping with her, a low caste woman, they secretly hunger for her company. Chandri is very sincere to Naranappa both alive and dead. When the Brahmins of the agrahara hesitate to perform the samskara for Naranappa, she offers her gold to the Acharya for the funeral expenses of her late lover. She has great regard for the Brahmins of the agrahara in general and Praneshacharya in particular. When she tries to seek his blessings while his returning from Maruti temple, her beasts accidentally touch the knees of the Acharya and leads to their mating together. Their mating changes the course of the Acharya from the life of an ascetic Brahmin to that of a sensualist.

Garudacharya

He is a Madhva Brahmin belonging to Durvasapuraagrahara. **Garudacharya** and Naranappa both are friends. But no relationship lasts between Naranappa's family and his after he has fought and won a lawsuit with his father over the orchard. They do not attend any functions nor take even a sip of water between the two families. Naranappa is said to have been instrumental in Garuda's son Shyama joining the army deserting his regular Sanskrit classes under the great Praneshacharya. Lakshmana's wife Sitadevi believes that he has cast a black magic on her relative Naranappa making him desert his wife and his Brahminhood by taking Chandri, a low-caste woman for his concubine.

Lakshmanacharya

He is one of the Madhva Brahmins of Durvasapuraagrahara. The deceased Naranappa is related to him through his wife Anasuya.Naranappa has

married her sister whom he has discarded soon after his marriage. But he does not want to undertake the cremation of Naranappa for he has been responsible for his sister-in-law to become hysterical and die soon after. Naranappa has not even attended the funeral of his wife. he has been responsible for ruining his son-in-law Shripati by initiating him into his ways of living, Lakshmana is a penny pincher and highly suspicious that his wife will be very liberal with her relatives and so he keeps a careful watch over her dealings with her people whenever they visit their house. He makes dry banana leaves and cups and sells them to the people of the nearby villages and towns and makes money out of it.

Dasacharya

He is one of the poor Madhva Brahmins of Durvasapuraagrahara who thrives mainly by ritual meals served in the houses of the agrahara Brahmins during ritual functions and ceremonies in their houses. He loses his patience with Garuda and Lakshmana for postponing the cremation of Naranappa on grounds of propriety. He is ready to cremate the body of Naranappa with the help of four Brahmins if Pranesha permits him to do so.

Durgabhatta

He has his own prejudice against the orthodoxy of the Madhvas who consider the orthodoxy of Smartas lower in rank. He does not like Dasacharya's suggestion to ask the ParijatapuraSmarta Brahmins to perform the samskara for the reprobate Brahmin Naranappa. He considers the suggestion an affront on the Smarta Brahmins to undertake the samskara for Naranappa, which the Madhvas of his own agrahara do not want to perform. He tells Pranesacharya that they need not make much fuss over Naranappa taking to a low caste woman, Chandri. He says that a Brahmin is not lost because he takes a low lowborn prostitute. Durgabhatta has partiality for the Smarta Brahmins of Parijatapuraagrahara as he has enjoyed their hospitality to the hilt.

Anasuya

She is the wife of Lakshmanacharya. She is related to late Naranappa through her sister whom he has married and jilted in favour of the seductive low-caste Chandri, his concubine. She is angry with Naranappa for neglecting her sister and causing her premature death. She is equally angry with him for ruining his son-in-law Shripati, an orphan whom they have brought up and given their only daughter Lilavati. Under the tutelare of Naranappa, Shripati discontinues his Sanskrit lessons with Praneshacharya and begins to loaf around by taking to evil company. She first advises her husband not to undertake the cremation of Naranappa. But later on seeing Chandri's gold, she alters her stand and goads her husband to accept the cremation of Naranappa.

Sitadevi

She is the wife of Garudacharya. She bears a grudge against Naranappa for making her son Shyama go astray and join the army without the knowledge of his parents. When the question of Naranappa's cremation first comes, she cautions her husband Garuda not to be rash to accept to undertake the cremation of the reprobate Naranappa.Chandri offering her gold for the cremation of Naranappa, she wants to grab the gold and redeem her son Shyama from the army as she is afraid that he will be forced to deviate from his Brahminic ways as people say that in the army he will be made to eat meat and drink.

Bhagirathi

She is the invalid wife of Praneshacharya, Bhagirathi often advises him to marry a healthy and fruitful woman. She is very proud of her husband and she thinks that anybody will be willing to give his daughter in marriage to him as he is just forty and an acknowledged scholar of Vedanta.

Shripati

Garuda and his wife pick him up as an orphan and bring him up and later marry their daughter Lilavati to him. He learns Sanskrit under the great scholar Praneshacharya for some time. He comes under the influence of Naranappa, the heterodox Brahmin of his village Durvasapura.

Putta

He is a half-caste young man belonging to Malera community. He is married but his wife is quite all right in everything except that she often wants to go to her parents and she makes her stay with them fairly long. He is a lover of life and company of people. He himself says that he is known as "talkative Putta' and 'riddling Putta. He is very helpful by nature and volunteers to help people. When he meets Praneshacharya wandering aimlessly.Putta takes the Acharya to the temple festival at Melige people and colourful scenes of cockfight and. Putta takes the Acharya to the house of a beautiful young lady by name Padmavati whose sexual charms are very difficult to resist. But after his broken meals at the temple, the Acharya insists on returning to Durvasapura. him off.

Padmavati

She is a beautiful young woman belonging to the half-caste ,She is on a good and familiar relationship with Putta and he too never misses to meet her whenever he visits the town Melige. . Padmavati is a courtesan where asChandri is a prostitute.

14.7 ART OF CHARACTERIZATION:

Ananthamurthy employs two techniques In the depiction of the characters, - that of (i) contrast, and

(ii) filmic flashback

(1). Naranappa is a figure (whether he is dead or alive), who helps in the removal of the temporal and spatial distances. The past of Naranappa is continuously referred to because it constantly trespasses in the present context of the novel. The Brahmins of the community debate with each other whether he shall be cremated according to the religious rules as Naranappa was potentially disinterested about the dull traditions of the Hindu community. That is why the past repeatedly trespasses in the present context - an amalgamation of the past and present; thus, the temporal and the spatial distances are overcome.

(2). The "dead man" Naranappaappears to be much more living than the living Naranappa. The dead man Naranappa shakes the very foundation basis of the belief and the age-old trust and faith of the socalled Hindu society. Therefore, the phrase "The Dead Man" is meaningful to us. Again, contrast is instituted between three characters - Naranappa, Praneshacharya, and Putta. Naranappa and Praneshacharya are contrasted in respect of Praneshacharya's complete devotion to the rules, regulations, customs, rites, and conventions of the Hindu religious texts. Therefore, his complete attachment to Hinduism should be contrasted with Naranappa's potential rejection of anything relating to Hinduism.

(b) Praneshacharya and Putta. Here the contrast is deep-rooted. It is not only at the physical level but also at the cerebral, intellectual level. Putta is a commonplace figure - represents the commonplaceness either hardly dissatisfied or commonly satisfied with the proceedings of life. Putta is a very pedestrian character. In stark contrast, Praneshacharya is intellectually much superior because of his sensitiveness and rational responses to life. The intellectual search for self-realization on the part of Praneshacharya should be contrasted to the ordinariness of Putta. Praneshacharya transcends what is mundane.

Similarly, Ananthamurthy, in his depiction of women characters, once again, is exceptionally poetic-very frequently does he impose mythical touches on them. Women in this novel, save Bhagirathi, are classical and mythical beauties.

Many of the women characters may be interpreted from the traditional Indian concept of womanhood as we find in the Puranas. There, women stand for elemental Nature (Prakriti). Any kind of union, therefore, either physical or emotional between man and woman is considered to be the union between Prakriti and Purush (archetypal masculinity). Hence, a union between a man and a woman is a union between the archetypal femininity and archetypal masculinity. Therefore, the union of Praneshacharya and Chandri in the forest can be viewed in that light.

At the same time, this novel is a social document in the sense that it draws our attention to the ways and means, customs and conventions of the Hindu society. As usual, one notices the meanness, the professional jealousy, suppressed greed, the protestations among the Brahmins of the community. In Samskara, Ananthamurthy has reinterpreted the meaning of 'realism' in his unique and inimitable style. The setting is realistic. Against

this, he discovers the poetic, mythic explanation of the human relationship. Therefore, there is an interfusion of realism and fantasy (myth). Praneshacharya's extraordinary amorous adventure in the heart of the jungle transcends the limits of reality. There is a touch of fantasy, a fairy-tale, mythical atmosphere in that scene. AnalyzingAnanthamurthy's art of characterization in Samskara further, we find that Praneshacharya is not static. we may safely call him a 'round' character.

He retains dynamism through and through. There are distinct stages of development in his character. Initially, he was calm and quiet; stoically accepted everything that came his way, but as the story progresses, he seems to be affected by the whirlpool of different feelings. It appears to us that he becomes a restless character on the theatre of his mind and this restlessness is expressed in two ways:

(i) His departure from his native village, and
(ii) In his momentary moral lapses; in his degeneration.

This restlessness continues till the end. 'He was expectant' for self-knowledge, for his redemption, as Praneshacharya knows that his self-knowledge will ultimately show him the light amid the pervading and encircling gloom. The novel is left open-ended and inconclusive.

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15

CRITICAL STUDY OF *SAMSKARA: A RITE FOR A DEAD MAN* BY U.R. ANANTHAMURTHY

PART II

Unit Structure:

15.0 OBJECTIVES:

- To view the growth of the Kannada novel and identify the chief concerns and themes of Kannada novels.
- To update your knowledge of Kannada literature and also help you to get a comparative perspective.
- To enable you to get to know the thematic preoccupations of the writer in Samskara.

15.1 CHAPTER WISE SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS:

Part One

Chapter I: death of Naranappa and the complications connected with the issues of discrimination.

Samskara is the story of a Madhva Brahmin colony, led by Pranesacharya. The name of thecolony or agrahara was Durvasapura. Pranesacharya led a lifelooking after his invalid wife. For twenty years he had followed a routine thatconsisted of taking a bath, saying prayers, cooking for himself and his wife,giving medicines to her and reciting sacred legends before. the Brahminsassembled in his house. He thought his salvation lay in his willingperformance of duties to his ailing wife.

One morning Naranappa's concubine Chandri came and told Pranesacharya ofthe death of Naranappa.The news created a confusion in theagrahara. Pranesacharya's first task was to go and tell all the Brahminfamilies in the agrahara that Naranappa had died, for no Brahmin could takemeals while the body of a fellow Brahmin lay uncremated. Later theBrahmins assembled in Pranesacharya'sverandah to hear his verdict on whowould do the funeral rites.Naranappa had no children. So, the mostimportant question was — who would do the death rites?

Pranesacharyasaid that, according to the shastras, any relative could, failing which anyBrahmin could offer to perform them. Garuda and Lakshmana were related toNaranappa but each of them had quarreled with him and were not interested inperforming the rites.

Chapter II: Durvasapura Brahmins searching forsolution from Parijatpura Brahmins.

The contrast between Naranappa and other Durvasapura Brahmins extendseven to the flowers grown by them. Flowers in other brahmins' homes weremeant for the worship of god but those that bloomed in Naranappa's yard_ were meant for Chandri's hair.The brahmins of Durvasapura, crossed the three-prongedstream of Tunga, entered the forest, and journeyed for an hour to reachParijatapura. There they went to Manjayya's house. Manjayya welcomedthem warmly. When he heard the news of Naranappa's death, Manjayya feltsorry and correctly inferred that he had died of plague, the disease. The Parijatpura folks were happy to get achance to cremate a high-caste: Brahmin but felt that Pranesacharya was thebest person to decide on the question of morality involved in the task.Manjayya on his part unhesitatingly said that Naranappa was his friend andthat he would spare no expense in performing the funeral rites properly.

Chapter III: the attitude of Pranesacharya towards Naranappa

While the Brahmins were away at Parijatpura, Pranesacharyawas trying to find a solution to the dilemma they faced. Naranappa had always been a problem for the agrahara. The Acharya had promisedNaranappa's mother as she lay dying that he would look after her erring sonand even fasted two days a week for him. Once when the Acharya visited tocounsel him, Naranappa told him irreverently that since the Congress wascoming back to power, they would have to open the temples to all outcastes.When the Acharya told him not to separate Shripati from his wife, he' laughedloudly saying that only barren Brahmins lived with women who gave nopleasure. He too had discarded his hysterical wife for the same reason. Hebelonged, he said, to the hedonist school and lived by the precept of Borrow,borrow and drink your ghee.

He was critical of Garuda's greed that had made him rob a poor widow of herproperty. Three months before his death, the Acharya visited Naranappaagain in response to a complaint that he had fished in the sacred temple pondalong with his Muslim friends. The Acharya feared that this desecrationmight set a bad example for the lower classes, who he thought, followed theright path out of fear. On that occasion Naranappa asked his concubineChandri to bring liquor and had the effrontery to offer it to him. And hechallenged him again saying that he would destroy brahminism.Naranappa drew the conclusionthat it was he, the Acharya who had corrupted brahminism. The Acharyascolded him but later stopped reciting luscious puranic stories to his listeners.Naranappa advised them to discard their sick wives and take those that gavethem pleasure.

Chapter IV: Focus on greed and Hunger in the character ofGaruda and Lakshmana and Dasacharya

Two incidents held against Naranappa are Garuda's son Shyma joining thearmy and Lakshmana's son-in-law Shripati's separation from his wifeLilavati, for both of which Naranappa was held responsible. This chapterfocuses on the accusations leveled by Garuda and his wife Sitadevi againstNaranappa and the counter-accusations made by Naranappa's enemies.Garuda's eye was on the money that would come to him if he were asikedtocremateNaranappa. He would then be able to secure the release of his onlyson from the army.

The second part of the chapter focuses on the thinking in Lakshmana'shousehold and on Lakshmana's miserliness. His wife Anasuya was in tears atthe loss of her sister's jewellery to Chandri and blamed Garuda for ruiningNaranappa through what she called black magic. At the same time, sheaccusedNaranappa of making him go astray — he kept the company of Yakshgana players, visited a prostitute, and causing him to separate from hiswife.

Chapter V: Shripati discovers Naranappa's death while Shripati meet Belli

This chapter takes us inside the consciousness of Shripati as he comes back toDurvasapura after spending a happy week with a drama troupe from Kelur. Itwas night and he was carrying a flashlight while crossing the forest.We get to know about Shripati's secret friendship with Naranappa, his love ofdramatics, his desire to escape the Brahmin dump, and his liaison with Belli,an outcaste girl. Pranesacharya's description of the erotic beauty ofShakuntala during his recital of puranic legends had excited him so much thathe went and took Belli at the river ('He had personally, carnally enjoyed the- Acharya's description.") (38). It seems it was his story that Naranappawastelling the Acharya when the latter had come to counsel him to behave (Chapter III).

Chapter VI: The seventy-year old widow, Lakshmidevamma, cursesGaruda for robbing her

This chapter introduces the seventy-year old child widow Lakshmidevamma, known in the Brahmin colonies around for her sore temper, her resoundingbelches and her curses and offers proof of Garuda's greed in taking awaywhatever little property she had.Chandri was waiting at Pranesacharya's house for his verdict. She had livedwith Naranappa for ten years but the delay in cremating him unnerved her. Asa prostitute she was considered to be sinless. "Born to prostitutes, she was anexception to all rules. She was ever-auspicious, daily-wedded, the one without widowhood. How can sin define a running river' (43)? She ate bananas toallay her hunger and slept curled up on the floor.

Chapter VII: Pranesacharya leaves agrahara and goesto the Maruti temple for divine guidance.

The rotting body of Naranappa filled the agrahara with unbearable stench andthe Brahmins with superstitious fears. The rats leaped and tumbled and died,much to the unthinking delight of the children. The Brahmins distressed byhunger approached Pranesacharya again and he told them of his plan to go tothe Maruti temple. Chandri followed him, waiting for his word at a safedistance in the forest.

Chapter VIII: Dasacharya goes and eats at Manjayya's house inParijatpura.

Dasacharya, dying to eat, flattered Manjayyafor being as good a Brahmin as anyone else and criticized his own community for asking the Parijatpurabrahmins to do what they wouldn't do themselves. He also criticized GarudaandLakshmana for their greed. Manjayya offered him something to eat. Atfirst he confined himself to uncooked food but later his appetite got the betterof him and he ate whatever was offered, to his fill.

Chapter IX: The Brahmins waiting for Pranesacharyafor final decision.

The death of rats, which was a result of the plague in Durvasapura.the outcaste, A vulture on the roof was an omen of death. And when Garuda'swife spotted one sitting on their roof, she feared for her son and the coupleprayed to the household god to forgive them for coveting the god's gold.AtDasacharya's suggestion they beat the bronze gongs and blew their conches asthey did during the great offerings of flaming camphor making the vultures flyaway. But they came back leading the Brahmins to beat their gongs and blowtheir conches again. This continued till nightfall when the vultures finallydisappeared.

In the meantime, Chandri sat in the forest near the temple waiting for wordfrom the Acharya. She blamed herself for causing all this trouble for him. Butshe did not forget to eat the plantains that she had brought.

Chapter X: Pranesacharya's prayers to Lord Marutiandmeets and mates with Chandri.

Pranesacharya came back from the temple disappointed. The Maruti God hadgiven him no sign. It was night. As he moved through the dark forest, he metChandri. She felt compassion for him and embraced his feet in gratefulnessand wept. He on his part bent down to bless her and caressed her loosenedhair. She held him close, made him lean against her breasts and fed himplantains. "Touching full breasts he had never touched, Pranesacharya feltfaint. As in a dream, he pressed them' (62). Then they made love to eachother.

Part Two

Chapter I

Naranappa was cremated by Chandri

Pranesacharya woke up in the forest at midnight, his head in Chandri's lap. Atfirst he thought he was in a dream and wondered where he was and how hehad got there. When he was fully awake, he asked her to tell all the Brahminswhat had happened in the forest. He said that he himself had not the courageto tell this to them.

Chandri, however, did not want to do what the Acharya had asked her to do. She went to her master's house but finding that his dead body had changed beyond recognition, rushed out in fear to the farmer's section and approachedSheshappa to help her cremate the dead body. Sheshappa however refused. Then she went to the Muslim section where Abdul Bari, the fish merchant,agreed to do the job.

Chapter II

Plans of the Parijat Drama Group members to cremate Naranappa

Shripati and other members of the Parijat Drama. Group were holdinghearsal of a play in Manjayya's house. From the conversation we learn thatNaranappa had been the prime mover of the Group, had donated a harmonium,was an expert drummer and was a source of inspiration for it. After therehearsal, the five members of the Group went to the riverside and drankliquor. They acknowledged that Naranappa was a dear friend of theirs, thatChandri was a matchless beauty. The least that they could do-was to take hisbody and cremate it secretly. With this intention in mind they went up toNaranappa's house but found that the dead body had disappeared.

Chapter III

Pranesacharya's new self-awareness — confusion in ideas

Pranesacharya's world had changed suddenly. All old beliefs seemed topsyturvy.At sixteen he had sought to achieve salvation through self-sacrifice andhad deliberately married an invalid woman so that he could serve her and thusearn merit. But his unforeseen experience of sex with Chandrichangedeverything. He had lost the old certitude of brahminism. Instead of a clear pathhe saw only an abyss.

The experience also gave him a new self-awareness. While giving a bath tohis wife, he became aware of her ugliness. 'For the first time his eyes werebeginning to see the beautiful and the ugly'. Flowers, female beauty andsexual pleasure — all had earlier been associated in his mind with divinity butnow he wanted a share in them for himself. He still looked for Chandri. Hefelt light that he was no longer the guru.

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Chapter IV:

The Brahmins go to Kaimara without Pranesacharya.

Subbannacharya is unable to help — then they go to the monastery. Two brahmins are taken ill on the way.The Brahmins went to Kaimara without Pranesacharya. He stayed backbecause of his wife's periods. At Kajmara, PanditSubbannacharya offeredthem food. They walked twenty miles to reachanother agrahara where they dined spent the night. In the morning they started for the monastery, which was ten miles away but without Snatiaeacnnyewho had also been taken ill.

Chapter V:

Pranesacharya's self-examination

For a good part of the chapter we are inside the mind of Pranesacharya. He is all alone in the agrahara — except for his ailing wife and some crows andvultures.

The horrible stench in the atmosphere was unbearable. He saw a rat die andthrew it out of the house. He felt extremely hungry and took some plantainswith him, bathed and crossed the stream and sat and ate the plantains there.He then tried to analyse his motives in taking Chandri.

Chapter VI

Discussion about Naranappa's property

All Naranappa's property must go to the monastery, says thechief.At the monastery, all the Brahmins ate the big meal prepared for the occasion.Later when they all sat around with the chief in the midst of them, heannounced that Naranappa was still a Brahmin even if he had left brahminismand that it was their duty to cremate him. He also ruled that all Naranappa's property must go to the monastery. Garudacharya and Lakshmanacharya bothtried to press their claim to the property but the chief rebuked themharshly.They apologized and hurried back to the agrahara for the cremation.

<u>Part Three:</u>

Chapter 1

Pranesacharya's self-analysis continues

A half caste youngman Putta joins him in his journey.We are inside Pranesacharya's restless state of mind. He had decided to gowherever his feet took him.

He met a young farmer herding buffaloes to the tank, his mouth full of chewed betelnut. He had one fear — fear of being recognized. Fortunately, the farmer hadnot recognized him.

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The thought of Naranappa brought into focus how he came to make love toChandri. It was an undesired moment.

Chapter II;

The story of the Durvasapura Brahmins

Pranesacharyaarrives at a new equation with himself, decides to confess to his fellowBrahmins.In Parijatpura, Manjayya realized that the deaths of Naranappa, Dasacharyaand Praneschary a's wife indicated the outbreak of plague.The Brahmins, disappointed at the monastery, made their way towardsDurvasapura.

In Durvasapura, Belli lost her parents to plague. The neighbours set thethatched hut with the dead parents inside on fire. Belli, frightened, ran awayfrom the village. -Putta stuck to the Acharya like sin. The Acharya wanted to be alone and thinkbut Putta wouldn't leave him.

Putta then told him about the death of Shyama, an actor of the Kundapura'troupe. They came to a place where the road branched. The Acharya saw achance to evade Putta. When Putta chose one, he chose the other but Puttasaid that both roads led to Melige, one of them was a little longer than the other and stayed with him. Putta started becoming more familiar with the Acharya. He asked him about his marriage and told him that he had two children. But his wife was alwaysclamouring to go to her parents. He beat her but that didn't seem to have anyeffect on her. But for this one weakness, she was very clean and good ineverything.

The familiarity with Putta continued. Putta gave him coconut and jaggery.Then he asked him another riddle. The Acharya solved it but his mind wasstill on his own situation. He realized that he could free himself from theTrishanku-state. But finally he wants to go wherever his legs took him. Meanwhile Garuda, Lakshmana and the other Brahmins returned toDurvasapura. Fortunately, there were no vultures on the roofs anymore.Performing the death rite for Naranappa was the first priority. But they didn'tfind Pranesacharya there. He had probably gone to the river. They were afraidto go into his house. So they decided to wait for him and started making astretcher for the body.

The narrative of Samskara can be summarized as follows:

(a) The first part of novel contains ten chapters. In these ten chapters we have the opening of the novel and the first stage of development in the character of Pranesacharya. It ends with Pranesacharya failing to fulfil his Brahminical duty.

(b) The second chapter has six chapters and leads us to the second stage of transformation of Pranesacharya. It ends with death of Pranesacharya's wife and his abandoning of everything and leaving Durvasapura.

(c) The third part of novel has two chapters. The second chapter of this part is the longest. This part ends with Pranesacharya going back to Durvasapura to confess and take responsibility of his actions.

15.2 CONCLUSION:

Anantha Murthy is very selective and careful in the field of characterization. The names of various characters are also meaningful and symbolic. Praneshastands for being united, Naranappa means Lord Vishnu, Chandri a beautiful woman like moon. Major roles in the novel have been assigned to Praneshacharya, Naranappa, Chandri and Putta and the rest of the characters inthe novel are presented referentially and appear as mere reflections in the background. They merely add to the tale of the main protagonists. The minorcharacters in the novel are Bhagirathi, Garudacharya, Sitadevi, Lakshmanacharya,Anasuya, Shripati Belli, Durgabhatta, Dasacharya, lakshmidevamma, ManjayyaandPadmavati. *Samskara*is located in the following places: Durvasapura,Parijatapura, Tirthahlli, Kaimara, Shivamogge, Jhirnali, Kundapura and Melige.The multiple focuses are absent and secondary characters just exist in thenarrative. The gallery of characters is not big and it is not difficult to locate themain action and the protagonist.

Man-woman relationship is one of the dominant concerns of the novel. Murthy represents it through the portrayal of Naranappa and Praneshacharaya's relationship with Chandri. Chandri-Naranappa love relationship becomes a central point of discussion for the villagers and the whole Brahmin community because they have rejected all the customs and norms of the Brahmin society. Their living relationship becomes a constant source of fear and menace to the villagers because they lived boldly, breaching every taboo. The relationship between Chandri and Acharya also is one of the significant incidents of the novel which helps in the development of the story, and this accidental union of Acharya with Chandri continues to grip the attention of the readers throughout the novel.

The chief trait of the narrative technique in *Samskara*is the running of two parallel stories of Praneshacharya and Naranappa. These two complementary stories enrich the plot with a rich variety of symbols and allusions. Murthy alsopresents a distinction between the high caste and the low caste women. He depicts the commanding character of low caste women like Chandri and Belli insharp contrast with a sick and bed-ridden Brahmin woman. Murthy is successful in keeping the suspense till the end of the novel and grasps the interest of the reader throughout the novel. The second half of the novel concentrates more on the philosophical and metaphysical speculations. The physical gratification is not very important but the centre of attraction is the tension between matter and spirit which is reflected in Acharya's dilemma. Praneshacharya after communion with Chandri reflects more on the real meaning of life and his quest. The quest for Chandri turnsout to be a quest for his identity and the self.

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