



S.Y.B.A.
ENGLISH - PAPER - II
INDIAN LITERATURES
(POETRY & DRAMA)

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I

Syllabus for S.Y.B.A. Literature Paper Indian Literatures (to be implemented from 2013-14 onwards for IDOL Students)

Objectives of the Course :

- 1) To introduce learners to the various phases of evolution in Indian Writing in English.
- 2) To acquaint learners to the pluralistic dimensions of this literature.
- 3) To help them understand the different genres of this elective.
- 4) To sensitize them to the value system of this literature.
- 5) To make learners aware of prominent Indian writers whose works have been translated in English.

Section 1: Short Stories & Novel

Unit 1 : Concepts :

- i) The rise of English studies in India
- ii) Pre-independence fiction
- iii) The Partition as portrayed in the novel and short story
- iv) Women fiction writers
- v) Dalit fiction
- vi) Diasporic fiction
- vii) The postmodernist Indian English novel
- viii) Postcolonial fiction

Unit 2: Short Stories:

R. K. Narayan ***The Martyr's Corner*** (from ***Malgudi Days***, India Thought Publication, Madras, 1982, repr. 1998, ISBN 81-85986-17-7)

S.H. Manto ***The Assignment*** (*Mottled Dawn*, 1997, Penguin Books India, ISBN 0-14-027212-7)

Salman Rushdie ***Good Advice Is Rarer than Rubies*** (from ***East West***, Vintage Canada, 1994, ISBN 0 394-28150-0)

Waman Hoval ***The Storeyed House*** (from ***The Poisoned Bread***, ed. Arjun Dangle, Orient Blackswan, 1994, ISBN 0 86311254 4)

II

Unit 3 : Novel :

Bibhutibhusan Bandopadhyay *Song of the Road* (original *Pather Panchali*, Indiana University Press, 1975, ISBN - 10 : 0253201861, ISBN - 13 : 978-0253201867)

OR

Amitav Ghosh

The Glass Palace (Harper Collins, 2002, ISBN 9780007427468)

OR

Bhalchandra Nemade

Cocon (original *Kasala*, Macmillan Publication 1997, ISBN 0333 92323 5)

Section II - Poetry & Drama

Unit 4: Concepts :

- i) Early Indian English Poetry
- ii) Poetry after the 1950s
- iii) Women poets
- iv) Dalit poets
- v) Indian English non-fictional prose
- vi) Modern Indian drama in English and translation
- vii) Nativism

Unit 5: Poetry :

Henry Derozio "To India - My Native land"

Rabindranath Tagore "Authorship"

Nissim Ezekiel "Poet, Lover, Birdwatcher"

Kamala Das "An Introduction"

Agha Shahid Ali "Postcard from Kashmir"

Menka Shivdasani "The Atheist's Confession"

Kabir "It is needless to ask of a saint the caste to which he belongs" (santan jat no pucho nirguniyan...) (From One Hundred Poems of Kabir translated by Rabindranath Tagore)

III

Dilip Chitre From Says Tuka :
 "I am cripple"
 "When he comes"

Unit 6 : Drama :

Vijay Tendulkar : *Kamala*
 (From Five plays by Vijay Tendulkar, OUP)

OR

Amitav Ghosh : *Sammy*
 (Rupa & Company, New Delhi in
 association with Gandhi Smarak Nidhi,
 Mumbai, 2005)

OR

Mohan Rakesh : *One Day in Ashadha* (original *Aashad ka*
 Ek Din, National School of Drama)

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VII

SYBA

PAPER II : INDIAN LITERATURE IN ENGLISH PAPER PATTERN FOR IDOL STUDENTS

**Marks : 100
Time : 3 Hrs.**

- | | | |
|-------------|---|-----------------|
| Q. 1 | Concepts from Unit 1 & 4 above (4 out of 8) | 20 Marks |
| Q. 2 | Attempt any two from four short story writers | 20 Marks |
| Q. 3 | Attempt any one from three novels | 20 Marks |
| Q. 4 | (a) One from first four poets | 10 Marks |
| | (b) One from next four poets | 10 Marks |
| Q. 5 | Attempt any one from three plays | 20 Marks |

LITERARY TERMS AND TRENDS IN INDIAN ENGLISH FICTION

Unit Structure:

- 1.0 Objectives
- 1.1 The Origin and Rise of English Studies in India
- 1.2 Pre-independence Fiction
- 1.3 Partition Literature
- 1.4 Women Fiction Writers
- 1.5 Dalit Literature/ Fiction
- 1.6 Diaspora Fiction
- 1.7 The Post Modern Indian English Fiction
- 1.8 Post Colonial Fiction
- 1.9 Questions

1.0 OBJECTIVES

To introduce the students to :

- The origins and rise of English studies in India
- Pre-independence fiction
- The Dalit literature of India.
- Partition literature
- Women fiction writers
- Diaspora fiction
- The Post Modern Indian English fiction
- Post Colonial fiction

1.1 THE ORIGINS AND RISE OF ENGLISH STUDIES IN INDIA

The British first arrived in India in the early 1600s and soon established trading posts in a number of cities under the control of The East India Company. By 1765 the Company's influence had grown to such an extent that the British were effectively controlling most parts of the country. This date is often taken as the beginning

of what is referred to as The Raj — a period of British rule in India that lasted until Independence in 1947.

Initially English was only taught to the local population through the work of Christian missionaries — there were no official attempts to force the language on the masses. But by the 1700s, English had firmly established itself as the language of administration and many educated Indians were demanding instruction in English as a means of social advancement. By 1857 universities had opened in Bombay, Calcutta and Madras. English was increasingly accepted as the language of government, of the social elite, and of the national press.

After Independence

After Independence, India became a nation state, and it was intended that English would gradually be phased out as the language of administration. But there was no simple solution as to which language should replace it. At first Hindi, the most widely spoken language, seemed the obvious choice, but following violent protests in 1963 in the state of Tamil Nadu against the imposition of Hindi as a national language, opinion has remained divided. In a country with over 900 million people and more than a thousand languages, it is difficult to choose a single national language, as mother tongue speakers of that language would automatically enjoy greater social status and have easier access to positions of power and influence. Even Gandhi, a proponent of a native variety as a national language, accepted that his message was most widely understood if expressed in English. So, although English is not an indigenous language, it remains as an 'Associate Language' in India, alongside Hindi, the 'Official Language of the Union of India' and eighteen 'National Languages', such as Bengali, Gujarati and Urdu, that have a special status in certain individual states.

English in India Today

Despite continued pressure from nationalists, English remains at the heart of Indian society. It is widely used in the media, in Higher Education and government and therefore, remains a common means of communication, both among the ruling classes, and between speakers of mutually unintelligible languages. According to recent surveys, approximately 4% of the Indian population use English. That figure might seem insignificant, but out of the total population this represents 35 million speakers —

the largest English-speaking community outside the USA and the UK. In addition there are speakers of English in other parts of South Asia, such as Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, where English plays a similar role. English is virtually a mother tongue for many educated South Asians, but for the vast majority it remains a second language. This means there are speakers whose spoken English is heavily influenced by speech patterns of their ethnic language, alongside those whose speech reveals nothing of their racial background and some who are ranged somewhere in between.

1.2 PRE-INDEPENDENCE FICTION

The history of Indian novels does owe a lot to Bengali literature and the sheer brilliant and dazzling writers that had come up during pre-Independent India, in the middle 19th to late 20th centuries. The likes of Rabindranath Tagore, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay, Tarashankar Bandopadhyay, Bibhutibhushan Bandopadhyay, Manik Bandopadhyay, Bimal Mitra and a little later, Satyajit Ray, have forever been included in the elite list of Bengali novel writers, superlatively bringing to surface the cultural, political and economical ethos of the then India. The idyllic mixture of fantasy, mystery, non-fiction, fairy tale, science fiction under these `Bangla` men, truly had elevated the status of Indian novels in Indian history forever.

As to the factual evolvement of Indian novels, it is now known that the historical scenario of novels in India is conventionally conceived to have come to view in the middle of the nineteenth century. The year of the Great Revolt of 1857 or the Sepoy Mutiny had witnessed the publication of *Alaler Gharer Dulal* by Peary Chand Mitra (Tekchand Thakur), upon which Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, who himself maintains a soaring status in the historical development of the novel in India, lavishly had extolled as a "beautifully written" work. The contemporary estimation of the virtues of this work has been rather limited and moderate, but notwithstanding, *Alaler Gharer Dulal* is conceived to engage an exceptional position in the history of Indian, and most certainly Bengali literature as "the first work in Bengali which can be described as a novel."

Just like its English counterpart in the 18th century, in India the novel's beginnings are believed and imagined to be associated with the `diffusion` of the `market economy` into the countryside, the clandestine emergence of a bourgeoisie conception and, eventually, the advent of other forces of `modernisation` and `Westernisation`. With the consolidation of British rule and the changeover of authoritarian power from the East India Company with its fallible ways to the Crown - theoretically the very quintessence of the `rule of law`, both the rulers and the ruled could commit more concentration to the much touted moralities of `improvement`, and "life became more settled and conventional". Due to the thus emergence of the bourgeoisie society in the British Indian scenario, history of novel writing in India began to take up pace, with various households solemnly making endeavours to make their outcry known to the worldwide populace.

In spite of such stellar accounts of the history of novels in India, there still exists great deal of room for debate in the `conventional account` of the emergence of the novel in pre-Independent Indian scenario. Life may indeed have become more "settled" with the passing of the Mutiny of 1857-58, to that extent that departures from stated policy were rendered less in the inconsistent manner and the administration had assumed a more even note. As is said, the post-Sepoy Mutiny period was characterised by the emergence of British ascendancy and dominance over the most intimate aspects of the everyday lives of ordinary natives. However `civilised` or `well-mannered` the British Crown had called themselves, there was, in the long run, absolutely null use for the Indians in matters of privacy in both familial and commercial issues. And such governance was very much and integrally visible in the novels that came out in the dark, with British authorities trying every motion to curb such publications in the light of day. As such, with respect to the thesis that the history of the Indian novel owed a good deal to the development of a market economy, one can hardly question that new forms of commerce arose with the advent and fanning out of British dominion. Such shrewd modes of mixing art with commerce had significantly given rise - especially in the port cities of Bombay, Calcutta, and Madras - to a whole new class of shipping agents, customs functionaries, middlemen and merchants.

Whatever might have been that unseen force of the `sociological explanation` in helping one comprehend the historical growth of the novel in India, it has also been reasoned that by the mid-nineteenth century, English novels were widely available in India. And for this very fact there exists authenticated testimony of writers like Bankim Chandra himself. The novels of Walter Scott and Edward Bulwer Lytton may not have been as fervently anticipated in India as they were in the United Kingdom, but they were nevertheless to leave an indelible mark on the Indian novel and its historical perspective. To place rather concisely, the novel in India must, on the conventional opinion, be an `alien import`.

1.3 PARTITION LITERATURE

The partition of India and the associated bloody riots inspired many creative minds in India and Pakistan to create literary/cinematic depictions of this event. While some creations depicted the massacres during the refugee migration, others concentrated on the aftermath of the partition in terms of difficulties faced by the refugees in both sides of the border. Even now, more than 60 years after the partition, works of fiction and films are made that relate to the events of partition.

Literature describing the human cost of independence and partition comprises Khushwant Singh's Train to Pakistan (1956), several short stories such as Toba Tek Singh (1955) by Saadat Hassan Manto, Urdu poems such as Subh-e-Azadi (*Freedom's Dawn*, 1947) by Faiz Ahmad Faiz, Bhisham Sahni's Tamas (1974), Manohar Malgonkar's A Bend in the Ganges (1965), and Bapsi Sidhwa's Ice-Candy Man (1988), among others. Salman Rushdie's novel Midnight's Children (1980), which won the Booker Prize and the Booker of Bookers, weaved its narrative based on the children born with magical abilities on midnight of 14 August 1947. Freedom at Midnight (1975) is a non-fiction work by Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre that chronicled the events surrounding the first Independence Day celebrations in 1947. There is a paucity of films related to the independence and partition. Early films relating to the circumstances of the independence, partition and the aftermath include Nemai Ghosh's Chinnamul (1950), Dharmputra (1961), Ritwik Ghatak's Meghe Dhaka Tara (1960), Komal Gandhar (1961), Subarnarekha (1962); later films include Garm Hava (1973) and Tamas (1987). From the late 1990s onwards, more films on this

theme were made, including several mainstream films, such as Earth (1998), Train to Pakistan (1998) (based on the aforementioned book), Hey Ram (2000), Gadar: Ek Prem Katha (2001), Pinjar (2003), Partition (2007) and Madrasapattinam (2010). The biopics Gandhi (1982), Jinnah (1998) and Sardar (1993) also feature independence and partition as significant events in their screenplay.

1.4 INDIAN WOMEN WRITERS IN ENGLISH

a) Anita Desai

Anita Desai is an Indian novelist and short story writer. She has been shortlisted for the Booker Prize three times, was awarded the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1978 for her novel, *Fire on the Mountain*, by the Sahitya Akademi, India's National Academy of Letters. Her notable contributions are *The Peacock*, *Voices of the City*, *Fire on the Mountain*, *Clear light of Day*, *In Custody*, *Fasting, Feasting* and *The Village by the Sea*.

Her novel *Fire on the Mountain* (1977) won the Winifred Holtby Memorial Prize. Her children's book *The Village by the Sea* (1982) won the Guardian Children's Fiction Award.

b) Arundathi Roy

She won the Booker Prize in 1997 for her novel, *The God of Small Things* and has also written two screenplays and several collections of essays.

c) Anita Nair

Anita Nair is an Indian English writer whose novels are passionately woven on the thread of human nature and values with a female oriented component. *Her Mistress* was included in the list for the Orange Broadband Prize for Fiction. *Better Man*, *Mistress*, *The Puffin Book of Magical Indian Myths*, *Where The Rain is Born-Writing about K*, *Ladies Coupe*, *Lessons in Forgetting Pb*, and *Malabar Mind* are her notable works.

d) Shashi Deshpande

Sashi Deshpande is a well known name in the field of Indian literature. She published her first collection of short stories in 1978, and her first novel, *The Dark Holds No Terror* in 1980. She won the Sahitya Akademi Award for her novel *That Long Silence* in 1990 and the Padma Shri award in 2009. Her notable works include *The Binding Vine*, *Matter of Time*, *That Long Silence*, and *Dark Holds No Terrors*.

e) Shobha De

Shobha De is an Indian novelist, copywriter, freelance writer and columnist, best known for her columns in *The Week*. She is known as India's Jackie Collins. *Starry Nights*, *Socialite Evenings*, *Sultry Days*, *Sisters*, *Small betrayals*, *Second Thoughts*, *Surviving Men*, *Spouse*, *Snapshots* and *Selective Memory* are her notable works.

f) Sudha Murthy

Sudha Kulkarni Murthy is renowned for her writing and active role in social services. Her flair for writing is evident in her books like *Dollar Sose*, originally written in Kannada and *Wise and Otherwise*.

g) Jhumpa Lahiri

Jhumpa Lahiri is an Indian American author. Her debut short story collection, *Interpreter of Maladies* won the 2000 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction, and her first novel, *The Namesake* was adopted to a popular film. She has won several awards for her work. Her notable works include *The Namesake*, *Unaccustomed Earth*, and *Interpreter of Maladies*.

h) Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni

A novelist, poet, professor, and short story author, Chitra Banerjee is indeed a gifted writer. Her significant works include *Palace of Illusion*, and *Mistress of Spice*. She was awarded the American Book Award for *Arranged Marriage*. Her work has been published in more than 50 magazines, including the *Atlantic Monthly* and *The New Yorker*.

i) Kiran Desai

Born in India, educated in England and US, Kiran Desai's work has appeared in "The New Yorker" and Salman Rushdie's anthology *Mirror Work: Fifty Years of Indian Writing*. Her notable works include *Inheritance of Loss*, *Hullabaloo in The Guava Orchard*. *The Inheritance of Loss* won the coveted 2006 Man Booker Prize and National Book Critics Circle award for fiction

j) Bharati Mukherjee

Bharati Mukherjee is the author of seven novels and two short story collections, and co-author of two books of non-fiction. She is also the winner of a National Book Critic Circles Award. Some of her famous books are *Desirable Daughters*, *Jasmine*, *Holder of the World*, *Leave it to Me*, and *The Middleman And Other Stories*.

1.5 DALIT LITERATURE

Dalit Literature or the literature about the Dalits is the writing of the oppressed class under Indian caste system and it forms an important and distinct part of Indian literature. Though Dalit narratives have been a part of the Indian social narratives since 11th century onwards, with works like Sekkizhar's Periya Puranam portraying Dalit women like half-naked and sexually exploitable and praising the killing of thousands of Dalits on "Kazhumaram" in the hands of Gnanasambandan, Dalit literature emerged into prominence and as a collective voice after 1960, started with Marathi, and soon appeared in Hindi, Kannada, Telugu and Tamil languages. Through self-narratives, poems, short stories and most importantly autobiographies known for their realism and for its contribution to Dalit politics it created its identity. It was denounced as petty and false by the then prevailing romanticism. The bourgeois Sadashiv pethi literature treated the whole Dalit issue, ignoring the social reality of appalling poverty and oppression of caste Hindus which was the result of the bourgeois character of this culture. It is often compared with the African-American literature especially in its depiction of issues of racial segregation and injustice, as seen in Slave narratives.

Ambedkarite Literature

In 1993, Ambedkari Sahitya Parishad organized first "Akhil Bhartiya (All India) Ambedkari Sahitya Sammelan" in Wardha, Maharashtra to reconceptualize and transform "Dalit Sahitya (literature) into "Ambedkari Sahitya" after the name of its modern age hero and inspiration Dr.B.R. Ambedkar. Ambedkari Sahitya Parishad then successfully organized Third Akhil Bhartiya Ambedkari Sahitya Sammelan in 1996 and became a strong advocacy force of this transformation. Since then ten similar sahitya sammelans were held in various places. Ambedkari Sahitya Parishad was formed in 1992 with the goal to connect people with common ideals and aspirations to provide a platform to those who are inspired by Dr B. R. Ambedkar's thoughts and philosophy to express their anguish through their literature against the oppression and bigotry and to make their presence felt in the world.

One of the first Dalit writers was Madara Chennaiah, an 11th-century cobbler-saint who lived in the reign of Western Chalukyas and who is also regarded by some scholars as the "father of Vachana poetry". Another poet who finds mention is Dohara Kakkaiah, a Dalit by birth, six of whose confessional poems survive.

In the 20th century, the term "Dalit literature" came into use in 1958, when the first conference of Maharashtra Dalit Sahitya Sangha (Maharashtra Dalit Literature Society), a movement driven by thinkers like Jyotiba Phule and Bhimrao Ambedkar, was held at Mumbai.

Baburao Bagul (1930–2008) was pioneer of Dalit writings in Marathi. His first collection of stories, Jevha Mi Jat Chorali Hoti (When I had Concealed My Caste), published in 1963, created a stir in Marathi literature with its passionate depiction of a crude society, and thus, brought in new momentum to Dalit literature in Marathi; today it is seen by many critics as the epic of the Dalits, and was later made into a film by actor-director Vinay Apte. Gradually with other writers like, Namdeo Dhasal (who founded Dalit Panther), these Dalit writings paved way for strengthening of Dalit politics.

1.6 FICTION OF INDIAN DIASPORA

A diaspora, meaning scattering or dispersion, is a scattered population with a common origin in a smaller geographic area. The word can also refer to the movement of the population from its original homeland. The word has come to refer particularly to historical mass dispersions of an involuntary nature, such as the expulsion of Palestinians and Jews from the Middle East, the African Trans-Atlantic slave trade, the southern Chinese during the coolie slave trade, or the century-long exile of the Messenians under Spartan rule.

Recently, scholars have distinguished between different kinds of diaspora, based on its causes such as imperialism, trade or labor migrations, or by the kind of social coherence within the Diaspora community and its ties to the ancestral lands. Some Diaspora communities maintain strong political ties with their homeland. Other qualities that may be typical of many diasporas are thoughts of return, relationships with other communities in the Diaspora, and lack of full assimilation into the host country.

Indian Diaspora: They number up to 20 million, according to statistics provided by the Government of India. They are broadly divided into two groups i.e. NRIs (Indian citizens not residing in India) and PIOs (Persons of Indian Origin who have acquired the citizenship of some other country). Major populations exist in Mauritius (where they form the majority), Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago, Suriname, Fiji, Malaysia, South Africa, Nepal and Réunion, primarily from 19th century indentured workers. Recent immigration to United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States also falls in this category.

"Person of Indian origin" and "ethnic Indian" are not to be confused with Indigenous peoples of the Americas. "Non-resident Indian" are not to be confused with Non-Status Indians (North American aboriginals) who have no reserve habitation rights, or North American aboriginals excluded by "Indian Blood" (blood quantum) laws from having residency rights. A non-resident Indian (NRI) (Hindi: Pravāsī Bhāratīya) is a citizen of India who holds an Indian passport and has temporarily emigrated to another country for six months or more for work, residence or any other purpose.

A person of Indian origin (PIO) is a person of Indian origin or ancestry and some other countries who was or whose ancestors were born in India but is not a citizen of India and is the citizen of another country. A PIO might have been a citizen of India and subsequently taken the citizenship of another country.

Other terms with vaguely the same meaning are overseas Indian and expatriate Indian. In common usage, this often includes Indian-born individuals (and also people of other nations with Indian ancestry) who have taken the citizenship of other countries.

According to Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs, India has the second largest Diaspora in the world after Overseas Chinese. The overseas Indian community, estimated at over 25 million, is spread across every major region in the world.

The most significant historical emigration from India was that of the Romani people, traditionally known by the term "Gypsies". Linguistic and genetic evidence indicates the Romani originated from the Indian subcontinent, emigrating from India towards the northwest not earlier than the 11th century. The Romani's are generally believed to have originated in central India, possibly in the modern Indian state of Rajasthan, migrating to northwest India (the Punjab region) around 250 B.C.

In the centuries spent here, there may have been close interaction with such established groups as the Rajputs and the Jats. Their subsequent westward migration, possibly in waves, is believed to have occurred between 500 A.D. and 1000 A.D. Contemporary populations sometimes suggested as sharing a close relationship to the Romani are the Dom people of Central Asia and the Banjara of India. Another major emigration from the subcontinent was to Southeast Asia. It started through early interaction of Indian traders and, after mid-first millennium CE, by some import of members of the Brahmin social caste. This resulted in the establishment of the so-called Indianised kingdoms in Southeast Asia. The Cholas, who were known for their naval power, conquered Sumatra and Malay Peninsula. The influence of Indian culture is still strongly felt in Southeast Asia, for example with the royal Brahmins of Thailand (rajakru), or especially in Bali (in Indonesia). In such cases, it is not reasonable to apply the label 'PIO' to the descendants of emigrants from several centuries back. Intermixture has been so great as to negate the value of such nomenclature in this context.

Another early Diaspora, of which little is known about was a reported Indian "Shendu" community that was recorded

when Yunnan was annexed by the Han Dynasty in the 1st century by the Chinese authorities.

Indian trader's family in Bagamoyo, German East Africa, around 1906/18.

The Indian merchant Diaspora in Central Asia and Persia emerged in the mid-16th century and remained active for over four centuries. Astrakhan at the mouth of the Volga was the first place in Tsardom of Russia where an Indian merchant colony was established as early as the 1610s. Russian chroniclers reported the presence of Hindu traders in Moscow and St. Petersburg in the 18th century.

Modern Times

During the 19th century and until the end of the British Raj, much of the migration that occurred was of poor workers to other British colonies under the indenture system. The major destinations, in chronological order, were Mauritius, Guyana, the Caribbean, Fiji, and East Africa.

Gujarati and Sindhi merchants and traders settled in Iran, Aden, Oman, Bahrain, Dubai, South Africa and East African countries, most of which were ruled by the British. Indian Rupee was the legal currency in many countries of Arabian peninsula.

After Independence

After the 1970s oil boom in the Middle East, numerous Indians emigrated to work in the Gulf countries. With modern transportation and expectations, this was on a contractual basis rather than permanent as in the 19th century cases. These Gulf countries have a common policy of not naturalizing non-Arabs, even if they are born there.

The 1990s IT boom and rising economy in the USA attracted numerous Indians who emigrated to the United States of America. Today, the USA has the third largest number of Indians. Also, as per UNESCO Institute for Statistics the number of Indian students abroad tripled from 51,000 in 1999 to over 153,000 in 2007, making India second after China among the world's largest sending countries for tertiary students.

1.7 THE POST MODERN INDIAN ENGLISH NOVEL

A major development in the post modern Indian fiction has been the growth of a feminist or woman-centered approach, an approach which seeks to project and interpret experience from the viewpoint of a feminine consciousness and sensibility. Feminism assumes that women experience the world differently from men and write out of their different perspective. As Patricia Meyer Spacks remarks, "There seems to be something that we might call a woman's point of view, an outlook sufficiently distinct to be recognizable through the centuries" (4-5).

It must not be imagined that feminism suddenly burst upon the Indian literary scene in recent years. Rather, it has grown slowly and steadily, some of its features having been anticipated by earlier writers such as Bankimchandra Chatterji and Rabindranath Tagore in Bengali and Jainendra Kumar in Hindi. Saratchandra Chatterji, who created perhaps the most memorable portraits of women in Indian literature, was something of a feminist by conviction, as were some of his heroines, such as Kamal and Kiranmoyee. In Urdu, Ismat Chughtai had scandalized many by her outspoken themes, while as early as the 1930s the now almost completely forgotten Rashid Jahan, in her stories in *Angare (Embers)* and *Aurat (The Woman)*, had dealt with the problems of women, especially Muslim women, with daring unconventionality. In Marathi, Vasumati Dharker published a number of stories from the 1930s to the 1950s in which, says Rani Dharker, "the strong women characters she portrays and the ideas about women . . . are far ahead of her time" (79).

Thus what may be called the faint foreshadowing and premonitions of feminism become visible in Indian fiction as early as in the 1920s and 1930s. It is, however, only in the post-Independence period, and especially since the 1960s, that Indian novelists have begun to question seriously and systematically, and at times to reject outright, traditional interpretations of women's role and status in society. Ideals of womanhood firmly entrenched - often imposed by men and unconsciously internalized by women are now losing their sanctity and are being critically assessed.

Oppression and exploitation of women in what is now often called a patriarchal society has been an ever-present theme in

Indian fiction. The theme is a recurrent one in Premchand and Saratchandra Chatterji, although in Saratchandra it is often suffused in a romantic glow which blunts its sharp edge. Whereas earlier writers had often glorified women's suffering, however, Indian novelists in the last two or three decades have on the whole presented it with much greater realism, and without minimizing its impact by giving it the halo of noble self-sacrifice. Recent Indian novelists tend to present oppression of women with greater self-consciousness, a deeper sense of involvement, and not infrequently a sense of outrage. The theme takes on sharpness and urgency, and is developed with great diversity of situations and characters, in Nayantara Sahgal's novels *The Day in Shadow* and *Rich Like Us*. In the Dalit or "oppressed" writer Baburao Bagul's nightmarish Marathi novel *Sood* (Revenge) Janaki, the daughter of a devadasi, finally seeks to destroy her femaleness as the only way to escape being degraded by men, by offering her female body to the River Ganga. Mrinal Pande's story *Girls* (in Hindi) brings out the discrimination women themselves practice in the upbringing of girls and boys. The unnamed eight-year-old narrator is told by a female relative: "You are born a girl and you will have to bend for the rest of your life, so you might as well learn" (59). The narrator is finally driven to expostulate: "When you people don't love girls, why do you pretend to worship them?" (63). In Shashi Deshpande's justly celebrated English novel *That Long Silence*, the matric-failed Dilip is given a favored position over his much more talented sister Kusum. Manorama Mathai's story *The Marriage of Aley* in her collection of short prose in English, *Lilies That Fester*, shows the unenviable fate of even well-educated Christian women of Kerala. The writer, Kamala Das also recalls how even in her matriarchal society a man could force his niece to divorce her husband, whom she loved, and marry another man (155).

The celebrated Oriya writer, Binapani Mohanty, whose avowed aim is to uphold "femininity" and "woman-consciousness" and who excels in presenting the plight of village women, and the leading Gujarati novelist Kundanika Kapadia, who has taken a sustained interest in the Women's Liberation Movement, graphically and at times polemically depict the fate of women wronged by men. More restrained is the Assamese writer Sneha Devi, whose collection of stories *Sneha Devir Ekunki Galpa* is remarkable for its presentation of images of women's life with insight and sensitivity. As Bhaben Barua remarks, at the heart of

each of her stories "there is the voice of a woman. The significance of her contribution to Assamese fiction partly lies in the expression of this sensibility. . . . Various aspects of feminine sensibility have . . . been presented in her stories with remarkable authenticity" (15-16).

To be sure, portrayal of women's suffering has been an eternal theme in Indian literature, going as far back as the Mahabharata and the Ramayana. What is innovative and unprecedented is the perspective and point of view from which it is now presented. No longer extolled as noble sacrifice or enveloped in an aura of misty romanticism, women's suffering is now portrayed, especially by women writers, with bleak realism for what it often is: an outcome of male egotism, selfishness, and heartlessness.

Increasingly, in recent Indian fiction, women refuse to put up passively with oppression and injustice, choosing rather to resist them with courage and determination, often coming out victorious in the end. Although some writers may persist in showing women in traditional roles in society, many present women in active and assertive roles. Recent Tamil fiction, for example, deals pervasively with the theme of emancipation of women, the tone ranging all the way from muted to strident, from placid to doctrinaire. Jayanti Naik's stories in *Garjan* (in Konkani) present village women fighting against male authoritarianism with firmness and success. In the title story of Gangadhar Gadgil's collection *The Woman and Other Stories* the main character is a strong-willed woman committed to asserting and defending her integrity as an individual. In Sindhi, Soni Mulchandani portrays women who fight against injustice with persistent courage in her aptly titled collection *Shakti* (Strength). Rita Shahani's novel *Chanda Khan Sija Taeen* (From the Moon to the Sun) shows the protagonist gradually shedding her dependence on external props and becoming self-reliant, thus ceasing to be the moon which reflects the light of the sun in order herself to become the sun. Qurratul-Ain Haider's Urdu novel *Chandni Begum* presents a new and emerging face of the Muslim woman after long years of repression.

A major strength of Shashi Deshpande's *That Long Silence* is its sensitive and realistic presentation of the married life of the narrator Jaya and her husband Mohan. The searching critical

examination to which the institution of marriage has been subjected in recent Indian fiction may to some extent well be an offshoot of the growth of a feminist outlook. Marital relationships, and the oppression that often exists in them, have been a subject of great concern for recent Indian novelists, both men and women, although it is women writers who have felt most strongly and passionately about them, for understandable reasons. Writers such as Shivani, Amrita Pritam, Binapani Mohanty, and Sneha Devi effectively show the frequently oppressive nature from a woman's point of view, of such relationships, and the legitimization of women's exploitation which they too often involve. In a well-known poem, *Pati* (Husband), the Punjabi woman poet Manjit Tiwana wryly remarks: "The husband is a hungry wolf who saves you from other wolves, but devours you in the end. Dina Mehta's finely chiseled stories of married life are peopled by women who boldly question male values and often totally reject male hegemony. In her delicately ironic story Absolution the narrator, a conventional middle-class housewife tellingly named Sita, responds to her husband Ram's persistent infidelity by what may be called retaliatory infidelity. Her husband, who had flowers left for his wife in the lacquered bowl on the breakfast table after his acts of infidelity, is totally discomfited when he finds, in an ironic reversal of situation, a glorious bouquet of red carnations left for him by - who else but his wife!

Feminism as manifested in modern Indian fiction suffers from certain limitations. Too often it has led to the portrayal of passive, unrelieved suffering of women, their stark misery. Many women writers have been afflicted with excessive self-pity and have failed to extricate themselves from the vale of tears. For example, in Shashi Deshpande's novel *That Long Silence* the spectacle of women suffering without resistance or struggle becomes unbearably oppressive. The fact is that passive suffering, no matter how true to life, does not go a very long way as a theme in narrative or dramatic literature.

Moreover, feminism in modern Indian fiction has often been too descriptive and not sufficiently critical. While it has effectively played with the surface, it has not sufficiently provided insight into the deep social and psychological factors which produce the environment in which exploitation of women becomes possible. Sometimes man is blamed too easily as the ubiquitous villain to whom can be traced back all the suffering and oppression of

women, and women's role in the oppression of women is not brought out, except through the cruel-mother-in-law syndrome. Arguably, in India at least, women themselves have been great oppressors of women. To attribute this entirely to the patriarchal system is, I think, overly deterministic and undercuts the individual's autonomy and freedom of action.

Such lack of criticism can easily lead to exaggeration and sentimentality. But, as Krishna Kripalani remarks, "Wails of anguish or thunder of curses or growls of anger do not by themselves turn into great literature" (109). They can in fact lead to reductive, unidimensional approaches toward reality. In India, however, militant, programmatic feminism of the kind common in the West, when it has appeared at all, has tended to be confined to academics and socialites, its literary manifestations having been minimal. Not having achieved the occasional militancy of the West, literary feminism in India has also largely escaped the excesses of the Western model: a simplistic and doctrinaire view of reality and an aggressive and passionate conviction in the infallibility of one's own point of view, as well as an outright rejection of all that militates against it.

For all its limitations, feminism remains one of the most significant developments in modern Indian fiction. It has brought about an insistent, searching reevaluation of the role and status of women in society and thus may justly be considered an exciting and innovative approach which has vitalized and enriched Indian fiction of recent years in many, many ways.

1.8 POST COLONIAL FICTION

India's independence had raised people's expectations sky-high, some legitimate, others - since political freedom cannot by itself be a panacea for all social and economic ills - perhaps exaggerated and unrealistic. In India, as in many African countries with a colonial past, the new native rulers turned out to be no less rapacious than the colonial masters they had supplanted, a typical Animal Farm situation. The disenchantment to which this gave rise found in Africa its classic expression in the works of such writers as Chinua Achebe and Wole Soyinka of Nigeria and Ngugi wa Thiongo of Kenya. In India the sense of hopes belied and

aspirations not fulfilled began to appear as a literary theme soon after 1947. T. S. Pillai's Malayalam novel *Rungs of the Ladder* brings out in detail the machinations of politicians and bureaucracy through the case study of a middle-class Nair who rose to the position of Chief Secretary of Travancore. Political satire gradually became an increasingly familiar theme in Indian fiction even as the tone hardened into cynical despair. Deshbandhu in Rajendra Yadav's *Ukhare Huye Log* comprehensively epitomizes the corrupt and manipulative politician.

Increasingly, political issues have become a rich and fertile source for literary exploration. Nayantara Sahgal's interest in politics is deep and abiding: each of her novels, she says, "more or less reflects the political era we are passing through." She adds: "Fiction is my abiding love. But I need to express myself on vital political issues. Political and social forces shape our lives. How can we be unaware of them? I believe there is what the American writer E. L. Doctorow has called 'a poetics of engagement' where commitment and aesthetics meet and give each other beauty and power" ("*A Truly Wonderful Moment*"). Her novel *Rich Like Us* deals with the time of the Emergency - which she aptly calls "a collective will to cowardice" - when opportunists prospered while the honest and upright suffered. Shashi Tharoor's justly acclaimed work *The Great Indian Novel* burlesques the Mahabharata to comment upon current political events of the country. Arun Joshi's novel *The City and the River* is a political allegory about the rise and fall of governments and the abuse of power. O. V. Vijayan's Malayalam novel *The Saga of Dharmapuri* also deals with the perversion of the political process during the Emergency.

An exceptionally forceful indictment of political corruption and manipulation is Satakadi Hota's Oriya novel *Rajdhanira Ranga* (The Capital in Its True Colors), in which the writer effectively brings out the complete degeneration of values behind the glittering facade of the capital. Om Goswani's collection of Dogri stories *Sunne di Chiree* (The Golden Bird) also targets the current political situation, with the title story being an all-embracing castigation of complete loss of decency in every sphere of life in modern India. The story *Magarmuchh* satirizes the way the rich manipulate government officials and labor leaders to oppress the poor. *Nark Joon* and *Mhatamdari* expose dishonest recruitment procedures. E. Sonamani's Manipuri stories in *If the Front Door Is Closed, Enter Through the Back Door* revealingly anatomize dishonest ministers and legislators. Sonamani's portrait of Minister Ibochaoba in the title

story is an exceptionally fine representation of the corrupt politician. Rafiq Zakaria's novel *The Price of Power* is a somewhat transparent political allegory, its characters and events thinly disguised versions of real people and real situations. Much more effective and sophisticated as political satire is Ranga Rao's *Fowl-Filcher*, in which the protagonist, unjustly nicknamed "Fowl-Filcher" for a crime he did not commit, graduates after a highly checkered career to become a politician's trusted assistant, ironically getting killed in the riots he himself had engineered.

Many modern Indian novels deal with specific political issues. O. V. Vijayan's *Gurusagaram* (in Malayalam) is set against the backdrop of the Bangladesh war and the growth of the Naxalite movement. Novels dealing with issues such as the antireservation agitations, terrorism, and various reformist movements are many. However, the very topicality which adds to the relevance of such works also often makes them ephemeral, unless they are anchored by a more enduring component, as is the case with *Gurusagaram*, for example, in which the strong element of spirituality has a broadening and universalizing effect.

The intricate web of family relationships, especially in a joint or extended family, has perpetually interested Indian writers. Exploration of these relationships as literary themes continues in modern Indian fiction with undiminished vigor, although the nature of the issues dealt with may have changed in response to the current social situation.

Harmony within the family has been an ideal traditionally cherished by Indian writers. In the early decades of the century Premchand and Sara Chandra had come down heavily on those who sowed seeds of dissension in the family for selfish ends. The discomfiture and ultimate rout of such people is gleefully presented in many of Sara Chandra's stories. Later, Rajendra Yadav's Hindi novel *Sara Akash* became the definitive study of the pains and pleasures of living in a joint Indian family. *Sara Akash* is a triumph of modern Indian fiction in its graphic and sensitive portrayal of the close, convoluted, sometimes stifling nature of family relationships in a joint middle-class Indian family, the petty envies and intrigues, the perpetual bickering, and also the warmth, the affection, the magnanimous self-sacrifice.

Although interest in problems of the joint family system has remained unabated in recent Indian fictional works, the treatment has become much more serious, even somber. Whereas the earlier writers had often dealt with family discord in a more or less light vein, bringing out its comedy, writers in recent years have tended to treat it with solemnity, showing a brooding concern with its darker aspects. In Punjabi, Ram Sarup Ankhil and Inder Singh Khamosh have dealt with dissensions in family relationships and brought out how greed and selfishness of individuals lead to disintegration of the family. Stories of the domineering mother-in-law and the bullied daughter-in-law have been extremely common in Indian fiction, Prabhakar Kumar Choudhary's *Sheetiyuddha* (Cold War) in Maithili being a fine recent example. But now the reverse side of the relationship, with sons and daughters-in-law showing, in their headlong pursuit of the pleasures of life, callous disregard of the welfare of the parents, is also being explored. The breakup of the joint family under the impact of modernization and economic pressure has bred a new and major social problem: the insecurity and widespread neglect of the elderly. Stories dealing with the plight of old people left destitute and emotionally insecure crowd the pages of fictional works in many Indian languages. The generation gap and the problems of old age have been vividly presented, for example, in Homen Borgohain's Assamese novel *Asta Rag*. The author himself says: "In the past, old age was not like this. People were afraid of death, but not of growing old. But now there is a change and man is afraid of growing old, not of death."

1.9 QUESTIONS

Write short notes on the following:

1. The origins and Rise of English studies in India
2. Pre-independence fiction
3. The Dalit literature of India.
4. Partition Literature
5. Women fiction Writers
6. Diaspora Fiction
7. The Post Modern Indian English fiction
8. Post Colonial Fiction



LITERARY TERMS AND TRENDS IN INDIAN ENGLISH POETRY, DRAMA AND PROSE

Unit Structure :

- 2.0 Objectives
- 2.1 Early Indian English Poetry
- 2.2 Poetry after 1950
- 2.3 Women Poets
- 2.4 Indian English Non-Fictional Prose
- 2.5 Nativism
- 2.6 Modern Indian Drama in English and Translation
- 2.7 Questions

2.0 OBJECTIVES

To introduce the students to:

- Early Indian English poetry
- Poetry after 1950
- Women Poets
- Indian English Non-fictional Prose
- Modern Indian drama in English and Translation
- Nativism

2.1 EARLY INDIAN ENGLISH POETRY

Henry Louis Vivian Derozio is considered the first poet in the lineage of Indian English poetry. A significant and torch-bearer poet is Nissim Ezekiel and the significant poets of the post-Derozio and pre-Ezekiel times are Toru Dutt, Sarojini Naidu, Rabindranath Tagore and Sri Aurobindo. Some of the poets of Ezekiel's time are A. K. Ramanujan, Dom Moraes, R. Parthasarthy, Jayant Mahapatra, Kamala Das, Dr. Krishna Srinivas, Keki N.

Daruwala, Arvind Krishna Mehrotra, Arun Kolatkar, Dilip Chitre, Vikram Seth, etc.

There are good as well as globally respected current poets like O. P. Bhatnagar, I. K. Sharma, Maha Nand Sharma, Krishna Srinivas, Mani Rao, P. C. K. Prem, Srinivas Rangaswami, Dwarakanath H. Kabadi, D. C. Chambial, P. Raja, Nandini Sahu, Sunil Sharma, Jaydeep Sarangi and scores of others. These poets write with an awareness of their milieu and environment rather than British or American rhetoric or intellectual attitudes like alienation or exile. They share the central core of contemporary realities of Indian life.

Recent Indian English poetry adds to what O. P. Bhatnagar terms as a process of collective discovery, affirming its richness, sensitivity and cultural complexity. If we examine the potential of the poetry-making mind in English, applying whatever literary criteria, we should now discover aspects of the essentially assimilative genius of the Indian people, and a celebration of the vast chorus of voices that make Indian literature sing.

Rabindranath Tagore wrote in Bengali and English and was responsible for the translations of his own work into English. Other early notable poets in English include Derozio, Michael Madhusudan Dutt, Toru Dutt, Romesh Chunder Dutt, Sri Aurobindo, Sarojini Naidu, and her brother, Harindranath Chattopadhyay.

A new generation of poets also sprang in the Indian poetry. Among these are names like Agha Shahid Ali, Sujata Bhatt, Richard Crasta, Yuyutsu Sharma and Vikram Seth.

In modern times, Indian poetry in English was typified by two very different poets. Dom Moraes, winner of the Hawthornden Prize at the age of 19 for his first book of poems, A Beginning went on to occupy a pre-eminent position among Indian poets writing in English. Nissim Ezekiel, who came from India's tiny Bene Israel Jewish community, created a voice and place for Indian poets writing in English and championed their work.

2.2 INDIAN POETRY AFTER 1950

The place and status of Indian English poetry before and after Independence are open to debate. There are people representing diametrically opposite views on the achievement of this poetry in general. One group out rightly condemns the poetry written before 1947 and eulogizes the post-Independence Indian English poetry. For instance, R. Parthasarathy states that Indian verse in English, “did not seriously begin to exist till after the withdrawal of the British from India”.¹ P. Lal and Adil Jassawalla are in the company of R. Parthasarathy in denouncing the poetry of Sri Aurobindo and his contemporaries lock, stock, barrel.

On the other hand there are critics like V. K. Gokak, C. D. Narasimhaiah and a few others who have lauded the poetry of Sri Aurobindo and his contemporaries like Sarojini Naidu. To Gokak, Sarojini Naidu is the Yeats of India and Sri Aurobindo a great innovator in the art of versification. He classifies the Indian poets in English before Independence into two groups: “neo-symbolists” and “neo-modernists”. The neo-symbolists dive deep into mysticism and the neo-modernists’ vision is coloured by humanism. C. D. Narasimhaiah speaks of Toru Dutt, Sarojini Naidu and Sri Aurobindo in admiration in his well-known book, *The Swan and the Eagle*.

He lauded both Toru and Sarojini as pioneers in the field of Indian English poetry. Professor C. D. Narasimhaiah is more eloquent in his praise of Sri Aurobindo whom he considers not only as a distinguished poet but critic too. He goes a step forward to tell that English language has gained from Sri Aurobindo and compares him with Joseph Conrad who broadened the descriptive range of the English language. He says, “It may be said of Sri Aurobindo that he made the English language accommodate certain hitherto unknown (inconscient) areas of experience both through his prose work, *Life Divine* and through his epic *Savitri*, not to speak of the numerous translations from Sanskrit poetry and drama as well as his other less known but important works”. It is interesting and important to remember that Sri Aurobindo nearly succeeded in creating an idiom in English which is peculiar and unique to the genius of Indian people. Well-known scholars and critics like K.R.S. Iyengar, Sisir Kumar Ghose and M. K. Naik too praise Sri Aurobindo and Sarojini Naidu as poets of importance. In

the course of an article entitled "Indian Poetry in English Yesterday-Today Tomorrow" (The Literary Criterion Vol. XVIII No.3, 1983. Pp.9-18), Professor K. R. S. Iyenger takes R. Parthasarathy, Keki N. Daruwalla and Adil Jassawalla to task for criticising Sri Aurobindo and earlier poets in English for wrong reasons.

On the other hand there are sceptics who denounce post-Independence Indian English poets beginning with Nissim Ezekiel. To some purists the best post-1947 poets in English would appear as Pseudo-Keats, second-rate Tennyson, third-rate Hardy, and fourth-rate Eliot. It seems to me that a good deal of poetry of our time can be highlighted without denying or denigrating the poetry of our predecessors or taking a parochial and what George Woodcock calls, "literary incestuousness" attitude to recent Indian poetry in English. I believe that serious Indian English poetry came to be written not immediately after Independence but in the 'Sixties and after. The Indian English poetic movement of the 'Sixties and 'Seventies did much to fix its image as deliberately deficient, moderate with a will. Indian English poets sought comparisons with Anglo-Americans and unfortunately, followed either the genteel English poets or the confessing Americans. This tendency has gradually frayed and will probably give way altogether for the fact that however deliberate (and after a faltering start), post-Independence Indian English poetry has proved increasingly robust, varied, responsive to the times and enjoyable. It is now very rarely either consciously indebted or consciously hostile to Anglo-American models, it has acquired a distinct character and discovered its own voice. The voice is discovered by the poet's genius for intimately registering the idiom of his own world.

Post-Independence Indian English poetry is both a break with the past and a continuation with it too. Modernity in recent Indian English poetry, which essentially means a break with the past, has three identifiable manifestations: one – a past-oriented vision which is associated with a sense of loss and hopelessness, a sort of cultural pessimism; two – a future-oriented vision, associated with a desire to remake the world; three – a present-oriented attitude, ahistorical, amoral, neutral, stoic, ironic, ambivalent, absurdist. This modernity has two modes of "expression" – one, it might result in one turning inward going on one's "voyage

within”; two, it might result in an ironic observation of reality, in “voyage without.”

The incipient romanticism and rapid narcissicism of the early Indian English poetry are now discarded in favour of poetry as “a criticism of life.” Post-Independence Indian English poetry tries hard to set its roots and develop its own artistic credo. It has successfully risen above “decadent romanticism” and in the hands of such brilliant poets as Nissim Ezekiel, A. K. Ramanujan and R. Parthasarathy, it is acquiring new dimensions.

Jayanta Mahapatra, A. K. Ramanujan, R. Parthasarathy, Arun Kolatkar and Kamala Das turn inward to get into their roots. There is a need to acclimatise English language to an indigenous tradition to write poetry effectively. R. Parthasarathy, as it were, gives a clarion call to Indian English poets to return to their respective linguistic traditions. He asks:

How long can foreign poets
Provide the staple of your lines?
Turn inward, scrape the bottom of your past.
(Rough Passage)

It seems natural to conclude that a poet with a live cultural past behind him, aware of his roots and perhaps prejudiced by those roots, has a greater probability of writing significantly than one who has no knowledge of any Indian language: other than English. Jayanta Mahapatra’s “Relationship” is set in Orissa – a land of “forbidding myth”. Mahapatra is “caught in the currents of time” and in his attempt to “go into the unknown in me “tries” to speak of the myth of sleep and action” in order to soothe himself and others who suffer a similar fate. Parthasarathy, Kolatkar and Ramanujan have tried to evoke a sense of their past and inherit the native traditions. Kamala Das too works out her emotional and sexual traumas in poems of unexceptionable frankness reminiscent of the medieval Sahaja poets who espoused free love as a means of realizing oneself. While A. K. Ramanujan’s mind seems to be perpetually busy probing the areas of strength and weakness of his Hindu heritage, Kamala Das highlights with boldness the sexual permissiveness and uninhibition rooted in her native culture and produces arresting effect on readers.

Post-Independence Indian English poetry is genuine because it is deeply felt and addressed to the whole community. Indian situations form a vital part of it. The superstition and folk belief that exist in Indian society, turns out to be a favourite theme of recent poetry. Nissim Ezekiel handles such a theme with superb irony and subdued mockery in *Night of the Scorpion*. The mother is stung, the nationalist and skeptical father tries, "every curse and blessing/powder, mixture, herb and hybrid," as the peasants swarm in to console her offering advice of a strongly ritualistic and faith healing band. The mother's reaction to her own suffering, "Thank God, the scorpion picked on me / and spared my children", ironically rejects both the responses. Ramanujan in his much anthologized poem, *A River* does not present the traditional hymns in praise of the river but records instead, the details about the twins, which the women would have borne, bringing the experience to its simple and painful humanity. India's present day ills like brain-drain too attract the attention of our poets. O. P. Bhatnagar examines the implication of the exodus of the Indian intellectuals to foreign lands and makes a fervent appeal to them to return home. These intellectuals are worse than migrating birds, for the birds, who flyaway in winter because of trenchant cold, return home at the turn of the season. But our intellectuals fail to escape the lure of gold and glamour and stay back. Thus in a poem called *Look Homeward Angel*, Bhatnagar ironically calls them "angels". Likewise, Shiv K. Kumar comes heavily on the politicians who are unprincipled and time-servers. In *Epitaph on an Indian politician*, Shiv K. Kumar has given a very daring portrayal of the politicians:

Vasectomized of all genital urges
For love and beauty
he often crossed floors
as his wife leaped across beds.

Besides the contemporary problems, there is one vital problem – namely, the problem of creating an Indian English idiom which haunts our poets without end. As R. Parthasarathy has rightly observe:

That language is a tree
loses colour
under another sky.

Some of our poets have tried to evoke the sense of “Indianness” both in content and language in their poetry. Ezekiel’s *Every Indian Poem in Indian English*, *Good-bye Party* for Miss Pushpa T. S., Keki N. Daruwalla’s *The professor Condoles* and R. Parthasarathy’s *Incident at Ahmedpore Station* are cases in point.

Nissim Ezekiel, Keki N. Daruwalla, Margaret Chatterjee and Lila Ray, who are unable to share the indigenous tradition, take a different attitude, ahistorical, amoral, neutral, stoic and ironic. The expression results in an ironic observation of reality, “Voyage without”. O. P. Bhatnagar joins them in making pointed, objective and thought-provoking observations on the reality around us. If poetry written in English in Commonwealth and third world countries today is any indication, correctness of language should not be insisted upon. American, Australian, African and West Indian writers have discovered their own idioms in English. Post-Independence Indian English poets have attempted and succeeded to a limited extent in evolving a new Indo-English idiom. Though Indian English poetry has outgrown Victorian taboos and our poets have broken new ground, the quest for cultural moorings seems to be a major pre-occupation with them, a trait they unwittingly share with Madhusudan Dutt, an earlier Indian English poet of repute. But the pervasive presence of this conscious “Indianness” without any trace of romantic nostalgia or exotic quaintness sets contemporary Indian English poetry apart from the imitative mediocrity of much of this poetry in the pre-Independence period.

A. K. Ramanujan’s determination: “I must seek and will find / my particular hell only in my Hindu mind”. Kamala Das’s assertion: “I am Indian, very brown / born in Malabar / I speak three languages / write in two / dream in one”; Nissim Ezekiel’s resolution: “I have made my commitments now / This is one to stay where I am”; R. Parthasarathy’s persuasion: “How long can foreign poets / provide the staple of your lines / Turn inward, scrape the bottom of your past”; Daruwalla’s contemplation: “Then why should I tread the Kafka beat or the wasteland / when, mother, you are near at hand / one vast, sprawling defect” and Jayanta Mahapatra’s attempt “to speak of the myth of sleep and action / in the hope of soothing myself and those others” have unmistakably indicated the direction Indian English poetry is likely to take in the future.

2.3 WOMEN POETS

Indian women poets writing in English from Toru Dutt to Kamla Das and from Sarojini Naidu to Suniti Namjoshi reveal the mind-boggling variety of theme as well as style that poetry is capable of offering. In the last fifty years absorbing a variety of influences, dealing with a range of themes and generating diverse strategies of poetic expression. Each one of them has tried to speak in a distinctly personal voice, yet they form a part of chorus, a collective voice asserting the autonomy of women. It needs to be remembered that poetry written by women need not be viewed only as feminist poetry. In fact the belief that one is a woman is almost as absurd and obscurantist as the belief that is a man. However, literature by women tends to get marginalized because of the disparate tendencies of reception to their writings. In writing and particularly in writing poetry women are allotted personal but not public spaces, a private but not a political or rhetorical voice. Women poets have often raised their voice against social and cultural conventions that constrained their freedom and perpetrated a sort of institutional subjection of women. Women writers assert that the creation of a community of women is necessary antidote to the excess of individualism. They believe that women need to explore their collective consciousness and shared experience in order to transcend the fragmentation and isolation of their lives. With regards to the new trends and techniques in women's poetry there is a remarkable movement connecting the domestic with the public spheres of work. Increased metropolitan activities, sophisticated life styles, globalization, urbanized influences of pop, disco and cafe culture, Anglo-Americanization and the public and convent education of the present generation of women poets have made their poetic language, chiselled, sharp, pithy and effortless. The deconstructive strategies of narrative and conceptual frames, along with the simultaneous assimilation of pan-Indian elements have made their poetry a formidable area of study and research. Other than the skillful use of standard poetic devices, the semiotic, symbolical and metaphorical properties of language help to emphasize the feminist strategies of interrogation. The fissures and fragments of post-modern life are questioned and reflected in the highly experimental diction. The problems of sociological vis-à-vis literary politics, of gender inequities of marginalization and sub-humanisation of women, of their social and artistic exclusion and of the dominant need for inclusion and democratization, all contribute

towards the distinctive character of this poetry. For the first time, mapping out new terrains the poetry of such Indian women poets bring forth the suppressed desires, lust, sexuality and gestational experiences. This new poetry in new forms of new thematic concerns of contemporary issues has changed the course of human civilization as the country entered the new millennium. As such, it does not remain isolated from the global trends and can be corroborated by the fact that it has incorporated itself the manifestations of the feminist movements that swept through Europe, America, Canada, and Australia since 1960s. At the same time in India appeared the poetry of Kamla Das, Eunice de Souza, Mamta Kalia, Tara Patel, Imtiaz Kalia, Gauri Deshpande, Suniti Namjoshi, Gauri Pant, Lakshmi Kannan, Vimla Rao, Meena Alexander, Margaret Chatterjee, Charmayne D'Souza, Mamta Kalia, Sujata Bhatt, etc.

Tejdeep Menka Shivdasni and a few other women poets who not only totally upset the phallogocentric discourse of Indian English poetry by introducing in it a new array of thematic contents in new voices, but relate their experiences in their art from a broad spectrum of styles.

Kamla Das is one of pioneering post-independence Indian English poets who have contributed immensely to the growth and development of modern Indian English poetry. Her poetry could be divided into three categories - positive poems, negative poems and poems about her grandmother and ancestral house, leaving aside of few poems of some minor observations. The love poems where she expresses her happiness and the poems where she expresses her resentment against unfulfilled love may be termed as positive and negative poems respectively.

The Freaks is a negative poem in which love turns to lust. The woman in the poem complains bitterly against the attitude of her man because there is no love between them and what keeps them together for a moment is the lust of the blood. The physical appearance of the man is repelling to the woman because his cheek is 'Sunstained', mouth 'a bark cavern' and teeth 'uneven'. There is no love between them and as he puts his right hand on her knee, "they only wander, tripping / Idly over puddles of Desire". 'Desire' here is personified. It stands for lust - mere carnal desire devoid of warmth of love and affection.

Kamla Das's poetry reveals that the gap between the larger feminist consciousness of women whose issues were being voiced has reduced considerably. The colonial exotic has now redefined not only her sexuality but also created suitable alternatives. Gauri Deshpande is a name that the critic and reader of Indian English poetry cannot bypass without leaving a conspicuous lacuna in his repertoire.

Menka Shivadasni's poetry holds together a private world of chaotic emotions through its logical development and its strikingly imaginative icons. Her *Nirvana at Ten Rupees* (1990) is a careful selection spanning twelve year's work. Shivadasni, a well-travelled journalist who worked for a year in Hongkong, was one of the founding members of the Bombay Poetry Circle in 1986. In her poetry, she had anticipated many of the new characteristics of Bombay poetry as it would develop during the 1990s. Her poems can be broadly categorized under three types of skeptical attitudes which reveal the writer's preoccupation with pessimism. The first category deals with the relationship between man and God the second, with the human predicament; and the third with the women's condition. In all three cases the life has hit her so hard that the situation is desperate and pathetic and death seems to be the only escape from the generally disturbing experiences of life. Her horrors and temptations of living alone in a small flat, the anxieties of a single life which get complicated by being a woman, the sordid world of sex, drugs, broken relationship and the aftermath are portrayed in stark reality. She traces her own transition from a believer to an atheist in the very first poem of the collection, 'The Atheist's Confession'. The poem starts with nostalgia of rosy faith in the "earth god" when she "ate Prasad only after a bath" is contrasted with a later stage when "gods no longer smiled when I prayed" because she had framed her cold logic that "They couldn't / They were of stone /" and eventually comes the final word that "God didn't exist." The writer's uncertainty regarding the existence of God is further evidenced in the poems *Are You Three* and *Somewhere on the Streets*. The tedious nature, the sheer monotony of the modern mechanized existence is described in *Destination* where the daily commuter's journey in the second class railway compartment is between Church gate and insanity. Another poem *Schoolgirl No More* displays the modern women's predicament that having spent a lifetime in acquiring bookish knowledge at school, "nothing measures up to what it should.

“Geography taught her the vastness of space, history not to live in the past and English Literature “That I belong nowhere. Physics, Einstein and his theory of relativity taught her to hate everything including herself. So mere acquisition of knowledge is fruitless without its moderation through contact with wisdom, seems to be the leit motif of many of Shivdasani’s poems. In the poem Safe - I Think, ‘the human being is compared with a palm tree, the coconuts of which are likened to the tears of human beings. The coconuts are “wrenched” for profit. Despite thinking that it is safe for the next one hundred and fifty years the trees are surviving under the permanent fear of destruction. The modern man’s threatened condition is reflected in the concluding lines that offer a comment on the ever-growing materialistic attitude of people who are simply not concerned with the life and feelings of others : Highly metaphoric, at times almost surreal, her poems show a woman alienated from the expected conventions of social life, strongly aware of sexuality and mental unrest where her inner and outer life is at odds. In the above mentioned poem, though Shivdasni apparently mocks at the heart of the volume lurks a similar wage for a paradise or a nirvana, something better than the anxieties, dishonesties, repression, false needs, hypocrisy and basic ugliness of ordinary life.

The woman is still a ‘football’ who is kicked around, used and abused and when the man “scores his goals,” he leaves her into the drain where it belongs once the game is over. She gets disturbed and angry at the maltreatment meted out to her but is there anything that she can do to alleviate her miserable plight? Another woman poet, who is aware of the discrimination of the genders in the society, is Tejdeep. The alienation and marginalization as the inevitable fate of woman in patriarchy is portrayed by her in her volume of poems entitled *Five Feet Six and a Half Inches* (1977), abbreviated F. Though subjective and limited in scope, the works of Tejdeep compel the reader to take note of the underlying significant intent of her verse where she is trying to raise her lonely voice not only for herself but for many upcoming Tejdeeps to charter a new territory for themselves. As an Indian English woman poet, Mamta Kalia has left her mark in the field of Indian English Poetry. She got two collections of poems published from Writers Workshop, Calcutta. They are *Tribute to Papa and Other Poems* [1970] and *Poems 1978* (1979). Mamta Kalia defines the phenomenon of the educated urban working women. In a poem

entitled *Compulsions* the poet expresses her desire to defy social norms.

Sujata Bhatt born in India and educated in the United States, now living in Germany has been shaped by cross-cultural experiences as reflected in her three collections : *Brunizem* (1988) which won the Commonwealth Poetry prize (Asian Section), *Monkey Shadows* (1991) won a poetry Book Society Recommendation and her third anthology *The Stinking Rose* (1997) is the recent book with a selection from the first three books introduced by one new poem. *Rajana Ash* in *The Oxford Companion to Twentieth Century Poetry* describes Sujata's poetry as "the anguish of immigrants when they start lose their first language," and she comments approvingly on the poet's attempt to use Gujarati line interspersed with English ones", onomatopoeia effect, and because for her certain subjects cannot be described in English." In fact, her bi-lingual poem explores the conflict of the self fragmented between different cultures. One can argue that incomprehensibility thus created is poet's deliberate design to draw the reader into her own sense of otherness in order to experience a predicament which allows only a peripheral existence. At the beginning of *Search For My Tongue*, an eight page poem, the Gujarati sentences are translated quite literally into English. As the poem progresses the Gujarati lines remain flat, prosaic and closed, while the English sentences that flow become longer and richer, spinning off associations and graphically building on them so that they work quite independently of the Gujarati original.

Bhatt seems to be obsessed with the question of language, which she looks at from different points of view at different times.

Bhatt's recent work evinces her growing interest in the character sketch and its more evolved form, the dramatic monologue. Her exceptionally wide range of reference enables her to present characters as diverse as a young Indian girl during the partition and an old Spanish woman working in her field. The monologues are more numerous; a swimmer in New England, the snake-catcher; the artist in Dublin; Jane addressing Tarzen; and even Hannibal's personal elephant Surus talking to its master. What is generally missing however, is the undercurrent of irony which constitutes the chief strength of Browning's dramatic monologues.

In many other places, almost the same urge of exploring the implications of dislocations and tensions of living in an alien land get evident as in the poem *The One Who Goes Away* from the book *The Stinking Rose* where she is searching for a place in order to keep her soul from wondering.

Moving between countries and cultures, Bhatt is concerned with the construction of the self and its relationship with memory, history and identity. While honouring the importance of her heritage, she also seems to be striving to discover who she is; she fosters both the values of her birthplace and her Western self-confidence, at the same time she reveals her sense of alienation in the environment of the country of her domicile. The poems, therefore, in general are marked by the twin metaphors of loss and recovery. While the loss is real in terms of spatial and temporal distance from the motherland, the recovery can only be imaginary – or at best aesthetic. It is indeed remarkable that Sujata Bhatt has not only the right idiom at her command but also a native mode to express a new consciousness. Meena Alexander's *A House of a Thousand Doors* for instance is an Indian woman living in United States. She often hears voices of the village women she left behind. During her birthing pains in New York these women come in dream to deliver her. In a moment of this primeval pain, all barriers collapse and women come together in mutual sympathy, understanding and concern. Suniti Namjoshi directly addresses the need to legitimize lesbianism and argues that a woman's love for a woman is both natural and quite ancient. She complains that books, stories and society all collude in propagating the myths of compulsory heterosexuality and in all these versions men love women and women love men, and men ride off and have all sorts of adventures while women stay at home. In a number of poems included in her collections *Jackass and the Lady* and *Blue Donkey Fables*, Namjoshi celebrates lesbian eroticism.

These and many more recent women poets bring out the conflict of gender through the Indian female psyche in its interaction and correlation with the male psyche. Written in a personal and confessional style, their poetry acts as a social document because they themselves are victims and agents of social change. In the twilight zone in which the creative mind dwells, there is a natural feminine ability to turn inwards, to accept intuition and tenderness as values long with the gentle sensitivity to one's natural

environment and to the latent communications among human beings which mobilize the feelings and imageries and bring forth the new feminine voices creating new terrains. Female bonding in literature has thus taken a variety of forms. The agenda being common, women need to come together and call into question all the diverse strategies of patriarchy.

2.4 NON FICTIONAL PROSE

Non Fictional Prose is any literary work that is based mainly on fact, even though it may contain fictional elements. Examples are the essay and biography.

Defining non fictional prose literature is an immensely challenging task. This type of literature differs from bald statements of fact, such as those recorded in an old chronicle or inserted in a business letter or in an impersonal message of mere information. As used in a broad sense, the term 'nonfictional prose literature' here designates writing intended to instruct (but does not include highly scientific and erudite writings in which no aesthetic concern is evinced), to persuade, to convert, or to convey experience or reality through "factual" or spiritual revelation. Separate articles cover biography and literary criticism.

2.5 NATIVISM

Nativism locates non-vedic and oral tradition as the most significant creative upsurge of the Indian mind not only for the merit of ideas and insights it can offer but for its place in the process of acquiring Indian sensibility. Bhalchandra Nemade is the first important literary critic to introduce nativism which has the context of a living desi (native) tradition inherited from the Satyashodhak (seekers of truth) Movement started by Mahatma Phule. Each nation has its unique culture and civilization, which may be called its soul; hence we should cultivate the habit of looking within and be proud of our Indian culture and institutions in the right spirit. Consequently, we must rule out the colonial and brahmnical literary canons as being the only authentic literature.

Bhalchandra Nemade is the most prominent theorist and his prominence is due to his theory of Nativism. He is not afraid of adopting certain Western ideas (i.e. Ralf Linton's Nativistic

Movements from Anthoropology) if he feels that their adoption is necessary for India's innovation. At the same time, he is careful to keep intact the genius of our civilization. What he wants to keep intact is what is truly original to the Indian way of thinking. And the theory of Nativism certainly is part of it.

At present, one finds an unusual proliferation of Indian practical criticism without the necessary native theory of literature. The attempts to westernize or to Sanskritize Indian literary theory into a single system also proved to be inadequate. There is a great problem, which needs to be looked into in order to understand the precise nature of the crisis in Indian criticism. That problem relates neither to the Sanskritic tradition of poetics nor to western literary thought. It relates to literary theory in the modern Indian languages.

In order to evolve a native literary theory based on our national genius, culture and traditions, Bhalchandra Nemade, a poet-Novelist critic, advanced the positive term 'Nativism' to start a nationwide literary movement emphasizing India's many regional languages and cultures, a movement just now being widely recognized and challenged. The concept of Nativism has its affinities with the ideology expounded by two Mahatmas: Phule and Gandhi, both posed danger to the greater Anglo-Sanskritic tradition by introducing a different system of moral concern which emphasizes truth and threatened to alter the basic characteristics of Indian society by making its cultural periphery its center. Nemade, successfully, advanced the term nativism, shaped by decentralized impulse rather than centralized one and advocated indomitable literary values: tradition, Indian modernity, new morality, verbal action, truth, language of the people and nativisation.

Nativism in Indian literature is not anti-migrant like American Nativism because it is not form of ethnic identity that seeks to exclude those who are not members of the local or indigenous ethnic groups from residing and/or working in a territory because they are not native to the country or region. But Nativism is reactionary and progressive form of indigenism whose agenda can be summed up as an urge for cultural self respect and autonomy. It is nothing but the freeing of Indian literature from alien models and creating the opportunity to make it stand on its own. Nativism is not

atavism; those who have a hankering to go back into the ancestral past are called atavistic.

Thus, nativism is a value term. It stands for the writer's clarity of vision about his place in his society and culture; it stands for mature understanding of things in their proper perspective; and it stands for the writer's sense of responsibility as an adult to forge in the smithy of his soul the uncreated conscience of his race.

2.6 INDIAN DRAMA IN ENGLISH AND TRANSLATION

The post-Independence Indian English drama was benefitted by the increasing interest of the foreign countries in Indian English literature in general and Indian English drama in particular. A good number of plays by Indian playwrights Asif Currimbhoy, Pratap Sharma, Gurucharan Das have been successfully staged in England and U.S.A. But the plight of Indian English drama is that no regular school of Indian English drama was established in our country. This is mainly because the encouragement drama received from several quarters immediately after India got freedom but it was monopolised by the theatre in the Indian regional languages while Indian English drama continued to feed on crumbs fallen from its rich cousins' table.

The plays have been written in prose but at the same time poetic plays also survive in the post - colonial era. M.K. Naik rightly opines "... that Tagore-Aurobindo-Kailash tradition of poetic drama continues, but with a difference in the hands of Manjeri Isvaran, G.V. Desani, Lakhan Dev and Protish Nandy." Manjeri Isvaran's *Yama and Yami* (1948) is a dialogue in poetic prose, with a prologue and an epilogue, dealing with the incestuous love of Yami for her brother. G.V.Desani's *Hali* (1950), an entirely different kind of play, received high praise for its originality, symbolism and rich imagery. Regarding the message of the play *Hali*, M.K.Naik remarks Hali finds peace in the thought that man must transcend human love, go beyond life and death and even leaving behind his limited idea of godhead, develop in himself a god-like love and detachment. Lakhan Dev's *Tiger Claw* (1976) is a historical play in three Acts on the controversial murder of Afzal Khan by Shivaji. His two plays are *Vivekananda* (1972) and *Murder At The Prayer Meeting* (1976). The use of blank verse is flawless and the last play compels us to remind of T.S.Eliot's *Murder In The Cathedral*. Other verse plays of

the period include P.A.Krishnaswami's *The Flute of Krishna* (1950), M. Krishnamurti's *The Cloth Of Gold* (1951), S.D.Rawoot's *Immortal Song. Karm and The Killers* (1959), Satya Dev Jaggi's *The Point of Light* (1967), Pritish Nandy's *Rites for a Plebian Salute* (1969). Hushmat Sozerekashme's *Vikramjeet* (1970), Sree Devi Singh's *The Purple Braided People* (1970), P.S. Vasudev's *The Sunflower* (1972) and S.Raman's *Karme* (1979). The number of prose playwrights is larger in comparison to verse playwrights. The most prolific playwright of the Post-Independence period is Asif Currimbhoy, who has written and published more than thirty plays. Some important plays are *The Tourist Meeca* (1959), *The Restaurant* (1960) *The Doldrumness* (1960) *The Captives* (1963) *Goa* (1964), *Monsoon* (1965) *An Experiment With Truth* (1969) *Inquilab* (1970) *The Refugee* (1971), *Sonar Bangla* (1972) *Angkor* (1973) and *The Dessident M L A* (1974). In spite of comprehensiveness, Currimbhoy's dramatic art has been a subject of criticism for the lack of structured plot, embellished language and balanced characterization. His dialogue reflects the extreme poverty of invention and his language is not suitable to capture the internal drama of the clash of motives. His symbols are often crude, conventional and mechanic but the greatest limitation of his technique is revealed especially in his later plays, in which Currimbhoy appears to confuse dramatic technique with theatrical trickery and stage gimmicks with dramatic experience. Pratap Sharma wrote two prose plays *A Touch of Brightness* (1968) and *The Professor Has a War Cry* (1970). His plays were staged even abroad successfully but they failed to be staged in the country. Sex, moreover remains the prime theme of his plays but Pratap Sharma shows a keen sense of situation and his dialogue is often effective. Prof M.K. Naik appreciates his dramatic art for his keen sense of situation and effective dialogues. In the realm of Indian Drama, Nissim Ezekiel is acknowledged for his exceptional poetic creed and rare dramatic sensibility. Nissim Ezekiel's *Three Plays* (1969) including *Nalini: A Comedy*, *Marriage Poem: A Tragi Comedy* and *The Sleep Walkers: An Indo-American Farce* are considered to be a welcome addition to the dramaturgy of Indian English drama. *Songs of Deprivation* (1969) is also a short play by Ezekiel. Gurucharan's *Larins Sahib* (1970) a historical play, deal with Henry Lawrence of Panjab. The play, *Marriage Poem* presents the conflict of a middle class husband caught in the conflict of commitments of married life and the desire of love. *The Sleep Walkers* is a diverting take off on national preconceptions and prejudices. In spite of

strong sense of dramatic concept, Ezekiel could not transform his poetic talent into appropriate dramatic talent. His plays can be appreciated for symmetrical construction with abundance of irony. They unveil his sharp observation of the oddities of human life and behaviour. Ezekiel's poetics self swayed his dramatic creed but his plays make a 'pleasant reading'. It is attributed In his satire of current fashion, in his exposure of prose and presence, Ezekiel comes very close to the spirit of some English social satirist in theatre.

Contemporary Indian drama, deviating from classical and European models, is experimental and innovative in terms of thematic and technical qualities. It is not an off spring of any specific tradition and it has laid the foundation of a distinctive tradition in the history of world drama by reinvestigating history, legend, myth, religion and folk lore with context to contemporary socio-political issues. A cumulative theatrical tradition evolved by Mohan Rakesh, Badal Sirkar, Vijay Tendulkar and Girish Karnad prepared the background of contemporary Indian English theatre. Girish Karnad in the capacity of writer, director and actor substantially contributed to enrich the tradition of Indian English theatre. His dramatic sensibility was moulded under the influence of touring Natak Companies and especially Yakshagana which was in those days not accepted as the purified art form. His well known plays are *Yayati* (1961), *Tughlaq* (1962), *Hayavadana* (1970), *Nagmandala* (1972). He borrowed his plots from history, mythology and old legends but with intricate symbolism, he tried to establish their relevance in contemporary socio-political conditions. The play *Yayati* reinterprets an ancient myth from Mahabharata in modern concept. The plot of the play *Hayavadana* is adopted from *Katha Saritsagar*, an ancient collection of stories in Sanskrit. Tughlaq is Karnad's best historical play where he mingles facts with fiction. Karnad projects the curious contradictions in the complex personality of Sultan Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq. In the play *Tale Dande*, he discovers the vital relationship between contemporary society and literature. His use of myth as a structure and metaphor in his play gives "new meaning to the post from the vantage point of view of present". In the play *Nagmandala*, the conflict is between patriarchal and matriarchal views of society. It is about the life of Rani, a typical Indian woman in male dominated society. She is married to Appanna, a wealthy village youth. The focus in the play is on sexual liberty of sexes: male and female. In order to counter

mail dominance, Karnad adopts a strange device in which King Cobra gets sexually involved with Rani and ultimately she becomes pregnant. Like his other female protagonists, she is encouraged to pass through chastity ordeal. Regarding the position of Rani, Smita Nirula holds :

“Rani is never free to express herself, to be herself. She is either daughter, wife, lover or mother. She is always playing a role imposed upon her, except in her dreams in the lonely nights that engulf her. She is a woman used, abused. She can either live as a whore or a Devi. There is no element of person for her” Karnad’s dramatic art lacks stability still his success lies in technical experiment with an indigenous dramatic form. The collective efforts of Karnad and Karalam Narayana Pannikar are significant in their binding of the traditional forms of Indian theatre with the modern. Born in 1828, Vijay Tendulkar began his career as a journalist but from the very first play *Grihasth* in 1955 to *Safar* in 1992, his plays have given Indian theatre a rich and challenging repertoire. Leading the Vanguard of the avant-garde Marathi Theatre, Vijay Tendulkar symbolizes the new awareness and attempts of Indian dramatists of the century to depict the agonies, suffocations and cries of man, focusing on the middle class society. In all his plays, he harps upon the theme of isolation of the individual and his confrontation with the hostile surroundings. Influenced by Artaud, Tendulkar, relates the problem of anguish to the theme of violence in most of his plays. He does not consider the occurrence of human violence as something loathsome or disgusting in as much as it is not in human nature. He says :

“Unlike the communists I don’t think violence can be eliminated in a classless society, or for that matter, in any society. The spirit of aggression is something that human being is born with. Not that it is bad. Without violence man might have turned into a vegetable.”

While depicting violence on the stage, Tendulkar does not dress it up with any fancy trapping so as to make it palatable but rather keep it low and natural. The plays *Chimaniche Ghar Hote Menache* (1960), *Kalokanchi Shala* (1968), and *Ek Holti Mugli* (1967) reflect Tendulkar’s concern with authority and the idea of exploitation of individual. In the plays *Silence! The Court Is In Session* (1968) and *Ghasiram Kotwal* (1972), the theme of

oppression dominates. *Sakharam Binder* (1972) is a study in human violence amounted to powerful dramatic statement. *Kamala* (1982) and *Kanyadaan* (1982) are written on the lines of naturalistic tradition. *Kamala* is a study of marital status of woman as well as it is the study in the theme of exploitation. *Kanyadaan* is a complex play about the cultural and emotional upheavals of a family. Tendulkar was associated with New Theatrical Movement in Maharashtra. He presents a fictional reality in which the reality of life acquires a sharp focused character having rare dramatic power.

Badal Sircar too is a prestigious name in the realm of contemporary theatre. He represents New Theatrical Movement in India. He has created an appropriate 'People's Theatre' a theatre supported and created by people. His dramatic career began with humorous play like *solution X*. His earlier plays are *Evan Inderjit* (1962) *That Other History* (1964) and *There Is No End* (1971). All these plays are based on political, social, psychological and existential problems. Evan Inderjit, is a tale of a playwright who struggle in vain to write a play. In the play *There's No Need* Sircar develops the thesis that "We are all accused" and share the burden of guilt. Afterwards, he wrote *Pary Konodin*, *Jadi Aur Ek Baar*, *Palap* and *Pagla Ghoda*. His later plays *Procession*, *Bhoma* and *Stale News* are based on the concept of Third Theatre. The play *Procession* is about the search for a 'real home' in new society based on equality. It suggests a 'real way' to new way in which man does not have to live exploiting man but should work according to his own needs. *Bhoma* is a dramatization of the life of oppressed peasants in sexual India. The analysis of these three plays suggests remarkable changes in Sircar's concept of a 'real home', a new society based on equality and free from the horrors of exploitation. Tendulkar in 1967, established his theatre group called 'Satabdi .' sircar's first contact with Grotowski's 'Poor Theatre' influenced him greatly in formulating his Third Theatre. In Indian English drama the influence of Mohan Rakesh cannot be ignored. He wrote in Hindi. His plays are of exceptional dramatic relevance. They have been translated in English and other regional languages. He published his first major play *Ashadh Ka Ek Din* in 1958, *Leharon Ke Rajhansa* appeared in 1963 and *Adhe Adhure* was first staged in 1969. The play *Pair Tale Ki Zamin* was completed by Kamleshwar after his death and published in 1974.

As a playwright, his main concern was to portray the crisis of contemporary man caught in the web of uncongenial surroundings and the persistent threat to human relationship. Mohan Rakesh perceived drama as a complex art involving the uniform contribution of actors, scenic effects, light and music and effective stage direction. Mohan Rakesh made extensive experiments in theatre. He used words and languages not as dialogues or direct statements but as the tools of suggestion to convey the meaning beyond the verbal connotation. In *Ashadh Ka Ek Din*, he highlights the dangers of sycophancy that whitens of his age face in desire of dignified official position. In *Leharon Ka Rajhans*, he reflects on the problem of relations between man and woman, ego clashes, divided self and on going illusion and nothingness. *Adhe Adhure* deals with the clash of ego between husband and wife, disintegration of family relationship, the prominence of individual interest against the commitments of the family. Besides, women dramatists also tried to enrich the soil of Indian drama by projecting the inner world of feminine psyche in the theatre. Women's theatre coalesces with Street Theatre movement, using the same technique in performance and production. It can be attributed as a 'Theatre of Protest' because women writers expressed their resentment against the politics of exploitation on the basis of gender discrimination. They also revived the traditional myths of Sita and Savitri and tried to reinterpret the epics from women's point of view. The dramatic work of Usha Ganguli and Mahasweta Devi can be placed in this category. Mahasweta Devi emerged as a dramatist having a quest to explore something challenging and new. Her five plays are *Mother of 1084*, *Aaj Urvashi O' Johnny*, *Byen* and *Water*. The play *Mother of 1084*, is a moving account of the anguish of an apolitical mother who had witnessed the horrors of Naxalite Movement. In *Aajir*, Mahasweta Devi deals with the issue of the fast deterioration of values and their effects on society, particularly on illiterate people. *Urvashi O' Johnny* is a play written for emergency through the love affair of Johnny with Urvashi, a talking doll. The play *Bayen* presents a moving account of harsh reality of a woman's life in rural India. The play *Water*, is the story of a professional water-diviner, Maghai Done who is an untouchable boy. Her plays represent a profound concern for human predicament and sincere hope for the better future of mankind

Mahesh Dattani

Mahesh Dattani is arguably one of the best playwrights the country has ever produced. Born in Bangalore on 7th August 1958. His preference for English as a medium of expression was almost obsessed. He tried to represent Indian soil and sensibility in the

wake of globalization. His famous plays are *Where There is a Will*, *Final Solutions*, *Dance Like a Man*, and *Tara*.

2.7 QUESTIONS

Write short notes on the following

1. Early Indian English poetry
2. Poetry after 1950
3. Women Poets
4. Indian English Non-fictional Prose
5. Modern Indian drama in English and Translation
6. Nativism



THE MARTYR'S CORNER & THE ASSIGNMENT

Unit Structure :

- 3.0 Objectives
- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 The Martyr's Corner
- 3.3 The Assignment
- 3.4 Let us Conclude
- 3.5 Questions

3.0 OBJECTIVES

The aim of this Unit is to introduce two short stories, *The Martyr's Corner* written by the renowned writer R.K. Narayan and *The Assignment* written by Saadat Hasan Manto, one of the best known short story writers of the twentieth century. It is unwanted aggression that grips both the short stories and exposes how a small redundant incident can change the lives of the common man.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Both the short stories take the readers to the simple and unsophisticated life of the ordinary men who suffer not because of any mistake they have committed but because of the fault of the attitude of the masses. *The Martyr's Corner* depicts the simple life and commerce of Rama, the food vendor, who loses his business, his reputation, his livelihood, everything in the hands of violence. *The Assignment* expresses the fear, the agony and the pain of those who have experienced the chilling sensation of communal riots.

3.2 THE MARTYR'S CORNER

The Author

R.K.Narayan (1906-2001), is considered to be one of India's best known writers and a leading figure in the early Indian literature

of English. With Mulk Raj Anand and Raja Rao he is known to have introduced India to the other English-speaking nations of the world. Born in Chennai and having completed his education in Mysore, he started writing literary reviews for various newspapers. The setting of most of Anand's stories is the fictional town of Malgudi, which he first introduced in his first novel, *Swami and Friends*, published in 1935. His narratives emphasize social framework and provide a particular feel for his characters through everyday life. Some of Narayan's famous novels are – *The Bachelor of Arts* (1937), *The Dark Room* (1938), *The English Teacher* (1945), *The Financial Expert* (1942), *Waiting for the Mahatma* (1955), *The Guide* (1958), *The Man-Eater of Malgudi* (1961), *The Vendor of Sweets* (1967), *The Talkative Man* (1992) and many more. He has also published collection of essays like *Next Sunday* (1960), *My Dateless Diary* (1960), *My Days* (1974) etc. He has also written columns for magazines and newspapers and in 1964 had published his first work of mythology, *Gods, Demons and Others*, a collection of short stories, rewritten and translated from Indian epics. Narayan later published translations of *The Ramayana* (1973) and *The Mahabharata* (1978).

He was nominated to the Rajya Sabha in 1980 for his contribution to literature where he focused on the concern of the heavy pack that the school children carried and the negative outcome of the established education system on a child's creativity. In 1942 Narayan first published his collection of short stories, *Malgudi Days* which he republished again adding a few more stories in 1982. His next collection of short stories, *A Horse and Two Goats* appeared in 1970 followed by *Under the Banyan Tree and Other Stories* (1982). He started his publishing company, Indian Thought Publications, during World War II which is now managed by his granddaughter. Narayan's scripts represent pragmatic typesets who follow their everyday schedule with complete dedication. He tries to squeeze out the paradoxes in the characters' lives in a straightforward, good humored and sympathetic approach. His characters are commonplace people with experiences that are at times ordinary and at times, extraordinary, and who are often pitted against the demands of the society in such a way that their personal and community lives often amalgamate. Most of Narayan's characters were inspired by his private occurrences and his sharp observation of his surroundings.

Summary

The short story *The Martyr's Corner* by R.K.Narayan revolves around Rama, the food vendor, and indicates how a small unpredictable circumstance can bring in a change in the lives of the ordinary men. Sudden external unknown situations crop up and create a dramatic effect forcing the humble individual to surrender

oneself in the hands of destiny. The language of the story is vivid and descriptive and the content of the story takes us to the first half of the twentieth century when coins of annas, paisas and pies existed.

Rama, the protagonist of the story, runs a comfortable business of selling food items at a particular corner, which he feels and indeed is, very lucky for him. Though Rama is uneducated, it does not affect his commerce and the comments of the passersby justify his prosperity and the jealousy that resulted – “Lucky fellow! He has hardly an hour’s work a day and pockets ten rupees – what graduates are unable to earn! Three hundred rupees a month!” but Rama is very unhappy at such comments because he knows the amount of work and dedication required for the best stuff to be prepared to attract various customers. Often he is irritated at such remarks and grumble to himself – “What these folk do not see is that I sit before the oven practically all day frying all the stuff

Fortune favors him and he makes the best use of his business strategies that help him to make good profit every day. He is hardworking and punctual and very popular among his customers. Sharp at 8.15 in the evening he would reach his lucky corner and lay out the stuff that he, along with his wife, had prepared throughout the day and display it on a big tray balanced on a stool. The mouthwatering bondas, dosais, chappaties, chutney, duck eggs and refreshing coffee would allure everyone to come and satisfy one’s taste bud. The appearance and the aroma of his food was so mesmerizing that even a confirmed dyspeptic failed to pass by without throwing a glance at the tempting sight. Rama was always on time to catch the cinema crowd of the evening show and his customers also included the boot polish boys, jutka drivers, beggars, grass selling women and many more. Rama is not harsh even on his competitors as is evident from his allowing a young fellow to do business in the same place till he arrives.

As the corner where Rama laid his stuff was easily accessible to all his customers he was making a good profit of nearly ten rupees every day. It was really interesting to note that all the copper coins that they earned throughout the day by serving their own customers finally came to Rama in the evening as it was only here that they could buy eatables at a very reasonable and cheap rate. And this is one of the reasons that his customers like him – “is there any other place where you can get coffee for six pies and four chappaties for an anna?” Rama gave his customers the privilege to pick and choose their own food but he knew very well the timing and the delicacy of each of his customers. Although he had a soft corner for the poor boot polish boys, it was impossible for him to think of any kind of charity for them as he did not want his

business to be affected. He disliked serving his women customers, especially the blind beggar and the grass-selling women, as their loud shrill voice took to his nerves. After satisfying his customers throughout the evening, emptying his load of food, he would return home contented as well as saturated. Happy did the days pass by and Rama had no complains.

But suddenly things take a different turn. One day when Rama reached his favorite corner with his usual stuff of food items he got astonished as he was not allowed to sell his food there. The reason behind this denial is the murder of someone in the afternoon which had aggravated a group of people who were then holding a meeting to show their protest. The agitated group demonstrated strongly and very soon a fierce fighting got started killing many people and consequently leaving the spot totally devastated. Even after a few days the situation does not improve and Rama is not allowed to carry on his business as the corner is declared as a holy place and the place is cordoned off. In some time money is raised and a stone memorial is erected with an ornamental fencing and flower pots encircling the spot and thus the place becomes 'the martyr's corner'.

Rama is forced to leave his favorite place and shift at a distance with his stuff but this new place does not bring him luck. He even loses his selected customers because the new place is quite inconvenient for them to reach. This substantially reduces the income of Rama and everyday he has to return home with a bulk of leftover. Not just his business, even his happiness is ruined forever. He loses his reputation as well when he tries to reuse his leftover which makes some of his customers fall sick. Ultimately Rama has no other go but to wind up his business and decides to retire. But soon his savings get exhausted and he is in search of a job to carry on with their livelihood. Ultimately he takes up the job of a waiter in Kohinoor restaurant and for twenty rupees a month he had to wait eight hours a day on the tables. He is not very happy with the loudspeakers shrieking all day and being dealt with very rudely by the guests. But he submissively gulps down the insult and sticks on to his job but never forgets to inform them that once he too was a hotel owner and this recollection gives him great satisfaction – When some customer ordered him about too rudely, he said, "Gently brother. I was once a hotel-owner myself." And with that piece of reminiscence he attained great satisfaction.

Significance of the Title

The title of the story is sarcastic as it points out to the ailing mindset of the authoritative administrators who give more importance to the departed but they inhumanly ignore the plights and sufferings of the existing. Although in the conventional manner

the spot emerges out to be the 'Martyr's Corner' but ironically it is Rama who pays the price by losing his livelihood, reputation and his entire fortune. In the true sense it is Rama who is the actual 'martyr'.

Check your Progress :

1. 'But such security is unattainable in human life'. Discuss the statement giving illustration from the story ***The Martyr's Corner***.
2. The story ***The Martyr's Corner*** deals with the rise and fall of Rama's fortune. Discuss.

3.3 THE ASSIGNMENT

The Author

Saadat Hasan Manto (1912-1955) was one of the best and most controversial short story writers of the twentieth century. Born at Samrata in Ludhiana district, Punjab, he worked as a journalist and was also a scriptwriter for radio and films. He has published twenty-two collections of stories, seven collections of radio plays, three collections of essays and a novel. The best years of his life were spent in Mumbai, a city that he had loved and longed for till the time of his death, and then he shifted to Lahore soon after Partition. Manto captured the insanity of Partition and he was one of the few who had the detachment and compassion to comprehend the vice and place it according to his own perception. He confidently believed that the inherent dignity of man, his fundamental decorum, and his capacity of adoration and concern do not expire, though they may be momentarily eclipsed. He expressed this assurance of his through, one after the other, commanding short stories.

Undoubtedly one of the best and most controversial short story writers of the twentieth century, Manto is often compared with D.H. Lawrence because, like Lawrence, he too wrote about the socio-economic discrimination that was ubiquitous in the society. At times his topics are too controversial like love, sex, prostitution, etc. which he handles with the help of satire and humour. To quote him: 'If you find my stories dirty, the society you are living in is dirty. With my stories, I only expose the truth.' (Introduction, *Mottled Dawn*, Penguin 2000). This rationalizes his justification of truth and his sincerity of expression.

Summary

The Assignment is set against the backdrop of Partition – a period that saw various unnatural happenings and intolerable sufferings. People felt the pain and the agony but they did not relent and humanity was lost forever. The situation was very grim and

people lost faith on others. Like the general view of Amritsar, the retired judge Mian Abdul, had a strong feeling that the riots could not last long. He was absolutely confident that the thunderstorm would blow over and things would return to normal soon and this gave him the assurance that there was no reason to worry. And so though the Muslims living in Hindu vicinities began to depart towards safer places and Hindus in Muslim majority areas followed the same, Mian Sahib decided not to move his family. With his small family comprising of a daughter of seventeen, a son of eleven and a servant in his seventies, Mian Sahib stuck to his obstinate decision of not moving to any safer destination.

His daughter Sughra was apprehensive of the situation as from the topmost floor of their three-storey building she had seen fires raging everywhere followed by the ringing of the fire engines. She had seen 'too many fires in too many places' and the 'sky was always lit by conflagrations like giants spitting out flames' and has understood the gravity of the situation. The nights had become frightening with slogans like 'Allaho Akbar, Har Har Mahadev' but Sughra did not express her fear to her father as she did not want to shatter his confidence which assured that there was no reason for anxiety. Finally when even the power and water supplies were snapped, she expressed her nervousness to her father and apologetically suggested to him to move to a Muslim dominated area. But nothing could move Mian Sahib's unwavering resolution.

Things disproved Mian Sahib's predictions and the situation worsened day by day. During such a traumatic circumstance, Mian Sahib suffered a stroke and the family was in a state of distress. There was no doctor available as all the dispensaries and clinics were closed. Mian Sahib's condition deteriorated day by day and Sughra became so desperate that she even sent her small brother out to find some rescue. Having witnessed a blood drenched body Basharat returned immediately and Sughra was happy and thanked the almighty for his safe arrival. Sughra helplessly watched her ailing father, her young frightened brother and the useless seventy-year old servant who mainly kept himself to bed, coughing and fighting for breadth. Finally one day she couldn't keep her composure and burst out at the old servant criticizing him for being good for nothing. Later she felt very bad for her harsh words and when she went to his room with food he was nowhere to be found. The brother and the sister searched for him and Sughra prayed for his safe return, but he was gone forever.

The festival of Id was just a day away and Sughra remembered the past celebrations that they used to have. Suddenly there was a knock at the door and though they felt it might be Akbar, their servant, they realized that it was not he but someone else. When Basharat came and said that it was a Sikh

Mian Sahib immediately understood that it must be Gurmukh Singh whom Mian Sahib had done a great favour by getting him acquitted in a false legal suit. From that day onwards Gurmukh Singh had felt indebted to Mian Sahib and every Id he had shown his gratitude by bringing some homemade food for the family. But this time it was not Gurmukh Singh but his son Santokh Singh, assigned to carry out this errand by his departed father. It was to fulfill his father's farewell wish that Santosh Singh had come all the way from his village to deliver the siwwaiyaan to Mian Sahib on the occasion of Id, as his father has always done to register his lifelong gratefulness.

Having fulfilled his paternal assignment, Santosh left the house. But outside the door he was surrounded by four veiled men, sarcastically wanting to know whether he had appropriately carried out the errand his father had entrusted upon him; whether the token of gift from his father has been successfully delivered. With burning oil torches with cans of kerosene and explosives they set themselves ready to carry out their job.

It is considered as one of the most remarkable stories of Manto which brings alive the most traumatic happenings during the Partition of the subcontinent and its aftermath. Undoubtedly the actual tension and violence is not portrayed but the hint of the tragedy is so well depicted that the reader's imagination knits the unsaid words into a profound connotation.

Significance of the Title

The Partition of the subcontinent is very well portrayed and the title justifies the importance of an assignment. On the one hand Santokh Singh, overlooking the tension and the violence around, carries out the assignment that his departed father has consigned upon him and then walks away surrendering the submissive family in the hands of the violent mob. He fulfills his father's assignment and also lets others fulfill theirs. On the one hand the attribute to humanity is commendable and on the other the attitude towards sadism is heartbreaking. The assignment has to be carried out whether it is appreciable or poignant, it does not matter.

Check your Progress:

1. How does Manto depict the trauma of Partition in ***The Assignment?***
2. Illustrate the situation of the town during the riots through the eyes of Sughra and her experience of fear and pain at such a critical time.

3.4 LET US CONCLUDE

The Unit gives a clear picture of the twinge and trauma that is felt in the stories because of some erratic unavoidable circumstances. In both the stories, *The Martyr's Corner* and *The Assignment* the authors bring out the other side of the human façade – where humanity is lost and innocence is buried forever. Very emphatically does R.K.Narayan portray the world of Rama on the backdrop of the martyr's corner and finally makes him the actual martyr; and very ardently has Saadat Hasan Manto relate how, in the backdrop of the communal riot, a happy assignment can turn sour in a fraction of a second.

3.5 QUESTIONS

- 1) Illustrate the character of Rama in the story, *The Martyr's Corner*.
- 2) Short notes on:
 - a) The usual comment of the passersby and Rama's reaction to it.
 - b) The riot in *The Martyr's Corner*
 - c) Rama's flourishing business in the beginning of the story
 - d) The significance of the title '*The Martyr's Corner*'.
 - e) Rama's shift from a businessman to a waiter
- 3) Explain the reason behind Santokh Singh's coming to the house of Mian Sahib and the consequences that happened after he left.
- 4) Short notes on:
 - a. The difference of the present unrest to the previous ones
 - b. Sughra's behavior with their servant Akbar
 - c. Gurmukh Singh's acknowledgement of Mian Sahib's kindness
 - d. Sughra's unhappiness during Id
 - e. The heartbreaking conclusion of the story



GOOD ADVICE IS RARER THAN RUBIES & THE STOREYED HOUSE

Unit Structure:

- 4.0 Objectives
- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Good Advice is Rarer than Rubies
- 4.3 The Storeyed House
- 4.4 Let us Conclude
- 4.5 Questions

4.0 OBJECTIVES

The Unit aims at introducing two short stories, Salman Rushdie's *Good Advice is Rarer than Rubies* and Waman Hoval's *The Storeyed House*. Both the stories take the readers deep into the world of sincere realization where one understands the importance of true advice and also recognizes the plight of the lower section of the society who face unaccountable problems because of the torture imposed by the upper caste section.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The story, *Good Advice is Rarer than Rubies*, is based on the exploitation of such women who are in need of their visa to go to foreign lands and so fall a prey into the hands of the advice givers; and how finally a lady changes the concept of true advice and makes everyone realize the essence of authentic guidance. *The Storeyed House* seeps into the heart of all and touches that part of sensitivity which knows how incorrect it is to afflict the lower section of the society for no reason at all. Having taken birth in a Dalit society does not snatch away the right to live properly. A human being has the right to live according to one's desire; no caste system should interfere into it. But the Indian society, with all its repercussions, continues with the same trend where the reins are in the hands of the upper caste and the Dalit is treated just like an animal under their control.

4.2 GOOD ADVICE IS RARER THAN RUBIES

The Author

Born on 19th June 1947 in Mumbai, Salman Rushdie is considered one of the greatest novelists, short story writers and essayists of the time. His first novel *Grimus* (1975) was a work of fantasy and science fiction. It was the publication of his second novel, *Midnight's Children* that infused immense literary recognition and fame on him. This highly appreciative novel was the recipient of the 1981 Booker Prize and was also awarded the Best of Bookers in 1993 and 2008. Apart from these two novels, his other novels are *Shame* (1983), *The Satanic Verses* (1988), *The Moor's Last Sigh* (1995), *The Ground Beneath her Feet* (1999), *Fury* (2001), *Shalimar the Clown* (2005) and *The Enchantress of Florence* (2008). He has also contributed in the area of non-fictional work like *The Jaguar Smile* (1987), *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism 1981-1991* (1991) and *Step Across the Line* (2003). His contribution in the area of short stories is also commendable – *East, West* (1987), *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* (1990) and *Luka and the Fire of Life* (2010).

Rushdie was appointed Commandeur de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres of France in January 1999. He has several awards to his credit and has also been appointed a Knight Bachelor by Queen Elizabeth II for his 'services to literature'. In 2008, The Times ranked him thirteenth on its list of the fifty greatest British writers since 1945. Since 2000, Rushdie has lived in the United States, where he has worked at Emory University and was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Letters. His most recent book is *Joseph Anton: A Memoir*, an account of his life in the wake of the controversy over *The Satanic Verses*. In 2012, Salman Rushdie became one of the first major authors to embrace 'Booktrack' (a company that synchronises ebooks with customised soundtracks) when he published his short story *In the South*.

Rushdie is known for his different artistic style that has the tinge of magical realism in it, where the real world portrayed has magical and illusory elements within it. He has mainly concentrated his writings into this fantastic world of illusions and his themes move around exile, rootlessness and transformation.

Summary:

The collection *East, West* is divided into three categories, 'East', 'West' and 'East, West' with each section containing stories which are set in their respective geographical locations and *Good Advice is Rarer than Rubies* is a part of this wonderful collection. A

moralistic tale centring around the meaning of freedom, the story embarks interaction between Miss Rehana, a woman applying to leave her country for England, and Muhammad Ali, a swindling 'advice-giver' who offers to help women like Rehana in their appeals for a price. A chilling touch of British colonization prevails in the story when the shanty, outside the British consulate, that houses quite a large number of natives is hinted at. The congregation mainly comprises of the 'Tuesday women' who visit the consulate with their desperate aim of emigrating to England, a country that is considered to possess greater economic opportunity and freedom. The main desire of these women is to somehow leave their country in the hope of a better tomorrow in an alien land and for this they are even willing to part with their monetary reserves. At such crucial moments men like Muhammad Ali come to their rescue with various ideas and advices and lure the women to fall in their trap of counselling and make a fortune out of their anxiety and distress. These men know the tricks of capturing the ladies by promising them ways of swindling the system that allows only few to exit.

Miss Rehana is an exception in the world where Rushdie mainly composes individuals with similar fundamental aims, as instead of a recipient she becomes the advice giver to Muhammad Ali. It is with her demeanour and her physical beauty that attracts special attention and a different behaviour from all those who encounter her. Everyone is fascinated towards her not just for her charm and beauty but also for the politeness and courtesy that she ensured. As she steps down from the bus Muhammad Ali is entangled in her beauty and his first expression reveals his exclusive judgement – 'Miss Rehana's eyes were large and black and bright enough not to need the help of antimony, and when the advice expert Muhammad Ali saw them he felt himself becoming young again.' Beauty is captivating and Muhammad Ali understands that he has fallen a prey to it. It is not just him who experiences the pull and he realizes that every man present there from the bus driver to the guard, who is usually rude to the Consulate's Tuesday women', is caught in the whirlwind. The men fail to ignore her self-assured beauty that seems to be coming out as a radiation from her inner enigma.

Like other Tuesday women, Rehana does not share the appearance of nervousness and panic and it is her tranquillity that intrigues and demands special attention. Salman Rushdie portrays Miss Rehana with a magical appeal – the power, dictating but naive, of a sorceress. Muhammad Ali is gripped into the enchanting surrounding of Rehana and he adjusts himself immediately to act upon his initial response with her. He thinks in himself how to break through the facade of her composed self with his experienced

advisory words. After so much of preparation before facing her, he is completely shocked and surprised by the words that actually come out of his mouth. He finds himself offering Miss Rehana with free advice and even, eventually and strangely enough, accepts to provide her with the treasure of a secured passport. He feels drawn to propose these things complimentary to Miss Rehana against his 'own violation'. It is his concern for her immature character that forces him to offer such a reward to her, even though it is not in his statuesque. His apprehension for the lady forces him to guard her somehow from facing the situation inside the Consulate. But to his dismay he finds her not at all alarmed by her lack of preparation or knowledge that is usually required at such a moment. Somehow he tries to unnerve her by sharing his awareness of the persistent questioning that occurs inside the walls of the Consulate. But she maintains her usual calmness and concentrates more on the pakora that she buys for herself and even offers it to Muhammad Ali.

When finally the time for his usual swindling arrives, he even goes to the extent of offering her the passport which she instantly and forcefully refuses, feeling insulted by his suggestion of asking her to be dishonest. She leaves him hurriedly, without looking back for any further assistance and Muhammad Ali yells after her the perception of the world that they share: 'It is a curse of our people,' he yelled. 'We are poor, we are ignorant, and we completely refuse to learn.' This is the actual truth that he feels persists beneath the superficial charm that people pretend. But to the surprise of Muhammad Ali, Miss Rehana speaks a language of cliché that in fact corresponds to his. When offered free advice, she responds, 'When Fate sends a gift, one receives good fortune.'

But after she returns from the so called grilling at the Consulate she seems so happy that Muhammad Ali believes that she has been granted the passage to England. And it is then that she discloses to him her story which very well justifies the reason behind her serenity. She has not been granted with what he thinks could have been the reason of happiness for all; instead she actually does not want to leave the country for somewhere very alien to her – she would rather prefer to live the life she knows than to escape to an arranged marriage. She seeks to lead her life according to her own will rather than the ways of tradition and culture and the force of her parents dumped upon her. Very emphatically she proves Muhammad Ali's scepticism wrong, explaining through the particulars of her own individual story that she is no fool in desiring to stay and live and lead her own personal life. She is bold enough to come back to Muhammad Ali and tell him the reason behind her behaviour. She prefers rejecting the societal pressure of joining her husband who had, after marriage,

left her long ago for a different destination altogether. At this juncture of her life she wishes to continue her life as an independent, single, working lady, rejecting the interference of anyone beyond herself.

Her story and her revelation is an eye-opener for those ladies who feel the pressure of society and sacrifice their life for the sake of something very shallow. The story even rejects the perception that England is a preferable place for everyone who belongs to the other side of the globe. There is also a critical approach to the traditional practice of arranged marriage and also the expectation that usually prevails that all women, after marriage, must live with their husbands according to the demands of the husbands. Strangling their own wishes the women have always to appreciate the decision of their husbands and follow them wherever and whenever they desire. Miss Rehana's disclosure of her story implies that others could be less desperate if they really wanted to be. Her final advice to Muhammad Ali that he should not be sad for her, transforms him completely: 'Her last smile which he watched from the compound until the bus concealed it in a dust-cloud, was the happiest thing he had ever seen in his long, hot, hard, unloving life.' Miss Rehana disappears in the dust cloud, her beauty veiled with her departure as it was during her arrival, but it was much clearer to those who will heed her advice and Muhammad Ali is one of those who takes in her advice with warm acceptance.

Significance of the Title

The title of the story signals the level of parable at work in the story as a whole. The actual advice giver Muhammad Ali receives, at the end, a very important advice from Miss Rehana which completely transforms his way of thinking. This beautiful piece of advice is so precious that one who recognises it can become the richest person morally. In today's world such prized suggestions are hardly available. A person can get hold of a precious stone like a ruby but to come across a good advice is exceptional. Miss Rehana's advice is one such precious advice that overshadows the expense of rubies.

Check your Progress:

1. Illustrate the theme of the story with reference to the significance of its title.
2. Explain how Rehana's physical beauty wins the heart of Muhammad Ali and how her wonderful actions confound him completely.

3. Short notes on:

- a. The character of Muhammad Ali, the advice-giver
- b. The business of Muhammad Ali
- c. Muhammad Ali's concern for Rehana
- d. Rehana's behaviour after she comes out of the embassy
- e. Rehana's confession at the end

4.3 THE STOREYED HOUSE

The Author

Waman Hoval, one of the most renowned Dalit short story writers, is known for his rustic comedy and brusque dialogues. It is the pain and suffering of the Dalits that he has been dealing with in his nearly fifty years of writing experience. Among the collections of his short stories, *Yelkot* (1982) and *Varasdar* (1986) have won Maharashtra State Government Awards. Many of his stories have been translated into various languages like English, French, Hindi and Kannada and have also been included in the syllabus of various universities. Hoval is also known for his contribution to folk theatre.

Summary

The story endeavours to capture pragmatically the Dalit predicament recounting to identity crisis and consciousness. Bayaji, a Dalit, had left his native village to work as a labourer in the dockyard of Bombay. Having reached the age of retirement at sixty, he collects his life savings to settle down in his ancestral village. He has imbibed many new ideas through the three decades of his stay in the metropolitan city of Bombay. And he was also enthusiastic in demonstrating to his village community that he has been doing well in the far off place and was successful in life. He wanted to use his life savings into something that he had always wished for his family. With boldness and pride he announced his plan to his children – 'Look, children, ours is such a large family. Even at mealtime we have to eat by turns or sit crowded, knocking our knees together and wish to build a house out of my earnings and it has to be a storeyed house; the usual three-portioned house won't be adequate for us.' Throughout the pain of staying clumsily forces Bayaji to take such a decision and he feels that more space in the house will give them the comfort of staying. It is just a common desire and hardly does he know that this ordinary gesture of his might change his fate altogether.

Hearing the decision of Bayaji, the family is overjoyed. The plans are drawn up and the foundation of 'the storeyed house' is

laid on an auspicious day. But the news of the storeyed house is not received well by Kondiba Patil, the 'high caste' headman of the village as his was the only storeyed house and no one can even imagine of building the other. And the fact that a Dalit is even thinking of building one equal to his own is not only an insult to his status, but also a devaluation of the accepted form of social hierarchy. Others among the caste community join Patil by murmuring that 'the untouchables were forgetting their position.' The message is absolutely clear and Patil even warns Bayaji in no uncertain terms – 'You may go for a storeyed house only if you don't wish to stay in the village and hope you know what I mean'. And to make his supremacy felt and emphasize his words he continues with 'This untouchable worm has got a swollen head. He needs proper handling.'

But Bayaji sticks to his pronouncement and carries out his efforts in the building of the new storeyed house. After the house is complete Bayaji keeps a house warming celebration and invites everyone of the village to be a part of the happy occasion. Guests throng in and Bayaji is very excited about the arrangements he has done for his guests. While the celebration starts winding down in the early hours of the morning, suddenly Bayaji's house is on fire from all sides. Bayaji is hysterical and he runs here and there and then to the first floor to save the pictures of Lord Buddha and the Dalit heroes. Throughout he keeps screaming, 'My house, my storeyed house! It's on fire. My enemy has taken revenge on me.' In trying to save the frames of his heroes from being engulfed into the fire, he is badly burnt. His sons surround him and hear him murmur his last words of instruction to them – 'Sons I want you to build a storeyed house. I have no other wish.' To have a storeyed house is his only dream and fascination as he wanted to live a life with no scarcity of space and no congestion. But his enthrallment is not eyed well by the upper caste members of the village and his dream unfortunately is shattered into pieces. But even on his death bed he doesn't lose hope and expresses his wish to his sons and desires fulfilment of it from them.

The police inquiry is made and the verdict is announced: the fire is caused accidentally by a petromax lantern. Strange are the ways of the society where money and power can win over everything. Even at such instances the cause of death remains unanswered and the culprit finds his own way to escape the bars of prison. After the funeral, while all are resting, Bayaji's sons come out with the spade, baskets, a pickaxe and a hoe and start working on the field where the ashes of the old house still remain. When the others want to know the reason behind and question them to know what they are doing, the eldest son replies, 'We're starting on a house, not one with a concealed first floor but a regular two-

storeyed house.’ Bayaji had at least understood the gravity of caste distinction and had decided to make a concealed second floor. But when his wishes are thrashed and Bayaji is killed, having pronounced his only wish to his sons, the sons become coarse in attitude and determined in action. Openly they now want to face the challenges of the caste order. They do not want to conceal the floor any more but openly build a two-storey house.

In Hoval’s story, for a Patil, the construction of a storeyed house by a Dalit is a symbolic assault on the horde of financial, social, cultural and political privileges which the Hindu society bestows on him as a representative of the caste community. But while the general eminence that Patil benefits from may have had sacred permission, the associations of this to caste privilege are hindered in uncertainty. In the eyes of the caste communities, what Bayaji does represents a destabilization of a whole hierarchical world order that is concretely lived out in the real world of power relationships. The fundamental right of the Dalits to create their own identity in sovereignty and solemnity is completely smeared out by the upper castes. Violation, thus, of the human rights of the Dalits to shelter liberty, equality and fraternity is a serious transgression.

Significance of the Title

The title of the story is well justified as it is just the desire of a storeyed house that leads to anger and hatred finally resulting in death. The wish of Bayaji is minimal – to build a storeyed house so that they are able to accommodate themselves comfortably. But the society peeps in and the caste system hinders every such yearning. Material comfort in its lowest form also can be responsible to snatch away the peace and harmony of the society. Bayaji could never think that a storeyed house could lead to such results. His death is a testimony to the plight of the Dalits who have no right to fulfil their wishes, the wishes as small as that of staying comfortably in a storeyed house.

Check your Progress :

1. ‘The caste system still plays a very vital role in the villages of India’. Comment on the sentence with reference to the short story *The Storeyed House*.
2. Comment on the portrayal of a Dalit village in *The Storeyed House*.

4.4 LET US CONCLUDE

The Unit depicts the pain and passion that formulates in the stories because of the wrong conceptions and the societal prejudices. The stories, *Good Advice is Rarer than Rubies* and *The*

Storeyed House play with the thought process of the readers as the authors try to inculcate the gravity and profundity of the situations. Very realistically does Salman Rushdie depicts the world of Muhammad Ali who takes advantage of the situation of those desperate women who require his support and suggestion regarding their passage to another country. This sublime world of the advice-giver is knocked off by the simple suggestion and submission of the young lady. Waman Hoval also articulates the pragmatic world of caste inferiority being dominated by the upper caste exploiters and the level of insanity that it finally reaches to – even assassination is not an issue when caste is concerned. There is a quintessence of frantic circumstances in the occurrences of the rational world and both the writers have tried to live up to that for proper justification.

4.5 QUESTIONS

1. Comment on the rare piece of advice that Rehana imparts through her own story.
2. Analyse the character of Rehana focusing on how she is different from the other 'Tuesday-women'.
3. Analyse the character of Bayaji in the short story *The Storeyed House*.
4. Short notes on:
 - a. The reason of Bhujaba becoming furious on Bayaji
 - b. Bayaji's wish of utilizing his savings
 - c. Bayaji's reaction when his house is set on fire
 - d. The reaction of Bayaji's sons after his funeral



SONG OF THE ROAD: THE NOVEL

Unit Structure:

- 5.0 Objectives
- 5.1 Introduction
- 5.2 Bibhutibhushan Bandopadhyay
- 5.3 *Pather Panchali*
- 5.4 Song of the Road
- 5.5 The Structure of *Pather Panchali*
- 5.6 Summary of the Novel, *Pather Panchali*
- 5.7 Questions

5.0 OBJECTIVES

This unit aims at making the students familiar with:

- Bibhutibhushan Bandopadhyay, the famous Indian novelist
- *Pather Panchali*, the novel by Bibhutibhushan Bandopadhyay
- *The Song of the Road*, English translation of *Pather Panchali*

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Indian writing in English took its roots in the fertile soil of West Bengal in 19th century. The establishment of the University of Calcutta in 1857 helped the youth of the time to be familiar with English language and literature. This newly educated class started penning their thoughts and ideas in English. Still there were some writers who preferred to write in Bengali. Bibhutibhushan Bandyopadhyay was one of those Indian writers who wrote his works in his mother tongue. His *Pather Panchali* is one of the all-time greats in not only Bengali literature but Indian literature as a whole.

5.2 BIBHUTIBHUSHAN BANDOPADHYAY

Bibhutibhushan Bandopadhyay was born as the eldest child of Mahananda and Mrinalini on 12th September 1894 in West Bengal. His family originally belonged to Panitar village in the North 24 Parganas district. His great-grandfather migrated to Barakpur village and got settled there as an Ayurvedic physician. However, Bibhutibhushan was born in Muratipurin, North 24 Parganas district. His father, Mahananda Bandopadhyay, was a Sanskrit scholar and story-teller by profession.

As a child, Bibhutibhushan was a talented student, who studied at Bongaon High School. He completed his undergraduate degree with Economics, History and Sanskrit from the Ripon College, Kolkata. Though he was admitted to M.A. and Law classes, he could not afford the fees. Therefore, he was forced to take a job of a teacher in a school at Jangipara, Hooghli to support his family. Bibhutibhushan's early days were spent in abject poverty.

His first wife, Gouri Devi died of pneumonia only after a year of their marriage. This tragic event in the life of young Bibhutibhushan had a very serious effect on his emotional as well as literary life. It made him lead a life of loneliness and the theme of tragedy became a recurrent motif in his early writings. Bibhutibhushan married Rama Chattopadhyay and had a son, Taradas. Such a writer breathed his last on 1st November 1950.

Bibhutibhushan's writing career started in 1921 with the publication of his first short story, *Upekshita*. With the arrival of his masterpiece novel, *Pather Panchali*, he became well-known with readers and critics. *Pather Panchali* was followed by its sequel, *Aparajito*. Both of these novels have been translated into numerous Indian and foreign languages and were also adapted for films by Satyajit Ray. In all Bibhutibhushan Bandopadhyay wrote 16 novels and over two hundred short stories.

5.3 PATHER PANCHALI

Pather Panchali is a Bengali term. In Bengali, 'pather' means 'of the path' and 'panchali' means 'folk song'. Therefore, 'Pather Panchali' means '*The Song of the Road*'. *Pather Panchali* is a novel

written in Bengali by Bibhutibhushan Bandyopadhyay, a Bengali writer of the pre-independence period.

The story of the novel revolves around a poor Brahmin family in Bengal. The father Harihar is priest, an optimist and dreamer, who never compromised with his dreams in spite of living in abject poverty. The mother Sarbojaya is a woman of the world who has the responsibility of raising her small daughter Durga and also taking care of her elder sister-in-law. Apu, their son grows amidst the love and pampering of mother and sister. Durga has developed a very cordial relationship with her aunt, who shares each and everything with her. However, the mother gets fully tired of her husband's complacency. Durga is seen facing false charges of theft. The aunt is always in loggerheads with the mother. The aunt had the last wish to die in the courtyard of her house but she dies at the orchard. At the end even Durga falls sick and dies. The father comes home and is saddened by Durga's death. Finally he determines to face the life realistically and so decides to take his family to Banaras for search of a new life.

5.4 THE SONG OF THE ROAD

The Song of the Road is classic translation of the novel *Pather Panchali* from Bengali to English by T.W. Clark and Tarapada Mukherjee. The author's style in keeping the Bengali tradition is truly world class. Each and every character has been given a very clear cut style and the same has been portrayed in the movie made by the famous Indian filmmaker, Satyajit Ray.

Of course, there are certain changes and also few distortions in the translated work, yet it has to be taken into consideration that Bengali language and Bengali culture are hugely different from English language and its culture. The novel is a story of the struggle for survival of a Brahmin family. The scene which has been captured in each and every section of the book is also a greatness of the writer. One can visualize the scene moving in front of the eyes. The writer has definitely succeeded in holding the attention of the readers from beginning to the end. Each and every page of the story keeps the readers going on and on until they reach to the end. The language is very simple to understand. It is really a commendable work done by the translator.

The novel is about the life and times of the Roy family in a small village called Nishchindipur. The head of the family is a reader of holy books or kathak. His wife, Sarbojaya is the symbol of Indian womanhood - silent and strong. During the long absences of her husband, Sarbojaya has to take care of the household. She has a daughter named Durga. As the novel progresses, a son, Apu is born to the Roys. There are beautiful scenes between mother and son as they play a very private game of peek-a-boo between themselves. As Apu grows, Durga finds an obedient companion in him. Together they play their childish games, have impromptu picnics in the nearby bush and watch trains. The novel presents a touching picture of the lives of ordinary people in a rural setting.

The children also are in awe of Indir Thakrun, an old aunt whom no one cares for. Infact, Apu shares his food with her. As always Apu, the man-child is the centre of both Sarbojaya and Durga's existence. Misfortune strikes as Durga falls ill and dies resulting in the family's decision to leave the village for Benares.

The novel has a very smooth narrative. The events seem to come and go as they should. There is a lyrical quality to the story. It is the tale of ordinary folks in very ordinary circumstances. Yet it provides insights into the tragedy of the human existence.

5.5 THE STRUCTURE OF *PATHER PANCHALI*

The novel, *Pather Panchali* has been divided into three sub-parts – ballalibalai, ama aatirvepu, and akrursanbad. The story line of the novel is very simple: the common things that happen in a poor village family; but it's the description given by the author, the beautiful use of language and the wonderfully described truth of poverty, is what makes this novel interesting and favourite even with the 21st century readers.

Part – I - *Ballali Balai*

In this part, the story evolves round the tragic life led by Indir Thakrun. Indir Thakrun, a widow, was a victim of the ballali system. As per this system, a Brahmin man may have many wives but did not accept their responsibilities. After marriage the wives had to stay at their father's house and not at their husband's house. This system prevailed in Bengal at the time when the story takes place. Naturally, Indir Thakrun is dependent on her distant brother, Harihar and has no other living relation. However, Sarbojaya could

not tolerate her. Durga was really close to her aunt and this made Sarbojaya even more furious. Many times they quarrelled and finally, one day Indir Thakrun leaves the house. But she returns home as she could not keep herself away for long. But now Sarbojaya turned her out of the house again. Indir Thakrun really felt helpless and didn't know where to go. Finally she dies on the road.

Part – II - *Aam Aatir Vepu*

This part depicts the growing stage in Apu and Durga's life. They are both good looking and are fond of each other. Imaginative Apu's feelings have been mostly portrayed in this part. It depicts incidents like: Apu-Durga getting lost while searching for railway tracks, their secret picnics, Durga getting beaten by her mother and once by Sejo Thakrun for stealing things from her house, Apu's dream of flying, etc. But the most tragic thing that takes place here is Durga's death. She had been suffering for quite a long time of malaria and soon after recovery, she died because of heart fail. Harihar was not present at the time of Durga's death and when he came back after a long time, he decided to take his family to Kashi, where Harihar thought they had hopes of a better future. Apu was not willing to leave his lovely village, his friends, Ranudi and Potu, the trees, their house and the memories of his sister, but he was forced to leave by his parents

Part – III - *Akrur Sanbad*

In Kashi, Harihar's prospects did not improve at all and after some months there, Harihar also died. Sarbojaya didn't have enough money and she could not go back to Nishchindipur because her self-respect did not allow her to do so. Therefore, instead of going back, she took up a job as a cook in a rich family. She and Apu were not at all happy there but they had no any other alternative. During this period, Apu found a new friend Leela, a girl of the family where Sarbojaya worked. But soon enough she also went away to some other place and again Apu was left alone. Once after being mercilessly flogged by the head of the family where they lived, Apu's mother proposed that they should go back to Nishchindipur. This aroused a new light of hope in Apu's heart. He has always felt that Nishchindipur has been calling out to him and now he prayed to God that He must send them back to Nishchindipur. But the god of the road answered him that he did not

bring them all this long way just to send them back. The novel ends with a suggestion that Apu's journey has just begun and he has a long way to go.

5.6 SUMMARY OF THE NOVEL, *PATHER PANCHALI*

Harihar Roy's household consisted of four people – his wife Sarbojaya, baby daughter Durga, 75-year-old Indir, a distant cousin, and himself. Tucked away in a corner of Nishchindipur, a tiny village in rural Bengal, his life was simple and uncomplicated, except for the usual ups and downs that go with lack of money. The traditional business of his family was to conduct religious rituals of different kinds. So there were regular clients at whose homes he performed them. This included people in his own village as well as a few others in nearby villages. It was not a profession where one made money. People usually gave him a few seasonal fruits, vegetables, sweets and a handful of grains and occasionally a rupee or two for conducting these rituals. But Harihar had a little piece of land and a roof of sorts over his head.

Sarbojaya strongly resented Indir's presence in her little household and made it more than obvious. But little Durga was extremely fond of old aunt Indir and spent most of her time listening to her stories, learning rhymes from her and playing with her. Whenever Sarbojaya was extra rude the old lady walked out vowing never to return again, Durga toddled after her, lisping "Come home, aunty, come home" and managed to bring her back. Before long, Durga had a little brother. Everyone was delighted, most of all little Durga and old aunt Indir. The baby boy was named as Apu. He was a little charmer. Everyone adored him. Before long, Sarbojaya picked up another quarrel with old Indir and drove her out. The old lady did not return this time and died soon after.

As Durga and Apu grew older they spent most of their time roaming about the countryside, climbing trees, looking for wild fruits and flowers, watching birds and rabbits, splashing in ponds and rivers. Durga knew every tree, every flowering shrub, every dell and nook. She knew where fruits grew wild and got them for her little brother and herself. Their rich relatives looked down on them and the rich cousins never asked them to join in their games. So Apu and Durga lived in their own world. Forbidden to enter the orchards of their rich cousins, they hunted for mangoes and fruits in the wilderness. One afternoon they were caught in a fierce storm and

sought shelter under dripping trees with Durga hugging her little brother to keep him warm. Though Sarbojaya was horrified to find them drenched to the skin they were thrilled with their adventure and the few mangoes they had managed to gather.

Apu was a bright young boy. He loved to hear his mother read out stories from the battered family *Mahabharata*. He saw it all in his imagination – the fight between the Pandavas and the Kauravas and just how they used each weapon. But his favourite character was Karna, the wronged, unacknowledged son of Kunti. His large eyes filled with tears every time his mother read about his chariot being stuck in the mud and his disability to protect himself in the battle, specially his final encounter with his arch rival Arjuna, because he had gifted away his protective shield and medallion the previous evening. Apu begged one of the carpenters working nearby to make him a bow and arrow. When one of them did, playing with these new toys became one of Apu's chief pleasures in life. His imagination soared with his arrows as he pictured himself as the different heroes of the *Mahabharata*.

Soon it was time for Apu to join the village school run by the local grocer. The children sat on the floor listening to their teacher, who gave them dictation, carried on his trade and entertained his visitors at one and the same time. The children played noughts and crosses and other exciting games whenever the teacher was otherwise occupied. Apu enjoyed school and learned to read and write pretty fast despite these obvious limitations. He specially loved to hear the beautiful descriptions of places that the teacher sometimes read out to them. Apu wondered wistfully if he'd ever get to see them someday.

When Harihar next decided to visit one of his clients in a far-off village he took Apu along with him. For Apu, who had never stepped out of his familiar realm before, it was one big thrill. Especially so, because they would have to cross the railway lines. Apu had never seen a train and often wondered what it would look like – more so after he saw the railway tracks. How could a vehicle (he was only familiar with the bullock cart) possibly slide over two narrow strips of iron and not slip off them? But Apu did not get to see a train after all, because the next one was due after two hours and his father absolutely refused to wait. It was a long, long walk to their destination. Twilight set in long before they reached.

Harihar's clients were well-to-do farmers who lived in a grand brick house, whereas Apu lived in a mud hut. Apu stared all around him in wonder. He had never seen so many pretty things before in his life. Nor had he ever had such a lavish meal. He longed for his mother and sister and wished they could share it too. He missed them and there was a big lump in his throat when he realized that probably they'd never get to taste anything like this.

The ladies of the house took a great fancy to Apu and let him play with what seemed an incredible collection of wonderful toys. There were lots of playmates too, all eager to play with him. But the one Apu liked best of all was Amala who seemed just like his sister Durga, only much prettier and far better dressed. When the visit came to an end, Apu carried many fond memories and spent the next fortnight telling his mother and sister in vivid details all that he had seen and done. His only disappointment was that he had not been able to see a train even on his way back home. He would not have minded waiting an hour or two to be able to catch a glimpse of the wonderful gliding vehicle but his father would not hear of it.

Apu's dream world consisted of many strange objects. One of them was a long, narrow bamboo twig. This twig was the key to his magic realm of romance. When he held it in his hand, it carried him to the strange world of make-believe where he was a prince, a traveller, a shopkeeper, a leader of battles or prince Arjuna himself. He could imagine it all when he waved the twig about. Durga alone knew of his secret world and quietly laughed at her little brother's strange fancy. Another great excitement in his life was the arrival of the travelling theatre party that visited their village once a year. Apu made friends with Ajay who played the lead as a lady and was around his own age. Apu was quite enthralled by the songs Ajay sang in his various roles. He brought Ajay home to meet his mother and sister who managed to rustle up dinner for him with great effort.

Days rolled by. Harihar, finding it difficult to make both ends meet, left the village in quest of a job that would make life easier all around. But jobs were not easy to come by though he tried his level best. In the mean time life almost came to a standstill at his home in the village for lack of money. Harihar had sent them five rupees but there was no news of him after that. There was hardly anything to eat at home except for what Apu and Durga managed to pick up from the woods. But it was not much and certainly not adequate for

the three of them. They had many rich relatives living virtually next door. But Sarbojaya was far too proud to beg for charity.

After a few days Durga fell ill. There was no money for medicine or even proper food. No one had any idea where Harihar was, so there was no question of sending for him. The rains arrived and their hut leaked from every corner. Durga lay still, quiet and uncomplaining, despite her fever and pain, while her mother tried in vain to look for a dry spot where she might shift her bed. But even in her illness there was just one thing Durga asked for. "I want to see the train. Oh how I wish I could see the train!" she muttered, "Apu dear, will you take me to see one? Will you show me the train, Apu?"

"Yes, I will" promised Apu, "I'll take you to see it when you're better."

By the time Harihar returned to his village, autumn had set in. He had managed to earn a little money during his avid quest for work and had bought a set of new clothes and some books for the children. But Durga was no more. She had breathed her last one rainy night leaving her mother and little brother on their own. When Harihar heard all that they had gone through he was to cut up to live in the village any longer. He had quite believed that his rich relatives would help out his wife and children in his absence, especially when it came to an emergency. Harihar sold off whatever he had – the mud hut and the piece of land it stood on – and prepared to leave Nishchindipur with his family for good. He would go to Benares, find a job there and start afresh.

But the thought of going to a new place did not excite Apu this time. Would the new place have such lovely bamboo groves, such mango trees growing close together where he had spent so many happy afternoons playing with his sister? Would it have such coconut trees with its tall trunks and leaves gleaming in the quiet moonlight? And all these ponds that were a part of his daily existence? Every nook and cranny of the village was filled with memories – of himself and Durga. The sound of their voice and laughter still echoed in the breeze. How could he leave it all? It was like leaving Durga behind!

As they left the village with their few meagre belongings Apu looked back tearfully for the last time. All those dear spots he once haunted with his sister seemed to call him back, begging him not to

leave them, not to go away. In a short time he would have his much longed for view of the train and even have a train journey. But his sister who had so longed for it night and day was no longer there to share the treat. As the train chugged away it seemed to Apu that Durga stood by their favourite mango tree, looking at him wistfully, bidding him a last farewell.

5.7 QUESTIONS

1. Write a note on life and career of Bibhutibhushan Bandyopadhyay.
2. Discuss the plot-structure of the novel, *Pather Panchali*.
3. Write a brief summary of the novel, *Pather Panchali*.
4. What kind of relation was there between Durga and her aunt, Indir Thakrun?
5. How does the novelist throw light on the relation between Sarbojaya and Indir Thakrun?
6. How does the novelist draw the portrayal of poverty and hunger in the novel, *Pather Panchali*.



PATHER PANCHALI - CHARACTERIZATION, THEME AND FILM ADAPTATION

Unit Structure

- 6.0 Objectives
- 6.1 Introduction
- 6.2 Characterization in *Pather Panchali*
 - 6.2.1 Durga
 - 6.2.2 Apu
 - 6.2.3 Indir Thakrun
 - 6.2.4 Harihar
 - 6.2.5 Sarbojaya
- 6.3 Critical Reception to *Pather Panchali*
- 6.4 Film Adaptation of *Pather Panchali*
- 6.5 Questions

6.0 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this unit are to know about:

- The characters of the novel, *Pather Panchali*
- The making of the film *Pather Panchali* by Satyajit Ray, the legendary film-maker

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Bibhutibhushan Bandopadhyay has become immortal in the pages of his novel, *Pather Panchali* as this novel was greatly appreciated all over the world, both by critics as well as common readers. The success of the novel lies in its very powerful story told by the novelist in simple, straightforward style. He is a great storyteller who succeeds in holding the attention of his readers by both his powerful story and his skill in narrating it. His characters are taken from the real life. Naturally, they exhibit all the qualities of a living being. His ability to engross the readers in his fictional world is greatly facilitated by his consistently well delineated realistic

characters. This is true of his characters in *Pather Panchali*. The characters of Durga, Apu, Indir and Sarbojaya are memorable creations of the great artist. Therefore, it would be worthwhile to discuss these characters in greater length.

6.2 CHARACTERIZATION IN *PATHER PANCHALI*

6.2.1 Durga

The character of Durga is one of the most significant creations of Bibhutibhushan Bandopadhyay. In fact, it is delightful to read about Durga in the novel. She is a mischievous, sprightly girl who is absolutely filled with life. The readers are bound to be entranced not only by her sheer love of the world but even by her numerous imperfections. In fact, she is made especially enchanting because she is such an ordinary and flawed human being. She steals from the neighbours. She is angered by and hits Apu. She manipulates him and others to get what she wants. She is very much like most other children.

Actually, *Pather Panchali* is more about Durga than Apu. Durga is an adorable girl. She shares the fruit from the neighbour's orchard with Aunt Indir with whom she feels some natural affinity. Durga must endure the humiliation of being the 'poor girl' in the neighbourhood and longs for the opportunities that her friends enjoy. She steals a beaded necklace from one girl who is unwilling to let her string any of the beads for which she is punished. Here it can be noted that Durga, being a girl child, is expected to play her 'feminine' role in the traditional Hindu society. However, she enjoys a little more freedom at home probably because her father is away.

Towards the end of the second part of the novel, the readers are told that Durga died of heart break. Actually, during the monsoon, Durga dances playfully and joyously about in the rain, getting herself soaked and catching the cold. She develops a fever and is unable to shake it leading to malaria. Her father was not present there to look after her. Her mother takes every care of her daughter and finally she recovers from malaria. But afterwards, she suddenly dies due to the heart break. Her death was a terrible blow for all her family members. When Harihar, her father returns home after a long time, he is shocked to know about Durga's death. He feels that he has lost much more than he has earned during his absence from home. A big piece of the heart is torn out of his family. And therefore, he decides to pack up their meagre belongings and begin a new life in the city of Banaras, where he may be able to find work. As they pack, Apu finds the necklace that Durga had earlier stolen (though she had denied it) and throws it into a pond as if to preserve Durga's memory from any belated taint. The algae on the pond's surface briefly spreads as the

necklace passes through, then closes up as though it had just swallowed the necklace and, symbolically, Durga's life.

6.2.2 Apu

Apu in this novel is presented mainly as the observer. In fact, the incidents of the novel about which we read, shape his character. As he is a young boy, he is seen very closely attached to his sister, Durga. Durga and Apu have a relationship that is typical of older sister and a younger brother. She teases him but is also affectionate to him. He 'borrows' an item from her toy box and flees from her when she tries to recover it from him. They share simple joys together such as sitting under a tree, walking some distance through a grassy field to see a steam train as it passes by, running after the candy man who passes through ringing his bells, viewing pictures of great sights like Bombay harbour in a special viewing device carried by a travelling vendor, and watching a travelling acting troupe that has come to town. Thus, Apu is a lovable character that lingers long in the memory of the readers.

6.2.3 Aunt Indir

Aunt Indir Thakrun is downright ancient. She is bent over at almost a ninety degree angle when she walks. She is a toothless old hag and the kind of realistic depiction of the very elderly. Periodically, Indir takes refuge in the home of another relative when Sarbojaya forces her out or becomes overly abusive. On such occasions, she arrives unceremoniously at her new residence with all of her possessions, which consist of a single bowl and the clothes on her back.

Aunt Indir has developed a very intimate relationship with Durga, the little girl of the family. It is observed that even Durga was also very affectionate towards this elderly woman. The chemistry between the two is one of the great concerns for Durga's mother, Sarbojaya. In fact, Sarbojaya is of the view that Indir was deliberately spoiling her daughter, Durga. But it was not the truth. Durga's child-nature had made her love and like the poor old Indir.

6.2.4 Harihar

The character of Harihar is an important character in *Pather Panchali*. The novel is set in the Bengali village of Nishchindipur in 1920s. The village is the ancestral home of Harihar, the father of an impoverished family. Harihar leads a poor life by working as a village priest. But he is a dreamer who dreams of writing plays and getting settled as a successful writer. He is rather a poor provider, partly because he is easily exploited and unable to stand up for himself or his family. He permitted his neighbours to claim the orchard that once belonged to his family as payment for debts that his deceased brother has incurred. When his wages are overdue

for two months, he cannot muster the assertiveness to ask his employer about payment despite his family having little food and his house being badly in need of repairs. His favourite saying “Whatever God does is for the best” reflects his resigned approach to life.

Harihar is more introspective and spiritual but less pragmatic. He is an idealist in both the best and the worst senses. He cares more about his own spiritual well-being than his family’s welfare. It is evident, however, that the luxury of focusing on the spiritual domain belongs mainly to the men in India. It is a social order where sexism is rampant both in childhood and adulthood. When Apu is born, the relatives weep with joy, as much for the reason that he is a boy as for his health or that of the mother. Apu attends school but Durga is told that her place is at home, learning to cook and do chores. Harihar is privileged to indulge his artistic conceits but all the responsibility for ensuring daily survival falls to Sarbojaya.

6.2.5 Sarbojaya

Sarbojaya is Harihar’s wife. However, her attitude towards life is different from that of her husband’s. Harihar is basically an artist, who prefers to live in his imagination than in reality. On the contrary, Sarbojaya’s focus is far more practical. Sarbojaya worries as she struggles to make ends meet. She is understandably careworn because she must bear all of the responsibility for the welfare of their two children, Durga and Apu, as well as an elderly aunt. She bears the brunt of unflattering gossip that blames her for Durga’s propensity for stealing mangoes and guava from the neighbour’s orchard. With too little food for her children, Sarbojaya resents having to share her home with the elderly and fragile aunt Indir. She blames aunt for spoiling Durga and encouraging her thefts of the fruits.

6.3 CRITICAL RECEPTION OF *PATHER PANCHALI*

Marie Seton describes the bonding between Durga and Indir and their fate as signifying a philosophical core: that both young and old die. Scholars have described parts or whole of the film as having lyrical quality. Set on identities the imagery immediately prior to the onset of monsoon is the most lyrical in the film. Darius Cooper has discussed the use of different *rasa* in the film. Cooper has noted the repeated use of ‘epiphany of wonder’ in Apu. Apu is wondered not only by what he sees around, but he also uses his imagination to create another world. Cooper has analysed that the immersive experience of the film corresponds to this epiphany of wonder. Stephen Teo utilises the scene in which Apu and Durga

discover train tracks as an example of gradual build-up of the epiphany and the resulting immersive experience.

Sharmishtha Gooptu, in her book *Bengali Cinema: 'An Other Nation'*, has discussed that the idyllic village life in *Pather Panchali* represents an authentic Bengali village, which was lost due to the upheavals of the partition of Bengal in 1947; the film seeks to connect an idealised past (pre-partition) with actual present (post-partition, when the film was made). She says that the film uses prototypes of rural Bengal to build up the ideal village.

6.4 FILM ADAPTATION OF *PATHER PANCHALI*

Though the film *Pather Panchali* had a budget of just Rs. 150,000 in which most of the actors were amateur, it was a critical and popular success. Influenced by Italian neorealism, Satyajit Ray developed his own style of lyrical realism in this film. The first film from independent India to attract major international critical attention, *Pather Panchali* won 'Best Human Document' Award at the 1956 Cannes Film Festival, establishing Satyajit Ray as a major international filmmaker. *Pather Panchali* is today considered one of the greatest films ever made.

The novel *Pather Panchali* by Bibhutibhushan Bandopadhyay is a classic bildungsroman in Bengali literature. It first appeared as a serial in a periodical in 1928 and was published as a book in 1929. The plot was based on the author's own early life. The novel depicts a poor family's struggle to survive in their ancestral rural home and the growing up of Apu, the male child in the family. The later part of the novel, where Apu and his parents leave the village and settle in Banaras, formed the basis of *Aparajito* (*The Unvanquished*, 1956), the second film of the Apu trilogy.

Satyajit Ray read the novel in 1943, when he was doing the illustrations for a new edition of it, and contemplated the possibility of making a film based on it in 1947–48. Ray chose the novel because of certain qualities that, according to him, "made it a great book: its humanism, its lyricism, and its ring of truth."

The title of the film in English is *Song of the Little Road*. During his visit with the French director Jean Renoir, Satyajit Ray told him his desire to make a film based on this novel. Realizing the greatness of the story, Jean encouraged Satyajit. His stay in London and watching the films there reconfirmed his conviction that it was possible to make realistic cinema with an amateur cast and shooting at actual locations. The success of Bimal Roy's film *Do Bigha Jamin* inspired Satyajit Ray to hope that *Pather Panchali* also might find an international audience. Besides the foreign influences,

Ray is also indebted to Bengali literature and the native Indian theatrical tradition, particularly the *rasa* theory of classical Sanskrit drama.

The film never had a complete script; it was made from Ray's drawings and notes. Ray tried to extract and build a simple theme out of the apparently random sequences of significant as well as trivial episodes of the novel, while preserving the loitering quality of it. Ray himself commented that, "The script had to retain some of the rambling quality of the novel because that in itself contained a clue to the feel of authenticity: life in a poor Bengali village does ramble."

Some notable shifts from the novel in the script include the death scene of Indir Thakrun, which occurs quite early in the novel in a village shrine at the presence of some adult members of the family; in the film she dies in the open in the presence of Apu and Durga. The scene of Apu and Durga running to catch a glimpse of the train is not there in the novel, neither child manages to see the train there, although they made an attempt. Finally, the ending of the film - the departure of the family from the village - is not the end of the novel.

Kanu Banerjee, an established Bengali film actor, portrayed the role of Harihar Ray, father of Apu and Durga. The role of Sarbojaya, wife of Harihar, was played by Karuna Banerjee Uma Dasgupta played the role of Durga. For the role of Apu, Subir Banerjee was selected. The role of Indir Thakrun was given to Chunibala Devi, a retired stage actress living in a brothel.

Satyajit Ray started the shooting of the film October 27, 1952. Boral, a village near Calcutta, was selected as the location for shooting. The technical team of the film consisted of several first-timers. Ray had never directed anything and cinematographer Subrata Mitra had never operated a movie camera. Art director Bansi Chandragupta had some professional experience.

From the outset, funding was a problem as no producer was willing to produce the film. Ray had to borrow money in order to shoot enough footage so as to persuade prospective producers to finance the whole film. In order to raise funds during the production period, Ray kept working as a graphic designer, pawned his life insurance policy and sold his collection of LP records. Production manager Anil Chowdhury convinced Ray's wife, Bijoya, to pawn her jewels as well. Nonetheless, Ray still ran out of the required money partway though filming and shooting had to be suspended for nearly a year, and following that, the shooting could be done only in

intermittent pieces. Finally, the shooting of the film completed with the loan sanctioned by the Government of West Bengal.

Ray and his team worked day and night during post-production, and just managed to get the film ready to send it to MoMA for the exhibition in May 1955 where it was well-received. *Pather Panchali* was released in a Calcutta cinema on 26 August 1955 and had a poor initial response. However, the screenings started filling up within a week or two. It opened again at another cinema hall, where it ran for seven weeks. It went on to great success in the US in 1958, running for eight months at the Fifth Avenue Playhouse in New York. *Pather Panchali* was the first film made in independent India that received major critical attention internationally and placed India on the world cinema map.

Pather Panchali was followed by two films that continued the tale of Apu's life - *Aparajito* (*The Unvanquished*) in 1956 and *Apur Sansar* (*The World of Apu*) in 1959. The three films are together known as the Apu Trilogy. *Aparajito* portrays the adolescent Apu, his education in the rural school and in a Calcutta college. The central theme in *Aparajito* is the poignant relation between a doting mother and her young ambitious boy. *Apur Sansar* tells the story of the brief family life of Apu, his reaction at the premature death of his wife, and finally bonding with his son whom he left as an infant. Both the sequels won multiple national and international awards. Ray did not have any specific plan to make a trilogy from the start. Indeed, he planned to make the third instalment only after being asked about the possibility of a trilogy at the 1957 Venice Film Festival, where *Aparajito* won the Golden Lion Award.

Pather Panchali ushered in a new tradition of film-making in India, one in which authenticity and social realism were key themes, breaking the rule of the Indian film establishment of the time. Although described as a turning point in Indian cinema, some commentators opined that *Pather Panchali* did not usher in a modern age in Indian cinema. Rather, the film refined an already existent "realist textual principle" in Indian cinema. In 1963, *Time* noted that thanks to *Pather Panchali*, Satyajit Ray was one of the "hardy little bands of inspired pioneers" of a new cinematic movement that was enjoying a good number of imitators worldwide. The film has since been considered as a 'global landmark' and 'among the essential movie going experiences'.

6.5 QUESTIONS

1. Draw the character sketch of Durga.
2. Do you think Indir Thakrun is one of the important characters in the play? Support your answer.
3. “Satyajit Ray’s film, *Pather Panchali* helped Bibhutibhushan Bandopadhyay to cross the international borders.” Do you agree with this statement? Support your answer.



A CRITICAL STUDY OF THE GLASS PALACE

Unit Structure:

- 7.0 Objectives
- 7.1 Introduction
- 7.2 The Author
- 7.3 Author's Major works
- 7.4 Plot Summary
- 7.5 Character Analysis
- 7.6 Critical Overview of the Novel, *The Glass Palace*
- 7.7 Let us Conclude
- 7.8 Questions

7.0 OBJECTIVES

- To introduce Amitav Ghosh as an Indian Postcolonial and Diaspora writer.
- To make the students understand Ghosh's contribution to Indian English literature and as a spokesperson of the country.

7.1 INTRODUCTION

In this unit the attention is on Amitav Ghosh as a voice of India with regard to his appreciated novel, *The Glass Palace*. The summary of the novel highlights the main theme followed by the plot which gives us idea about the India and Burma under British rule and the concept of the colonizer and the colonized. The novel deals with the historical context of the exile and migration of the Burmese Royal Family under the colonial period. The interactions of the characters and the struggles they go through develop the plot and story of the colonized India. Each character of the story provides a realistic vision of colonized Indians and the emerging nationalist spirit within them.

8.2 AMITAV GHOSH: THE AUTHOR

Amitav Ghosh, a pioneer of English literature in India, was born in Calcutta (Now Kolkata) on 11 July 1956 in a middle class family to Shailendra Chandra, a diplomat, and Ansali Ghosh, a homemaker. He traveled frequently in his youth, living in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh), Sri Lanka, Iran, and India. Ghosh attended Delhi University and received his B.A. with honors in history in 1976 and his M.A. in sociology in 1978. In 1978, he began studies at Oxford University in social anthropology. While at Oxford, Ghosh studied archives of documents from twelfth-century Egypt and was granted a scholarship that allowed him to travel to a small Egyptian village in 1980 to further his research. The village was located in the delta of the Nile River and Ghosh lived among the fellaheen, or Egyptian peasants. He graduated from Oxford earning a Ph.D. in social anthropology in 1982. From 1983 to 1987, Ghosh worked in the Department of Sociology at Delhi University. After completing his Ph.D. he decided to pursue his career in writing.

Although a Ph.D. in social anthropology, Amitav followed his passion for writing by taking up a job in a print media company. His first job was for a local tabloid called the Indian Express. In 1986, he published his first book *The Circle of Reason*. Over the years, Amitav wrote several books such as *The Shadow Lines* (1988), *In an Antique Land* (1992), *The Calcutta Chromosome* (1995), *Dancing in Cambodia* (1998), *Countdown* (1999), *The Glass Palace* (2000), *The Imam and the Indian* (2002), *The Hungry Tide* (2005), *Sea of Poppies* (2008), and *River of Smoke* (2011) that won him great adulation. His books not only earned him the distinction of writer par excellence, but also won him great laurels for his unconventional themes. His books are loaded with indo-nostalgic rudiments accompanied with an interesting mix of his personal philosophy and strong post-colonialism themes. *Sea of Poppies* won a nomination at the Booker's Prize and got much appreciation from his admirers for his brilliant plot and storyline. *The Circle of Reason* won the Prix Medicis Etranger, one of France's top literary awards, and *The Shadow Lines* won the Sahitya Akademi Award and the Ananda Puraskar. *The Calcutta Chromosome* won the Arthur C. Clarke Award for 1997 and *The Glass Palace* won the Grand Prize for Fiction at the Frankfurt International e-Book Awards in 2001. *The Hungry Tide* won the Hutch Crossword Book Prize in 2006. In 2007, Amitav Ghosh was awarded the Grinzane Cavour Prize in Turin, Italy because of his distinguished contributions towards literature and his expertise towards teaching. Amitav was granted fellowship in Royal Society of Literature and at the Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta. Ghosh has served as a visiting professor at several universities, including the University of

Virginia, Columbia University, University of Pennsylvania, and American University in Cairo.

The fictions of Amitav Ghosh are marked by extreme themes that go side by side with post-colonialism. Nevertheless it will be nothing short of insult, for an author of his repute, to say that his works are formulaic. It is practically impossible to label his works. It can be added here that his topics are much more unique and personal. The appeal of Amitav's work lies in his ability to weave "Indo-nostalgic" elements into more serious, heavier themes. The Government of India conferred Amitav Ghosh with Padma Bhushan. He now divides his time between Harvard University, where he is a visiting professor, and his homes in India and Brooklyn, New York. He is planning to shift back to India.

Amitav Ghosh has written for many publications, including the Hindu, The New Yorker and Granta, and he has served on the juries of several international film festivals, including Locarno and Venice. He has taught at many universities in India and the USA, including Delhi University, Columbia, the City University of New York and Harvard. He no longer teaches and is currently writing the next volume of the Ibis Trilogy.

Amitav is married to Deborah Baker, who is a writer and senior editor at the Little Brown and Company, a publishing house located in the U.S.A. The couple has two children named Lila and Nayan. Amitav has residences in Brooklyn, Goa and Kolkata.

In March 2010, Margaret Atwood and Amitav Ghosh were joint recipients of the 2010 Dan David Prize, awarded annually for achievements in science, technology and culture. Three prizes of US\$ 1 million each are annually awarded for achievements having an outstanding scientific, technological, cultural or social impact on our world. Each year fields are chosen within the three Time Dimensions - Past, Present and Future - Atwood and Ghosh won in the "Present" category which recognizes achievements that shape and enrich society today.

7.3 AUTHOR'S MAJOR WORKS

The majority of Ghosh's writing focuses on exploring geographical and social boundaries. His first novel, *The Circle of Reason*, is a complex tale of a young Indian boy, Alu, and his adventures in India and abroad. The novel was inspired by Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick*. Alu becomes an apprentice weaver and, after a tragic event, flees across the ocean to the Middle East, eventually traveling to North Africa. In his travels, Alu encounters a myriad of eccentric characters of varied nationalities. It is in this atmosphere

that Ghosh provides commentary on the nomadic proclivities of southern Asian and Middle Eastern societies. The work is divided into three sections, comprising the three main phases of Alu's life. Each of these phases also parallels a trio of concepts—reason, passion, and death—characteristic of ancient Indian literature and philosophy. Blending elements of fable and picaresque fiction, it is distinctly postcolonial in its marginalization of Europe and postmodern in its nonlinear structure and thick intertextuality.

In *The Shadow Lines* (1988), Ghosh juxtaposes the lives of two different yet intertwined families—one Indian and one English—to question the boundaries between their cultural and geographical settings. The title alludes to the blurring of the lines between nations and families, as well as the blurred lines within one's own self-identity. Ghosh depicts the characters of the novel as caught between two worlds, and the struggle to come to terms with both their present lives as well as their past forms the core of the narrative. *The Shadow Lines* is a sweeping history of two families (one Indian and the other English) that are deeply shaped by events following the departure of the British from India in 1947.

In an Antique Land is based on the historical and anthropological research that Ghosh conducted in Egypt during the 1980s. In the twelfth century, Jewish settlers in and around Cairo were reluctant to discard written documents for fear that the name of God might be contained within and they would therefore be desecrated if the paper was soiled. The synagogue created a geniza, or cellar, where people could dispose of written material without fear of desecration. For seven centuries, local Jews deposited everything from shopping lists, letters, religious texts, and legal documents into the Cairo Geniza. At the end of the nineteenth century, Western scholars discovered the geniza, appropriated its contents, and its wealth of history was divided among the Western scholarly communities. While studying at Oxford, Ghosh discovered records of these documents and noticed a reference to a slave named Bomma. Ghosh traveled to Egypt in an effort to uncover more information about the slave and the time period in which he lived. *In an Antique Land* recounts both Ghosh's research and his experiences while living in a small Egyptian village. His descriptions of his adjustment to the rural Egyptian way of life, and the curiosity with which his neighbors viewed him, form a large portion of the work.

The Calcutta Chromosome (1996) is a science-fiction thriller set in three different time periods—late nineteenth century, 1995, and the near future—and three different locales—Calcutta, London, and New York. The mystery novel centers on the research for a cure for malaria. The narrative switches back and forth

between time periods, revealing more and more clues to the puzzle.

In *The Glass Palace* (2001), Ghosh revisits his recurring themes of displacement and the examination of boundaries. The novel begins with a young Indian boy, Raj, who witnesses the expulsion of the Burmese royal family by the British. The story follows both the forced exile of the royal family in India as seen through the eyes of Dolly, their loyal maid, and Raj's adolescence and success in capital ventures. As a prosperous young businessman, Raj travels to India and asks Dolly to marry him. She accepts and they move to Burma together. The novel recounts the lives of their family as they struggle to define their place in the world. One of their sons, Arjun, enlists in the British Army and transforms his lifestyle with an almost zealous energy—by eating taboo foods, dressing in Western style, and speaking British slang. He believes that, by becoming like the English, he is making himself a more ideal specimen of man. His blind faith in the British Empire quickly dissolves during the Japanese invasion of Malaya. Arjun discovers that, as an Indian, he has become a pawn to be used by the Empire, and he eventually rediscovers the beauty in the Indian ideology and culture.

7.4 PLOT SUMMARY

Amitav Ghosh's *The Glass Palace*, published in 2000 is the latest expedition in understanding the havoc done by colonialism. *The Glass Palace* is a historical novel which mainly tells the history of the fall of Mandalay in 1885, the subjugation of Burma under British colonization, and the political developments up to the situation of the Myanmar in 1996. The novel focuses on the problem of Indian identity which appears after the Second World especially with the Japanese invasion in "Burma which the British Sarkar has declared to be a part of India. The story begins in 1885 Burma when the Burmese Royal family under British subjugation was sent into exile. *The Glass Palace* refers to the Burmese royal palace at Mandalay. It is the magnificent hall of mirrors which forms the center-piece of the royal residence. It is the traditional hall where the Burmese monarchs held audience. But it is also the name of a small photo studio in the late twentieth century where the novel *The Glass Palace* ends. The studio which derived its name from its original, is a reminder of the old days when Burma was free, both of the colonial powers and the junta which controls it now.

The book traces the life of Rajkumar, an orphan boy of Indian origin, who later on with lots of struggle succeeds in becoming a rich teak merchant. The book is actually a short history

of a nation seen through the eyes of subaltern. Rajkumar meets three important persons in his life which gives him a sense of completeness by the binding of important relations. In Saya John he finds father, in Matthew he finds brother and in Dolly, he finds his soul mate.

The novel begins in Mandalay, Burma, in 1885, when the British are about to seize the city with a powerful army of Indian sepoys. The Burmese royal family is sent into exile in a small Indian village and the royal palace is ravaged. Rajkumar, a Bengali orphan boy, gets the chance to enter the “glass palace” during the chaos following the fall of the Ava Kingdom, and there he meets one of Queen Supayalat’s maid servants, a breathtakingly-beautiful young girl called Dolly. Rajkumar makes his fortune with teak and finally marries her. Rajkumar’s story, the protagonist of the novel is directly connected to the institution and breakdown of the plantation economy. The plantation economy flourishes after British rule is institutionalized after the 1885 invasion and breaks down dramatically after the Japanese attack on Southeast Asia during World War II. In the meantime, the royal family is “incarcerated” by the British in a place called Ratnagiri, on the western coast of India, almost forgotten by the Burmese and everyone else. They make friends with their jailers nonetheless: Uma Dey, the District Collector’s wife, and Dolly become close friends. When her husband dies, Uma reinvents herself and feels as an activist for Indian independence and has a chance to travel to Europe and America.

After marriage Dolly and Rajkumar travel back to Burma and have two sons: Neel and Dinu. Of the two sons, Dinu plays a very important role in the text as he survives World War II and the invasion of Burma by the Japanese and the subsequent destruction of the Raha family fortune. Dinu becomes successful teak businessman and marries a Burmese princess exiled to Ratnagiri. Neel is killed during the Japanese attack on Rangoon in 1942. During the interwar years, Rajkumar and Dolly trek to India as refugees during the “forgotten long march” of 1943 (More than a million people, mostly of Indian origin, trekked to India through hazardous forest routes). They manage to take the dead Neel’s infant daughter, Jaya, along with them to Calcutta. While Dolly returns to Burma as a Buddhist nun in the post-war years, Rajkumar lives on in India as a hanger-on in the household of Uma Dey. Uma Dey is an Indian nationalist politician, and also a close friend of Dolly’s from Ratnagiri, who was instrumental in bringing Rajkumar and Dolly together. Rajkumar dotes upon his grandchild, Jaya, and dies long after she marries and has a son, who later reveals himself to be the narrator of the story.

Another strand follows Uma's nephew Arjun, a dedicated officer in the British Indian Army. He comes from Calcutta. He becomes Dinu's brother-in-law when his sister Manju marries Dinu's elder brother Neel. On occasion of Manju's marriage Arjun and Denu meet in Calcutta, have a conversion and start to fight for India's own side after realizing the contradictions of being a colonial and fighting for the British. At this time for people like Arjun the identification with the culture and the spirit of the British Army means to be modern. He doesn't mind eating beef, drinking alcohol but takes it as his life style.

The novel follows three generations and three families across borders, giving us a multi-layered portrait of colonial and post-colonial India, Burma and Malaysia. The novel spans more than one hundred years, finally ending in the 1990s, when Rajkumar's grand-daughter Jaya embarks on an internet search to find her long-lost uncle Dinu, who now lives in Rangoon. Burma, now called Myanmar, is no longer the "golden country" it used to be: bad politics, famines and the selfishness of its rulers have turned it into an impoverished land, where the military junta has seized the power and incarcerated opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi. The family reunion coincides with the period when Aung San Suu Kyi's democracy movement has started gaining strength in postcolonial Myanmar. Dinu, who has adopted a Burmese name of U Tun Pe lives a relatively solitary life, eking out a living giving photography lessons in his studio. The novel reveals that the name of this studio was "The Glass Palace Studio." Thus the novel, in a circular mode, begins and ends with scenes in "The Glass Palace." From the grandeur of King Thibaw's opulent palace to the decrepit ruin of Dinu's tiny studio, the narrative traverses a huge arc that spans the precolonial, colonial and post-colonial history of Burma/Myanmar.

7.5 CHARACTER ANALYSIS

RAJKUMAR

An Indian orphan boy, Rajkumar, is one of the many exploitative Indian businessmen in Burma, grown rich on the teak trade. During the discretion of the Glass Palace Rajkumar spies Dolly one of the queen's attendants, falls in love with her and eventually marries her. Like an epic legends and contemporary Bollywood films, they are separated but not before he promises to see her again. From his humble beginnings, Rajkumar, through fortitude and street smarts, rides the crest of the ensuing economic expansion to achieve the heights of success as a timber merchant, simultaneously playing his part in the building of colonial Burma. Years later, his promise to Dolly is fulfilled when he travels to Ratnagiri in India, home of the exiled royal family, to be reunited with his love.

Raj Kumar as a child is remarkable for his exploring spirit, keen perception and his ability to take calculated risks. Raj Kumar works in a tea stall of a matronly lady Ma Cho. He loves exaggerating his age just to feel like an adult. A well-travelled orphan, Raj Kumar is worldly-wise. Right at the beginning of the narrative, the author drops enough hints for the legitimacy of his choice of a protagonist. Although, a child, an orphan, this boy is established as bold, and remarkable. Once Raj Kumar lands in Mandalay, his life-long search for places and people begins. He is taken in by the city. And after a long exploration he develops sense of belonging at the new place. Barriers are challenging to him and made him venture and getting beyond his thoughts. As he views the fort of Mandalay the crystal shining glass palace, he instinctively knows that orphans like him cannot go there and yet 'No matter what Ma Cho said, he decided, he would cross the moat-before he left Mandalay, he would find a way in'. It is this spark that sets Raj Kumar apart for a life of success' adventure and prosperity.

At the heart, he is always certain about his success in life. When the British throw down the King of Burma, Raj Kumar is told that the British wish to control Burmese territory for wood. And from this point starts his shaping of his future plans. He senses wealth in teak. When the city is rampaged by the British, it is the Indian soldiers who come on orders of their colonial masters. Suddenly Indians become the target of mob frenzy. Raj Kumar is also attacked. He is saved by Saya John. That day, Saya perceives something unique in Raj Kumar. Saya offers him help as she realizes worldliness, curiosity and hunger in the eyes of Raj Kumar. The character of Raj Kumar seems to embody everything that is both good and bad about British imperialism. He is a self-made businessman who through sheer enterprise and tenacity was able to raise himself out of his humble beginnings and build a teak empire, which is not unlike the imperialist urge to expand and improve. His empire, however, like Britian, relied on exploiting Indian workers for raw labor and disregarded the most everything else.

DOLLY

The central character in *The Glass Palace* novel is Dolly. She is the only one character whose entire generation is mentioned in the novel. She strives hard to live up to her family to maintain the good name the family has earned in the community. Dolly is one of the most compelling characters in *The Glass Palace*, and the one besides Rajkumar that the reader follows throughout the course of the novel.

Dolly is the heroine of the novel. In this novel she is introduced as a nine-year old girl who looks after the younger

princess. Gradually, from a child she grows into an attractive young girl. A local man named Sawant takes charge of the servants. Dolly loses her virginity to Sawant. Then she attains mental and physical maturity. Uma her friend coaxes her to marry Rajkumar.

Dolly gives birth to Neel and Dinu. Dolly nurses Dinu perceiving her role as a mother more important than that of a wife. A feeling of emptiness spreads when her elder son Neel dies. But she gracefully accepts the pain and suffering. A visit to the Buddhist nunnery reveals her strong desire for renunciation. She proves her indomitable spirit and strength of convictions in entering the monastery and withdrawing from the world. Her weakness is her source of strength. She stands for courage, honour, hope, compassion and sacrifice. Her spirit lifts other characters.

Dolly, as a daughter, as a wife, and as a mother shows that woman can fulfill herself in a loving relationship with others. Her way of life reveals her affection towards her family.

Dolly like Raj Kumar is an orphan. She is a maid who looks after the princesses. At that tender age, Raj Kumar is struck by this girl. He offers her some sweets. Soon he sees her sharing those sweets with a soldier. Raj Kumar feels angry but soon learns a lesson. 'Dolly was doing exactly what had to be done.

Dolly is steadfast in her loyalty to the royal family. She remains with them in the most critical circumstances. One by one all the maids and servants leave the royal family and go back to Burma but Dolly does not do so. This may partly be due to the fact that she has nowhere to go to. Yet the sincerity of her nature cannot be denied. Her life is an appendage, a depending extension of the royal family. Sex comes as a handy rescue for this young girl to maintain her sanity. The novelist chooses to go in detail regarding Dolly's first exposure to the life of the body. Sawant is the local servant of the king. He is the chief servant. He is the natural choice for Dolly and she of him. But soon they are caught by the first Princess who herself is growing into a woman and is also in need of engagement of some sort. To cut a long tale short, the first princess snatches Sawant and her pregnancy is dramatically announced. By this time collector Dey and his wife have arrived on the scene. The collector is responsible for the well - being of the royal family. Dolly is a home bird, more reclusive, whereas Raj Kumar is always busy with expanding and increasing his business.

ARJUN

Arjun, a middle-class Bengali is an officer in the British Indian Army. He has adopted western culture in his life. He learns to dance the tango and to eat roast beef with a knife and a fork.

During World War II and his stay in Malaya he is asked by a much less Anglicized colleague, nicknamed Hardy, to desert and join a group of renegade Indians who plan to help the Japanese defeat the British and liberate India. There is much melancholy truth in this confession. The English-speaking Indian elite, Arjun belongs to was a carefully thought-out creation of the British, and was well protected from ideas of personal and political freedom. In fact, the original British intention behind setting up Western-style schools and universities in India, as very pragmatically specified by Macaulay, was to have a class of Indians who will be Indian in blood and color, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals and intellect. Arjun gets excited when he had a chance to join the army. But soon he was berated for joining in the army by the student workers and the Congress Party workers. He gets enraged when he comes to know that in Burma the Indian soldiers are called the army of slaves.

DINU

Rajkumar's second son, Dinu, plays an important role in binding the plot and the Arjun subplot of *The Glass Palace* together. From the beginning, Rajkumar and his younger son, Dinu, are depicted as distant from each other. In his childhood, Dinu had developed a limp because of polio. Because of his disability, Dinu had grown up as a withdrawn child, although for Dolly he seemed to be a matured child. As he grows older, Dinu, who had affiliations with the socialist cause, develops ideological differences with his father. But there is one point when father and son came together—they had both volunteered to be Air Raid Precaution (ARP) wardens for Rangoon in the days preceding the Japanese occupation of Burma. But the manner in which they arrive at the same positions only serves to accentuate the difference in their motivations.

But as the narrative progresses, Dinu's characterization becomes more complex than a simple allegorical representation of a social internationalist viewpoint.

His encounters with Arjun at Meiktila are key precipitants in this change. But when he meets him during Neel and Manju's wedding, he becomes aware of a different facet of Arjun's character like his capacity for "imaginative precision". Things sour between them in Sungei Pattani when for a brief moment they become rivals for Alison's love. But Alison's death and their subsequent encounter in drastically different circumstances in the jungle at Meiktila makes Dinu reevaluate Arjun once again. During their conversation Arjun tells him that the Japanese surrender meant absolutely nothing to him. He joined an Indian army that had been fighting for an Indian cause, and that the war was not over for him. Of course, this last

display of defiance is immediately followed by his despairing comment about the Empire staining all their lives. However, Dinu does not pity Arjun in this moment when he confesses the absolute nature of his defeat; rather, he feels compassion and realizes that even in this despairing statement, there was a sort of triumph and courage - which he did not wish to diminish by arguing. After this encounter with Arjun, Dinu felt "profoundly shaken" for the first time. Besides his life-changing encounter with Arjun in the forests in Meiktila, Dinu's changing relationship to photography becomes a useful way of mapping the shifts in his characterization. During his youth, Dinu is represented as "detached." Dolly, who is a painter, believes that Dinu's interest in photography grew out of his childhood habit of looking over while she sketched.

She encouraged Dinu's interest in photography because she felt that it would draw Dinu out of his self-absorption.

UMA DEV

Uma is another pillar of the novel. Uma is a particularly interesting character as she illuminates one of the ideas central to Ghosh's novel. When we first encounter her, she is constantly worried about being the proper *memsahib*, following traditional domestic etiquette, and living up to the standards of her husband, the Collector. She soon realized, however, that her husband's dream was not in accordance with the rules of Indian custom. He longed "to live with a woman as an equal in spirit and intellect," and she could never, according to custom, fulfill those expectations. We see a monumental change, a transformation in her when she returns to India from New York.

With Uma, we encounter the growth of a new political consciousness. Uma experiences her own awakening, not into an enterprising capitalist like Rajkumar, but rather into a cosmopolitan intellectual and activist, traveling from India to England to the U.S. and back, learning from displaced Indian populations and questioning the inevitability and rightness of British rule.

The power of Ghosh's narration is such that the moment Uma enters the novel, the reader knows that she has come to stay. The Collector and Uma go to the house of the King and Queen. The meeting is awkward and stiff. But Uma makes her mark. The Queen Supayalat gets impressed by her. Uma develops a close friendship with Dolly. Their friendship lasts for a whole lifetime. But for all her sophistication, liveliness and charm, there are problems in Uma's life that she has not been able to sort out. The bond between her and her husband is weak. The Collector has been educated abroad. He does not fit into Indian scheme of things. The author makes an indirect comment on the state of Indian marriages

when he says, the wifely virtues she could offer him he had no use for: Cambridge had taught him to want more, to make sure that nothing was held in abeyance, to bargain for a woman's soul with the coin of kindness and patience. The thought of this terrified her. This was subjection beyond decency, beyond her imagining. She could not bring herself to think of it. Anything would be better than to submit. (153).

7.6 CRITICAL OVERVIEW OF THE NOVEL *THE GLASS PALACE*

The Glass Palace is filled with unrequited love and passionate consummation of desire. It is a narrative of dramatic adventure, great migrations, and unbelievable chance encounters. It is also packed with historically verifiable details, such as colonial India's invasion of Burma, and announces dates in chapter headings to remind of the plot's imbrications with historical chronology. However, its thematic material is carefully organized according to the principles that govern the crafting of fiction: language, narrative technique, and genre. In *The Glass Palace*, Amitav Ghosh has staked a different claim: turning the clock backward to examine a lesser-known, earlier Indian Diaspora, and in doing so exploring the foundation of modern Indian identity.

In the 19th century, Britain was expanding its commercial interests, especially in its colonies. India in particular had become not just a continent to exploit and rule, but a source of raw labor and military muscle that bolstered British dominance worldwide and kept the imperial machine humming. With the end of slavery in the empire in 1833, thousands of poor, willing Indian workers were recruited for work in Burma, Fiji, the Caribbean and Africa - on plantations, in docks, mills and railroads - while others were conscripted into the British army, turning India into what one character in *The Glass Palace* calls a "vast garrison."

In 1857, the Sepoy Mutiny, a failed rebellion of Indian soldiers, contributed to a jittery mistrust between English and Indians. By World War II, when Indian soldiers were forced to put the fight against Japan ahead of their own independence, this simmering tension culminated in a group of soldiers rebelling and forming their own Indian National Army.

This is the complicated backdrop for Ghosh's novel, which centers on the fascinating story of Indians in Burma. By the late 19th century, there was a sizable Indian community in Burma; many were recruited to fill the lowly positions; others, such as

Rajkumar, came to prosper as merchants in the growing economy. In the 20th century, as India's independence movement gained strength, and England and Japan faced off in East Asia, these overseas Indians stood at a particularly agonizing crossroads, which tested their sense of national identity. Tragically, the idyll of Indian families in Burma ended in 1942, during the Japanese invasion, when thousands were forced to flee by foot through jungle and mountains back to India.

Rajkumar is the quintessential opportunist, in the best sense of the word. He makes his first money recruiting indentured workers in India, and then builds up a teak export business in the hills of Burma. Through Rajkumar we can observe the wheels of British commerce transforming the subcontinent and its other colonies into a vast network of trading and exploitation.

The first real stirrings of disquiet occur in the transitional figure of Beni Prasad Dey, the district collector responsible for the welfare of the king of Burma, who was exiled to Ratnagiri in India. The Collector, as he is known in *The Glass Palace*, has achieved the ultimate status for an Indian, as an esteemed civil servant in the bureaucratic Raj. And yet the Collector is plagued by doubts, "haunted by the fear of being thought lacking by his British colleagues." On a deeper level, though, the Collector is confronted with the awkward position of being a willing servant to an alien power.

A generation later, in the late 1930s, Arjun, the nephew of Uma, takes this self-questioning to new, agonizing heights. Arjun joins the British Army and becomes one of the first Indian officers to rise in its ranks. At first, as a colonized subject, even eating at the officer's mess hall, was an exhilarating barrier to smash, "an adventure, a glorious infringement of taboos. They ate foods that none of them had ever touched at home.

In the Indian epic the *Mahabharata*, Arjun is the warrior who pauses in battle to question the purpose of war and the kingdom he is fighting for. So too does this modern Arjun who begins to doubt his soldier's training--during World War II, when he encounters those drawn to the aims of the Indian National Army. As a fellow soldier remarks, "It was strange to be sitting on one side of a battle line ... knowing that you had to fight and knowing at the same time that it wasn't really your fight ..." During the Japanese invasion, Arjun comes to understand what it means to literally give over his trained body in bloody battle, and he wonders whether he even possesses his own self.

The opening scene of *The Glass Palace* also introduces us to a question that is repeated throughout this momentous epic narrative: the question of authority and, in particular, the authority to interpret new signs as they appear on the constantly changing landscape of colonized territory.

Questions of economic, artistic, cultural and national authority emerge in the novel's portrayal of two families over three generations, pushed apart and pulled together by the forces of capitalism, colonialism and insurgency movements. It is Ghosh's particular talent to interlace these questions with the telling of his characters' lives and to use them to probe deeply into the intricate. Ghosh's novel spans vast temporal and spatial dimensions in which people are shaped by larger forces, without ever abandoning the thread of personal ambition, struggle, love, and death that ties the times and places together. Individual efforts, material progress, and grand historical transformations move the plot from its Burmese beginnings through cities and sites in India and Malaya. With a remarkable eye for detail, Ghosh describes the material conditions – from the curious ingredients of meals to cutting-edge technologies – that also tie lives together. We learn, for instance, that in the year of King Thebaw's overthrow, 1885, Karl Benz unveiled the "motorwagon" run by a small internal-combustion engine. This modernizing moment brought the industrialization of Europe to the streets of Mandalay in a conversation about a paper illustration of the vehicle in question.

It is through family networks that the novel is able to achieve its ambitious span in time and space. The family begun in Rangoon by Rajkumar and Dolly is linked by long time friendships, business, and the lives of their sons Neel and Dinu to the Indian subcontinent and Malaya. The complexities of lives constituted within the ageing British Empire are explored vividly, linking the prewar years to events and chains of significance going back to the Indian Mutiny of 1857 and forward to the retreat of colonialism signalled by the Second World War. Along with the British Empire, Rajkumar's business is brought to ruin and his family struck by tragedy during the war.

The Japanese Imperial Army's swift takeover of British Malaya and advance on Burma are evocatively rendered through the protagonists' disrupted lives in Rangoon, Calcutta, and the environs of Sungei Petani, Kedah. The war breaks the empire into parts, sundering connections that depend on sea, road, and rail transportation and ending the lives of several key characters. Rajkumar and Dolly themselves only decide to leave Burma when there is no longer transportation to ferry them away. Rajkumar had been reluctant to leave, despite the rise of anti-Indian politics and the nearing war.

Reading *The Glass Palace* at the start of the twenty-first century reminds us how much our lives have been linked by transnational spaces and transformations well before the contemporary preoccupation with notions of globalization. Peoples have moved and been forced to move as a result of European imperialism and nationalism. And peoples have survived and thrived in their various incarnations, absorbing the local and distinctive while cognizant of far-reaching events and people linked to them. I read this book as a means of evoking other Asias. The novel's region, the eastern British Empire, becomes another Asia, given a life through and beyond colonial-mindedness. It is evocatively rendered as a space within which people, goods, ideas, and so forth flow in distinctive, textured, and dynamic ways.

A piece of painstaking historical work itself, *The Glass Palace* personifies in gritty and rich narratives the great transformations of the twentieth century in one corner of Asia. It reminds us of our connections with others in the world by reviving the long dormant, even invisible, tremor that have shaped us.

History is more than a backdrop for the story of Dolly's and Rajkumar's lives; it is a powerful force that constantly threatens and dwarfs each individual in the novel. All of Ghosh's characters struggle through an almost overwhelming number of turbulent events: British imperialism, depression, World War II, the Japanese invasion of Burma and Malaya, India's struggle for independence, and military rule in Myanmar.

Both Rajkumar and Dolly make close friends - a Malayan businessman and an Indian woman named Uma, respectively - whose own families become intertwined with the lives of Rajkumar and Dolly's descendants.

With the advent of World War II, Ghosh carefully illuminates how Arjun slowly and painfully becomes aware of what he has sacrificed in order to "become" British. As many Indian troops mutiny and the Japanese invade Malaya, Ghosh describes Arjun's attempt to grasp the surrounding cataclysm in a wistful and haunting voice: "He tried to form the sentences in his head and found that he did not know the right words in Hindustani; did not even know the tone of voice in which such questions could be asked. These were things he did not know how to say, in any language."

With this novel, the author demonstrates that he can balance the sweep of history with the depth and complexity of the individual. Ghosh spins his tale with harrowing precision and insight, leaving the reader with a lingering disquiet about how the forces of history can irrevocably alter the lives of ordinary men and women.

Ghosh's stand against the Commonwealth draws on a long tradition of nationalism in Indian English writing. A literature composed in the language of that nation's colonizers almost necessarily occupies a terrain of ambiguity and anxiety. Unable to shed the burden of colonial legacy, Indian English Literature has tried to compensate for it by espousing the cause of nationhood. The construction of national culture and community has thus been a persistent motif in Indian English Literature. It has been a method for Indian English writers to express their anti-colonial stand and indigenous identity.

The removal of the royal family from the centre to the periphery, the utter neglect and deprivation that they suffered, the squalor and dirt in which they lived, the physical and mental torture that they have undergone, the factors that people might easily forget after the deposition are meticulously etched by Ghosh in *The Glass Palace*. The marginalised history of Burma would have gone unnoticed if Ghosh had not captured it in this magnificent novel.

In order to examine the after-effect of colonization on India, Malaya and Burma, Ghosh creates a large number of fictional characters. Raj Kumar Raha the orphan turned capitalist, his wife Dolly, the orphan attendant of Queen Supayalat; their sons- Neeladhri Raha, Dinanath Raha, RajKumar's friend and benefactor Saya John - a Chinese businessman, his son Matthew, the Collector - Beniprasad Dey and his wife Uma Dey, her brother's twin children Arjun and Manju are some of the characters. The deposition of King Thebaw of Burma, the transformation of Burma from the monarchy to a British Colony, the resistance to the imperial centre by the indigenous people of Burma, the deploying of the Indian sepoys for the suppression of the rebellion that broke out in various colonised locations, the awakening of the national consciousness in the people of the colonised countries, and the First and Second World Wars are some of the major historical events dealt with in the novel. Each character has a specific purpose to serve. Events in the history and events that take place in the life and family of fictional characters mix and merge in the novel leading to a confluence of history and human insights.

An attempt made for the cause of national reconstruction can be traced through the fictional works of Ghosh especially in *The Glass Palace* but it ends without any hope for realisation. Burma became independent from the hold of imperialists in January 1948, but they couldn't enjoy freedom for long, because the military Junta took over the regime of Burma. Aung San's endeavour to provide democratic rule for Burma, which promised equal opportunity to all minority groups did not bear fruit and he was assassinated in July 1947. There has been more repression in

Burma than when it was under the British rule. People bestowed all their hopes on Aung San's promising and efficient daughter, Myanmar's charismatic leader and the pro-democracy icon Aung San Suukyi. Though she scored landslide victory in the 1990 elections as a candidate of National League for Democracy, the military which had run the country since 1962 ignored the result. There ends the hope for reconstruction and the situation of Burma remains unchanged even today.

One of the central themes in *The Glass Palace* is the way colonial discourses (primarily the military discourse) have moulded the subaltern identity and resulted in severe alienation. Self-alienation is apparent in the characters of the soldier, Arjun, who has been moulded into a war-machine in the hands of British military discourse and in the character of the Collector, a Britain-trained colonial administrator. Both these characters are destroyed: they end up in a dead end in their existential moorings and kill themselves. Arjun, the more prominent of these figures, can initially express himself only within the discourse of the military culture. As he finally realizes his condition as a puppet of this colonial discourse and manages to create some distance from it, he is left with nothing. He has nowhere to place his allegiances, so to speak, no language that would help him build a new self with other affiliations.

The novel proceeds mainly through the examination of various ideas through discussions, in which differing ideologies are pitted against each other in an ethical manner that prioritizes or vindicates none of them. Yet such juxtapositioning brings into view the pros and cons of each way of seeing the world more clearly and reaches towards a synthesis of viewpoints where each view is allowed to retain its voice and stance while they are brought into a meaningful relationship with each other. The debates address, among other things, nationalism, which is one of the major concerns in this novel. The discussions are not superfluous to the narrative; they cannot be over-looked in favour of the actual story line. In *The Glass Palace*, meaning lies not in individual utterances, but in their dialogical negotiations, the emphasis being on the manifold entirety of the plurality of viewpoints. The stances of most of the major figures become gradually modified during the course of the narrative through mutual interaction. Themes like theory and experience, duty and emotion etc., tend to become interwoven to muddle the borders between polemics and praxis.

The action in the novel is centered in Burma, but it features Diasporas to India, the eastern half of the Indian Ocean (South East Asia), Europe and North America. *The Glass Palace* is a refreshing departure from the norm in South Asian fiction. This shift

is evident from the novel's concentration on two key institutions of colonial rule: the plantation and the colonial army. The plantation and the army are two institutions that vividly illustrate the racial technologies of rule employed at the colonial frontiers - the plantation is a "terror formation" where the master literally has absolute power over the life and death of the slave-thing; the colonial army is both a "tool" of colonial sovereignty, and also exists outside the purview of "normal" law and order in the colonial context. Moreover, the recruitment policies for the plantation and the army also employed a racist logic. Influenced by mid-nineteenth century racial discourse, "races" in India were divided into "martial" or "fallen" categories depending upon their relative physiognomic distance from the "Aryan" norm. It comes as no surprise that most of the recruits for the army were selected from the so-called "martial races," while the indentured labor for the plantations were recruited, oftentimes forcibly, from the "fallen" races - a fact represented directly in the novel as well.

This entire story is told against the background of the situation in both India and Burma, with the Burmese resenting the intrusion of Indians into their commercial life and the Indians increasingly wanting to get rid of the British. While this is essentially a family saga, set against the background of major changes in India, Burma and Malaya, Ghosh uses it to make his political points. He accepts that India was not a paradise before the British got there, with poor treatment of women, the caste system and so on. He also points out the exploitation of the Burmese by the Indians and indeed, how the Indians exploit each other. We are even made aware through stories of those Indians who helped the Japanese, with a view of getting rid of the British and found Japanese to be worse than the British. Ghosh is quite clear that, however bad the British were, the Japanese were worse. As regards the Burmese, he makes it clear that the generals have caused a lot of harm to their country and its habitants. He even mentions that Aung San, father of Aung San Suu Kyi, went over to the British but then changed his mind.

Thus *The Glass Palace* is the novel most profound from the point of view that human beings are molded in large part by forces beyond their control. The result is a rich, layered epic that probes the meaning of identity and homeland - a literary territory that is as resonant now in our globalized culture as it was when the sun never set on the British Empire. *The Glass Palace* contributes something essential to the current debate about Indian cultural identity in the face of Western hegemony. Ghosh further lends his experience and insight to an examination of the nature of colonialism and the struggles that were inherent in winning independence.

7.7 LET US CONCLUDE

Thus the unit projects Amitav Ghosh's skill in projecting marginalized history of Burma. The novel is full of adventure, exile, migration and development of the characters in the colonial period covering India, Burma and Malaya. The problem of displacement and self identity is dealt with utmost care in the novel. The novel also covers Indian's contribution to British Indian Army and further as a revolt to fight against Japan during World War II formation of Indian National Army. The novel also traces the nationalistic spirit among the Indians and at the same time highlighting the changing lifestyle and cultural values of the Indians.

7.8 QUESTIONS

1. In an interview, Amitav Ghosh said of his work, *The Glass Palace*, "one can examine the truths of individuals in history definitely more completely in fiction than one can in history." Discuss this statement as it pertains to the novel. Which truths do his characters reveal?
2. Critically examine the characters of *The Glass Palace*.
3. What does the novel tell us about history, and how we have always been taught to remember it?
4. Highlight the social upheaval and political turmoil in the novel.
5. Examine the postcolonial traits in the novel.
6. What does Uma's character tell us about the nature of history and the power of social forces as factors in everyday life?
7. Discuss the issues of the colonizer and colonized in the novel.
8. Discuss the quest for self, cultural and national identity in the novel *The Glass Palace*.
9. Exile and return are themes that lie at the core of *The Glass Palace*. Explain it with reference to King Thebaw and Queen Supayalat and Rajkumar and Dolly.
10. Explain Amitav Ghosh's concern of nationalism in *The Glass Palace*.



COCOON

Bhalachandra Nemade

Unit Structure

- 8.0 Objectives
- 8.1 Introduction to the Novelist
- 8.2 Introduction to Cocoon
- 8.3 Summary of the Novel, Cocoon
- 8.4 List of Characters

8.0 OBJECTIVES

This unit will enable students to

- Understand the general and literary life of the novelist including his contribution to Marathi Literature and literary criticism
- Understand the novel, Cocoon as a translated novel and themes of the novel.

8.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE NOVELIST

Nemade was born in 1938 in a village named Sangavi in Khandesh. He is graduated from Fergusson College, Pune which is the setting of his Novel, *Cocoon*; his Master's degrees are in both Linguistics and English Literature from University of Pune and University of Mumbai respectively; and he has been awarded Ph. D and D. Lit from North Maharashtra University, Jalgaon. He taught English, Marathi and comparative literature at various universities. Nemade was editor of Marathi magazine, *Vacha*. He received Sahitya Akademi Award for his critical work *Teeka Svayanwar* in 1990.

Nemade's important novels include *Kosla*, *Bidhar*, *Jarila*, *Jhool* and *Hool*. He has portrayed the Maharashtra's youth in the character of Pandurang Sangawikar in *Kosla*; while his character of Changadev Patil figures in all his four novels namely, *Bidhar*, *Jarila* and *Jhool* and *Hool*.

8.2 INTRODUCTION TO *COCOON*

Nemade wrote *Kosla*, his Marathi novel in 1963 which is extensively translated into English, Hindi, Gujarati, Kannada, Assami, Punjabi, Bengali, Urdu and Oriya. This is a fictitious autobiographical novel of Pandurang Sangawikar. Sangawikar is a youth from rural Maharashtra studying in Pune. Pandurang Sangawikar's and Nemade's life have many similarities, therefore, some critics call this novel as a semiautobiographical novel.

8.3 SUMMARY OF THE NOVEL, *COCOON*

The *Cocoon* is the translation of Marathi novel, *Kosala* written by Bhalchandra Nemade in 1963 and translated by Sudhakar Marathe into English with the title *Cocoon*. This was written in a diary form and it was unique attempt in Marathi literature. The writer narrates his college days - his experiences at Fergusson College, Pune. The novel revolves around the protagonist Pandurang Sangawikar, the son of a well-to-do farmer in Maharashtra. It is also important to remember that the author belongs to the first generation of learners of his family. The novel is well known for his new technique and style and also for introducing an 'unheroic hero' in Marathi fiction. At the same time he popularized an antihero as the protagonist. This happened for the first time in an Indian regional language.

The hero of the novel, Pandurang Sangawikar is graduate student with English literature major. He narrates how it becomes challenging for a non native English learner to master the literature in English language. He is the son of the rich man who is also respected by other villagers. His decision to come to Pune for higher studies was itself a unique and daring one. Living in hostel, Pandurang decides to enjoy his college life. He becomes the secretary of the debate society of the college, monitor of the hostel and also the director of drama for the college annual function.

As a leader of his hostel, he hands over the hostel mess management responsibility to his friend. In the course of time, he realizes that the students in his surrounding are not as open hearted and clean hearted as he is. Somewhere he feels that he is being used for their personal gains. In this campus politics, labyrinths of friendly relations and unnecessary affairs, he performs badly in his examinations. It results also in his financial loss inviting his father's wrath. Pandurang learns his lesson that good deeds never count much in life.

In his second year of degree course he still behaves as a novice. But his original nature still remains carefree and adventurous. His father also hesitates to accost him or refrain him from behaving recklessly.

The death of Pandurang's younger sister, Mani shatters him at heart so much that he fails in examination. This brings the second lesson for him that with growth, one receives one's lessons only to make one more tolerant and mature. He for some time, tries to find a part time job in the city of Mumbai but in vain. He seems to be philosophizing his helpless condition as an existential one and calls himself as one of the unemployed many. In the course of his life he tries to learn their view of life and realizes that his own sorrow is much smaller than that of those unemployed many. The last lesson he receives is that sorrow and happiness exist hand in hand and fulfill one's life and they cannot exist without either.

The novel is divided into six chapters. The first one deals with the protagonist Pandurang's life from his childhood to the matriculation, his friends, his father's wrath and awe in which he grows into a timid young man.

Chapter two deals with his admission in the college at Pune, his admission in the hostel, his college friends and his free life. It's here where he enjoys his freedom for the first time. He lives a lavish life in Pune, and tends to overspend every time, for he thinks that his father is a miser and a thrifty man. The second chapter ends with the problem of his hostel mess and his college where he finds himself in financial loss of six hundred rupees. He asks his father for the help of four hundred rupees, and comes out of the problem, but at the loss of his father's trust in him.

Third Chapter continues with his stay in the hostel, but now his attitude has completely been changed. He has learnt many lessons, such as, the importance of money. He meets a girl called Rami whom he likes the most and also has a crush for her. He also loses his sister Mani in this chapter. Finally, he learns that there is no use of education. The very next day of his examination, he leaves for his native place with the decision that he would never go back to Pune for education. He also tells his father about this decision, but the father becomes angry with him and insists on sending him back to Pune.

The fourth chapter begins his coming back to college and the same climate once again, but with a complete changed attitude - rather a grown up attitude. He curtails his expenses, tries to concentrate on studies and avoids useless friends. He finishes the final year examination with the decision that it was his last exam of

his life time, and would never take any other exam whatsoever. Even if he fails in the exam, he would never take it again, never go back to Pune again and will stay in his village forever. He tries to search for a job in Mumbai, but all in vain.

The fifth chapter begins in his village where he decides to stay, but his villagers ask him various questions about his education, the reasons for his stay in the village etc. His father does not understand as to which degree is he learning in, and how many more years will he spend in taking it? He, on the other hand, seems to have lost interest in the urban life, those honking vehicles, the polluting climate and all selfish people around. He tells his fellow village men that the freedom and freshness he experiences in the village is not there in the city. This chapter ends with his minute narration of the plague and its impact on the village life.

The last chapter deals with his parents' attempts to marry him, but it also does not happen. His friend Girdhar and Bambas Bua (a Guru) are his buddies in his village, with whom he often discusses about the God, the purpose of life on earth, the death, etc. One day his friend, Girdhar disappears from his house and leaves for learning his life lessons on his own. Girdhar's parents were pasting him for his unproductive life. Pandurang feels lonely without Girdhar. Finally, he resolves to mentally settle down by listening to his parents, because it's the parents who are his last shelter, and he has no other refuge than them. The protagonist ends his story on a very positive note that the years he spent in learning so far and he experiences he earned so far have not been just a useless venture, though they haven't been so productive. They were not at all a useless venture. The novel ends on a positive note that the writer believes in his inability in doing at par with the expectations of his parents, but he trusts in doing good, being good and good nature of the life on the whole.

However Marathi critics call this novel as an existentialist one. This view, however, seems to be exaggerated. This novel is a record of experiences of a teenager through his adolescent age when his mind and body are constantly in the state of change. At this stage doubts, pessimistic thoughts, unfaithfulness, anger, over reactive moods are more frequent than other age groups. As the result of this, no wonder if a teenager finds himself like our protagonist, Pandurang Sangawikar at the war with the world. The death of a sister or the father's anger for poor performance in the examination or reckless behaviour or misuse by his friends or a little financial loss are not sufficient reasons to make the novel an existentialist. In other words, the present novel is an entertaining story of a college boy who happily grows from the stage of ignorance to knowledge and innocence to experience.

8.4 LIST OF CHARACTERS

Pandurang Sangwkar: The protagonist and the BA student at Fergusson College, Pune.

Father-The father of the protagonist, who is very strict about his studies.

Mother - Pandurangs.

Bapat - Friend of Pandurang

Ichalkaranjkar - Another friend of Pandurang

Rami- A girl. Pandurang's classmate, on whom he has a crush. She has the habit of speaking without using the first letter of the word, i.e. Satara as Stara etc.

Suresh, Madhu Deshmukh, Tambe, Mehta, Patil. Tony, Gambhir, Suresh, Kalya, Kadam, Mahadevan, Subhash (Mentally Challenged)- The friends of Pandurang Sangwkar.

Nalli, Mani, Jaai, Sumi- Pandurang's sisters. Mani dies of small pox, leaving Pandurang in deep grief.

Maternal Aunt and **Uncle** they are the local guardians of the protagonist at Pune.



CRITICAL STUDY OF THE NOVEL *COCOON*

Unit Structure :

- 9.0 Objectives
- 9.1 Thematic Concerns
 - 9.1.1 Existentialism
 - 9.1.2 Campus Novel
 - 9.1.3 Title of the Novel
 - 9.1.4 Bildungsroman
 - 9.1.5 Desivad/ Nativism
 - 9.1.6 Filial/ father-son Relationship
 - 9.1.7 Sangvikar's childhood memories.
- 9.2 Summing up
- 9.3 Questions

9.0 OBJECTIVES

- To make the students aware of the themes of the novel under study.
- To provide the students with the question bank on the novel.

9.1 THEMATIC CONCERNS

9.1.1 Is it an existentialist novel?

It is believed that first time in the history of Marathi novel, Nemade brought the tradition of introducing and portraying the existential characters in his novels like *Kosla*, *Bidhar*, *Jhool* and *Jarila* where the central characters are sketched as having a sense of futility, and estranged from society, not enjoying the freedom of choice. Though prior to *Kosla*, there appeared a Marathi novel, E V Joshi's *Ranbhool*, with characteristics of existentialism, but it is Nemade's *Kosla* that has clearly featured the tenets of existentialism like obsession of birth and death, alienation and absurdity of human existence.

Kosla also explores the life of an individual and divulges many questions regarding the meaning of life and the values of

existence. Pandurang Sangvikar is a protagonist of the novel. He tells us about his 25 years life story - from the childhood to graduation. At the beginning of the novel he declares that he has done nothing, though his father has spent money for his education, and he has never taken exams seriously. Even though, he has spent some years in the city, he could not develop his living style neatly.

As in the existential novels, he tells his life story from the first person point of view.

The novel portrays a modern youth in the wake of drastic change in every sector of India. Pandurang represents many unspoken modern youths who feel alienated from the society and culture they belong to.

After the independence of India, democracy and secularism became glittering slogans among the Indian intellectuals. But the democracy and secularism failed to provide hopeful, progressive and satisfactory aspirations to the young Indian generation. Modern youth is disillusioned by the inequality, hidden casteism, corruption, superstitions, unbearable poverty and inactive government. On the other hand, modern technology has made man's life comfortable and materialistic. As a result modern man is alienated from the society and even from himself. He becomes somewhat rebellious and critical about the society.

To quote Pandurang: "My whole childhood passed in awe of my father. He used to be wicked and cruel, etc. On the farm, once, having cleared a bit of ground, we children planted some flowers and such. So then, the moment he heard, he ripped them out and chucking them away, he said as he twisted my ear, if you plant ten banana stumps in this patch that would at least fetch twenty-five rupees. Now when I was learning to play the flute, perhaps everyone in my family may have been disturbed, and so on. But handing me a tight whack my Father said, This isn't Krishna's Age, is it? Take up your book. Throw away that bamboo. Having spoken thus, besides, he snatched the flute from me, broke it against the wall and flung it away."

9.1.2. Campus novel

It is known as an academic novel whose action is set in and around the campus of a university. The origin of this genre dates back to 1950s in Europe. The present novel, *Cocoon* is not set on the campus of a university but on the campus of a college affiliated to the university. Hence it is a campus novel. Pandurang Sangvikar studies at Fergusson College, Pune. And he is the bona fide student of the course of Bachelor of Arts. He is full of inhibitions, insecurity

complex and awe for a novel place like Pune. Whatever happens with him in Pune in general and on campus in particular is the central plot of this novel. This novel deals with pandurang and his friends and their interaction, relationships, experiences amongst themselves.

Pandurang , very realistically narrates his experience of his Combodian friends- his hostel mate who calls Pandurang his Indian friend as backward because they sleep with their clothes on. He says that it is very unhygienic to sleep wearing clothes. He himself sleeps in naked position. One day, Pandurang and his friends crosscheck it by peeping through a window pane of the Combodian. When the first friend sees, he says that he is sleeping on his stomach and looking very funny. But Pandurang finds him sleeping on his back which was opposite to what his friend said. Then Bapat, his friend, says that now the Combodian has changed his side. They again crosscheck it and find that he hasn't changed his side. The Combodian realize that something was happening outside of his room. When he gets up, they hide themselves in their rooms. When asked about the commotion to Pandurang, the later answers that they were seeing him sleeping nude. The Combodian replies that the Indian cannot see anything else but the nudity of a person. Once a girl bolts the door of a classroom from outside, when Pandurang studies inside. He saw the girl bolting the door. The girl deliberately stands outside of the window so that he should call her and request her to open it. Pandurang's perception of this act of hers is that she wants to talk to him. But he does every attempt to avoid it. He finds a strange way to come out of it. He comes out of a window of the classroom and enters the other room where a Chemistry lecture is on. He listens to the lecture for some time and then comes out.

These and numberless such interesting episodes have been woven into a beautiful garland with an interesting narrative technique in this novel. Pandurang's classmates, their attitudes towards their seniors and vice versa, their futile discussion on current and historical issues, the campus politics, the boys-girls relationship, the students of Pune verses the outsiders and the change in their behaviour and the teaching learning activities including their nature trips, love stories, sexual intercourses, abortions, love letter, telling lies to parents, over expenditure, the relentless studies and endless discussions and such romantic experiences of teenagers are at the centre of this novel.

9.1.3 Title of the Novel

Cocoon is a nest of an insect built around itself with its saliva to safeguard its life. The name of the insect is silk worm. The worm builds the shell-like cocoon of oval shape around itself but forgets

or fails to live a vent to it. Therefore, the insect remains inside the cocoon and suffocates to death.

The author entitled the present novel as cocoon because he thinks himself to have been arrested himself into the labyrinths of complicated relations, activities, incidents, and misdeeds so much so that he feels like the silk worm that dies within the cocoon.

The hero becomes the secretary of students' council with good intentions such as setting an example for the society, proving his iron amongst his pals and also proving to himself to be of great valour. In other words, he turns a little more ambitious as he grows. In the first place, he deviates from his proper path of studying seriously for the exams and gets inspired by such unnecessary things for which his father had always discouraged him. Like any other father, Pandurang's father also wanted him to do good at studies and also wanted him to curb his expenses. But Pandurang, on the contrary, not only increased his expenses but went bankrupts by over expenditure and found himself in deficit of four hundred rupees. This happened out of his sheer immature behaviour. Unlike other fathers, Pandurang's father helps him timely by giving him four hundred rupees with which he not only comes out of the shell of difficulties but he gains a valuable life time lesson. The author's mental state is like that of the silk worm that arrests itself into the cocoon and suffocates. The author introspects on his own helpless condition in a very sincere manner when he says that his condition has become like the cocoon. He himself has created it around him and now the same cocoon is stifling him within.

We should not forget that though the author is thinking pessimistically and agonizingly on his present lot, it was his father who lends the hands of timely help and brings him out of this trouble. Though he hero, Pandurang talks much against his father and carries an infected mind against him, we need to understand that he fails to comprehend his father to a great extent much because of a communication gap and not because of any other reason. We also should not forget that his father loved him beyond all limits but at the same time both of them seem to have failed to properly and timely express their love for each other. If only his father had expressed his love for Pandurang at time, Pandurang wouldn't have felt alienated and lonely and unattended like a loveless creature as he does.

9.1.4 Bildungsroman or Künstlerroman

It is a novel that depicts the conflicts of sensitive youth against the values or middle and upper class society of his time. It is also called as novel of formation, novel of education or coming-

of- age story. It is literary genre that focuses on the psychological and moral growth of the hero from youth to adulthood.

9.1.5 Nativism / *Desivad*

“Desivad” or Nativism sets out Nemade’s ideas on cultural hegemony and the English language and the need to root writing in one’s own culture and milieu. Literature has to include everything, from folklore to the highest expression. To quote G. N. Devy, “Nativism insists that literature be treated as a sub-system of native culture, and that literature should represent the social reality”.

The author wants everyone to search for an alternate tradition which opens within ourselves, preserving even now the history, orality, living traditions and folklore. Desivad naturally negates any imagined space that oppresses the real and aggressively asserts what was otherwise relegated, during the dark phase of colonialism, to one’s native cultural heritage.

9.1.6. Filial Relationship/ Father – Son Relationship

Pandurang Sangvikar is the protagonist of the novel, *Cocoon*. It is a story of an intermediate student upto his graduation. Pandurang’s life is very eventful and adventurous in its own sense. He is an adventure loving soul right from his early childhood. His father is a typical Maharashtrian farmer with well-to-do background. Like any other father, Pandurang’s father also expects his son to perform better and do well in life. But the problem of Pandurang is that he doesn’t know what it exactly means to do great or be great in life. He decided to come to Pune for his further education where he begins his journey of realization of his own self. He fights his own inhibitions as a student at a low level and gets humiliated at times in the presence of advanced boys and girls on the campus of Fergusson College, Pune. After this realization, the protagonist wages a war against his own weaknesses such as his shyness, inhibitions, weak communication skills, wrong Marathi pronunciation and weak knowledge of English language. In these attempts of developing his personality, he makes many friends and tends to be lavish in his life style. He likes giving alms to beggars. More than four rupees a month was the amount he donated amongst the beggars. This lavish life style is one of the reasons why the gap between the father and the son increases. On the contrary, his father suggested him to curtail his expenses many a time, but all in vain.

He recalls an experience when he had planted some vegetables in a corner of his field out of curiosity. But his father destroyed it saying that he would have grown bananas at the place, as it’d have worth more than Rs 25. This and such other

experiences created a considerable communication gap between the son and father.

Another worth mentioning incident which reflects the father son relationship more eloquently is when Pandurang finds himself cocooned in the labyrinth of his own bad financial decisions. He was the secretary of the Annual Cultural Programmes. He happened to spend more money than he was supposed, to ending into financial/ monetary trouble. This was his maiden experience and strange situation where he finds himself alienated and lonely dealing with his own problems. This alienation of the protagonist is misunderstood by many Marathi critics as his existential condition, but it is worth mentioning here that this is the result of his own wrong decisions. He feels like the silk worm which creates its own cocoon around itself only to die down alienated within.

He requests his father to give him Rs. 400 which was considerably more amount for his father. But like a responsible father he sends the money to the son and helps him out. His father writes a strict letter to him along with the money and says that he has purchased Pandurang for Rs. 400. The protagonist dislikes the statement only to experience an increased gap between them two.

It is a sheer case of under communication or weak communication more than a communication gap. This happens mostly when people do not express themselves properly. Just a single sentence with warm regards or love and confession or appreciation and praise from either of the sides would have settled everything all right between them.

9.1.7 Pandurang's Childhood Life -

Pandurang Sangvikar tells us the story of his childhood in the first chapter of the novel. He creates the pictures of his grandmother, mother, father, paternal aunt (atya) and friends. His childhood life is colourful and eventful. What he repeatedly insists in his narrative is that he is a failure due to his father's suppression. He calls his father as an established sort of bod and a money miser. He lives in the awe of his father all his childhood because he was wicked and cruel.

He shares an experience in which he was badly punished by his father. He wanted to learn acting in drama and playing flute. He returned home in excitement thinking that his father might reward him, when his father saw him in the evening, he was insulted. The father said that he was speaking mincingly like a pansy.

On the contrary, his mother was a loving soul who wanted to make a good human being of him. He tells us about his grany's and his mother's quarrels which affected him a lot.

His friend, Eknath was his classmate and a very good friend. They used to enjoy a lot after their school hours. Pandurang used to recite poems and songs in his dreams, like 'O my darling is a rose'.

He also was fascinated by the *Bhagvad Gita* given to him by a spiritual Guru called Jaganbua. He reads the book but finds it difficult to understand the verses of *the Gita*. He learnt lessons from his friend Girdhar about *The Gita*.

Then he tells us about the havoc created by the disease Cholera, and how he killed the rats in his house. He spent the whole night in killing the rats, because they cut unnecessarily almost everything that they find, especially the books.

The description of his childhood by Pandurang is, thus, a vivid and colourful one which not only entertains us but provides us with knowledge about the humble village life.

9.2 SUMMING UP

The unit has focused mainly on the thematic study of the novel. The students are also advised to read reference books or the books on the prescribed texts as and when available. Though the given information on the text is sufficient from the examination point of view, it is always a good and healthy habit to read more, because the given information in the study material is not a text book in itself, but a minimum material required for the preparation of the examination, especially for those for whom the classroom teaching is inaccessible.

9.3 QUESTIONS

1. Discuss *Cocoon* as an Existentialist novel.
2. Write a detailed note on *Cocoon* as a Campus novel.
3. Justify the title of the novel, *Cocoon*
4. What is the desivad or Nativism? Find the traces of the Desivad in the novel *Cocoon*
5. What do you think about the Filial or the father-son Relationship in the novel?
6. Write a note on Sangvikar's childhood memories.



TO INDIA – MY NATIVE LAND, AUTHORSHIP & POET, LOVER, BIRDWATCHER

Unit Structure:

- 10.0 Objectives
- 10.1 Introduction
- 10.2 To India - My Native Land
- 10.3 Authorship
- 10.4 Poet, Lover, Birdwatcher
- 10.5 Conclusion
- 10.6 Questions

10.0 OBJECTIVES

The aim of this Unit is to introduce the readers into the world of Indian poetry in English with some very relevant poetry writers like Henry Derozio, Rabindranath Tagore and Nissim Ezekiel. The poems give an idea about Indian concern, the style of writing and their expression through the foreign mode. The history of Indian English poetry began with Derozio, who was half Indian, half Portuguese; Rabindranath Tagore took it to its extreme height by achieving the Nobel Prize for his collection, *Gitanjali*; and Nissim Ezekiel made Indian English poetry completely modern with his innovative methods.

10.1 INTRODUCTION

Indo-Anglian poetry has evolved poetic styles of its own and poets like Rabindranath Tagore and Nissim Ezekiel have experimented with new lyrical styles that have a great appeal to the readers. Whether it is poetry of martyrdom or sacrifice, love or nature, the simplicity and the wonderful authenticity pulls the readers towards its appealing force. *To India, My Native Land* articulates the fading grandeur of the once glorious; *Authorship* explores into the immature and simple mind of a child unable to

understand the complications of an adult world; and *Poet, Lover, Birdwatcher* gives inspirational messages to the poet through the examples of a lover and a birdwatcher.

10.2 TO INDIA – MY NATIVE LAND

The Poet

Henry Louis Vivian Derozio (18 April 1809 – 26 December 1831), the assistant headmaster of Hindu College, Kolkata, was an Indian poet, a radical thinker and one of the first Indian educators to publicize Western learning and science among the young men of Bengal. Although his father was of mixed Indian and Portuguese descent and his mother was English, he considered himself completely Indian. One of the pioneers of the Bengal Renaissance of the early 19th century, he was considered a great scholar and thinker at the age of seventeen itself. After a short tenure as a student in David Drummond's Dhurramtallah Academy School, he was employed as clerk in Messrs J. Scott and Company, which he soon quit to join his uncle and aunt in indigo planting. He secured the post of a lecturer in literature at Hindu College, which is later called Presidency College, when he had come to Kolkata in 1926 for the sake of publication of his poem '*The Fakeer of Jungheera*'. Derozio was deeply impressed by the ideas of the French Revolution. His support of the sovereignty of expression and rational philosophy, and his questioning of superstitions influenced the students so intensely that they started calling themselves Derozians. In 1930 he started a journal named *Parthenon*, which included students' articles criticizing various Hindu beliefs and practices and also the British rule and even promoted the rights of women, which infuriated the college authorities and he was forced to resign from the college in 1931.

Derozio has written many magnificent poems in English before his untimely death of which '*The Fakeer of Jangheera*' is one of the most significant. His poems are regarded as an important milestone in the history of patriotic poetry in India. The revered educationist and social reformer died of cholera at the age of 23 but his influence lived on among his former students, who came to be known as 'Young Bengal' and many of whom became prominent in social reform, law, and journalism. A teacher, a scholar, a poet and an academician, he is modern India's first poet to express his patriotism in poetry, the first to verbalise in verse the desire of the Indians for Freedom.

The Poem

In the poem *To India – My Native Land*, Derozio epitomizes India and addresses her in a monologue. Derozio talks about the glorious past of India and also reminds her how, in her days of

splendor and fame, she used to be looked upon highly, worshipped with sanctity and was considered sacrosanct. But then, when the poem was written, the poet felt that all its grandeur and sacredness that was hers has been lost. Derozio personifies India as a Divine Goddess; India is considered a female figure as usually a country is addressed as 'mother' and India is even referred to as 'Bharat Mata' (or *Mother India*). In the past, India had a rich cultural, divine and legendary facet – she was full of grandeur and was admired and respected all over the world. India was regarded highly by all but now (during the framing of the poem), because of her subjugation to the British power, she has lost all her brilliance and grandeur. Like a deity or a goddess, with a halo at the back, she was worshipped and admired everywhere in the world.

The poem laments the deprivation and depreciation of India because of her slavery to the British and seeks to regain India's lost glory and reverence. The poem very clearly indicates the discontent of the author with the British rule in India and this pain and agony is reflected in 'the eagle pinion is chained down at last'. Here 'eagle' refers to India as it is believed that in the early years of the British rule, India was referred to as the Golden Eagle or Golden Bird as it was one of the largest producers of gold, diamonds and rare stones. Foreign visitors were impressed by the treasures and generosity that India offered. The poem begins with a grief-stricken declaration 'My country!' that reverberates throughout the poem. The poet, with a heart crammed with distress, mourns over the deplorable and nightmare scenario of present India which is crushed under the British feet.

But later the British domination and the internal weakness brought the country into the chains of slavery and knocked down its pride and personality. This thought is very beautifully expressed in 'And groveling in the lowly dust art thou.' Due to lack of liberty and stagnation in the standards of living, there is an acute sense of desperation not just in the country but in the heart of the poet as well and this is conveyed wonderfully in the poem: 'no wreath to weave for thee, save the sad story of thy misery.' The condition that the country was in during the time of the British rule is miserably heartbreaking and its pain is felt in the words of the poet. The poet uses rhetorical questions at times (like 'Can we forget those happy days?'), the intention being to find a solution in the question itself as well as to involve the readers in the drift of the poem. The poet makes use of the images of death - dust and wreath - to communicate to the readers the insignificant, hollow and demoralised situation of India under the British supremacy. The writing of a poem is contrasted, using a concealed metaphor, to the 'weaving of a wreath'. In the earlier years, the poets used to compose and sing songs of praise, glorifying the enormity of the

country. Now, the poets can no more write these tributes as India is in a wretched condition having lost all its glory and divine status of the past.

Derozio's wish is to bring back and write about the past of India. As the 'ages have rolled by' it is only by 'diving into the depths of time' that he can bring back its lost glory. His wish is to collect all 'small fragments of those wrecks sublime' and present it in front of the reader's eyes. He feels that the people with the passing of time might have forgotten the glorious past and may never have the opportunity to see or read about it again: 'which human eyes may never more behold.' So the author believes that he should become the instrument of connecting the glorious past to the sublime present. By this means, Derozio hopes to introduce to the present and future generations the distinguished status and glorious grandeur that his country once enjoyed. By making the men and women of now and coming days aware of the bygone grandeur and greatness of India, Derozio expects to resume and reinstate India's glory and reverence. His poems of glory, dedicated to his dearest motherland, will always motivate the young Indians to shatter the shackles of slavery under the British supremacy. The poet compares India to a shipwreck, as a diver plunges into the depths of the sea in search of treasures from a wrecked ship and retrieves them, the poet studies India's past and writes poems about those treasured moments in Indian history. Finally as a recompense for his efforts Derozio prays to his country to grant his wish of returning to the past splendor and pride. Demonstrating his selfless patriotic feelings, he seeks to attain only loving blessings from his Mother country.

10.3 AUTHORSHIP

The Poet

Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941), the greatest versatile writer, was the first non-European to be awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. From a very young age, he displayed an interest in poetry, art and music. His contribution to Bengal Renaissance with his vast number of songs, poems, plays, short stories and paintings are unparalleled. Though he was more conversant and comfortable writing in his mother-tongue, he has also translated many of his works into English. It was his English translation of a collection of spiritual poems, *Gitanjali*, that attracted the western world and won him the Nobel Prize. In all Tagore has published a thousand poems, eight novels and many books of essays on various topics of philosophy, religion, education, social issues, etc. As a music composer he has written more than two thousand songs and is also the originator of the famous Rabindra Sangeet.

Tagore's poetry is very much influenced by the ancient Indian saints and prophets (from Vyasa to Kabir) and also the Vaishanava poets of the 15th and 16th centuries and the Bauls, the folk musicians of rural Bengal. Apart from *Gitanjali*, his other collections of poetry are *Manasi*, *Sonar Tori*, *Balaka* and *Purobi*. Throughout his life, Tagore experimented with various poetic styles and techniques. In his use of language, initially he had applied either a Sanskritised dialect of Bengali or the 'Chalit', which was a more popular dialect; but later, in poems like *Africa* and *Camellia*, he adopted various innovative poetic concepts. His range of themes and styles express his versatility in poetry: *Gitanjali* emanates devotion to the celestial, *The Gardener* is about love, *The Crescent Moon* is about childhood; *Fruit Gathering*, *Lover's Gift and Crossing* and *The Fugitive* have varied themes and *Stray Birds* and *Fireflies* contain verse epigrams. 'The Child' is Tagore's only poem which is originally written in English and later translated into Bengali.

The Poem

'*Authorship*' belongs to his collection *The Crescent Moon*, where the poems are divided into two kinds: those that view childhood from an adult's perspective and those that are from a child's point of view. This poem is written from a child's perspective where he tries to understand his father's constant creative engagement of writing a book. He watches his father's continuous efforts, the dedicated devotion and the instantaneous initiatives taken by him to produce something very qualitative. But to the child's dismay, he doesn't follow what his father writes. He is quite amused at her mother's engrossed listening to all that his father read out to her and the child wants to know from her mother is she comprehended what he meant. The child appreciates his mother's stories and wonders why his father is not capable of writing such wonderful and understandable stories. His innocent mind, concerned about his father's childhood, wonders whether his father had heard stories from his mother, as he does, - the stories of ghosts and fairies and princesses; or he has completely forgotten whatever he had heard in his childhood? The child's point of view is very appreciative when he contests with his father – the writer's authorship to his own. Through the child's innocent questions and naïve analysis, is the author trying to bring the subtle absurdity of those pseudo-artists who consider themselves very tall but finally end up contributing nothing as such to the literary world.

The child's observing approach is also very beautifully imprinted – he has witnessed his father's careless attitude – when his father is late for bath his mother has to go and call him innumerable times, when his mother keeps the food warm for his father, he simply forgets as he keeps himself engrossed in writing.

The child is quite perplexed at his father's callous approach which seem so unrealistic to him. His childish mind recognizes his father's work as a game – 'Father always plays at making books.' To a child, every kind of work is associated with 'play' as that is the only work he himself is engaged into. Yet he fails to follow the mystery behind his being scolded by his mother when he goes to play in his father's room. It is indeed too difficult for him to understand the fun that his father gets in 'always writing and writing'.

The child is extremely upset with his mother's partial approach – when he takes up his father's pen or pencil and writes on the book, his mother gets cross with him but she does not say anything when his father writes. When his father wastes heaps of paper, his mother seems not to mind at all but if he would take just one sheet to make a boat with, his mother would say, 'Child, how troublesome you are!' He keeps wondering at what his mother thinks of his father's 'spoiling sheets and sheets of paper with black marks all over both sides.' To the child writing is nothing more than a type of scribbling which looks like black marks all over. Throughout the child is perplexed at his father's writing concept and his mother's biased attitude. His immature mind fails to understand the difference between his own creation and his father's. He judges the world around him with his adolescent eyes and feels that his father's writing is beyond his understanding and he also feels pity for all who tolerate this kind of creativity.

His mother tries her best to make the child comprehend that his father's poetry is par excellent and he is an author respected all over but the innocent mind has no place for elevated poetry. To him creation should be as simple and uncomplicated as his mind could grasp and beyond that it is worthless creation altogether. The child cannot accept the biased nature of his mother who tries to shield his father when he wastes heaps of paper. He is quite unhappy at his mother's not minding attitude at such instances whereas, on the contrary, she goes to the extent of scolding him for just one sheet of paper that he takes to make a boat with. The questions that the child raise are innocently attributable like 'why can't father write like that, I wonder? Did he never hear from his own mother stories of giants and fairies and princesses? Has he forgotten them all? What's the fun of always writing and writing? What do you think of father's spoiling sheets and sheets of paper with black marks all over on both sides?' Written from a child's perspective, it is a poem where maturity is handled and interrogated from an unripe counter. The child despises the dark, unknown and suffocative world of adulthood and feels safe and secure in the world of simplicity and innocence.

10.4 POET, LOVER, BIRDWATCHER

The Poet

One of the prominent figures in Postcolonial Indian English Literature, Nissim Ezekiel (1924-2004) was a poet, playwright, editor and an art critic. Having graduated from Wilson College, Mumbai in 1947, he took to teaching English literature and also started publishing literary articles. Within a year he went off to England where he studied philosophy at Birkbeck College, London. The influence of literary personalities such as T. S. Eliot, W. B. Yeats and Ezra Pound, is very apparent in his early works. His use of English language in a formal way is often linked with colonialism and the outcome has often been controversial. His poems display persistent self-scrutiny. From the early works written in traditional meters to the later experimental poems like 'poster poems', 'psalms', etc. the theme spreads by itself.

Time to Change (1952) was his first collection of poems and his poetry contained all the elements of affection, seclusion, desire and creativity. *Sixty Poems* (1953) was his next book followed by *The Unfinished Man* (1960). His poem *Night of the Scorpion* is considered as one of the best poems in Indian English poetry. Ezekiel joined the 'Illustrated Weekly of India' in 1953 and later worked as an advertising copywriter and general manager of a picture frame company. For a couple of years he was the art critic of 'Times of India' and then for a year he was the editor of 'Poetry India'. He was also the co-founder of 'Imprint', a literary monthly. In 1983 he was honored with the Sahitya Academy Award and in 1988 he received the Padma Shri for his contribution to Indian English writing. He passed away in 2004 after a prolonged illness.

The Poem

The poem is extracted from Nissim Ezekiel's fourth volume of poems that appeared in 1965 under the name *The Exact Name*. Nissim Ezekiel is a poet of self-exploration and so he has carved out a poetic place for the tininess of the soul. The acute sense of this smallness, the sense of one's insignificance to the world, is an important motif in modernist Indian English poetry. *Poet, Lover, Birdwatcher*, a much admired poem, reveals the poet's search for poetics which would help him to transform himself in his own eyes and also in the vision of the Almighty. The poem is about learning to be a poet and the message of the poem is very clear – 'The best poets wait for words'. It is only when they are truly inspired or when they experience the moments of illumination or enlightenment that proper words take shape in their writing. The poet uses the templates of 'lover' and 'birdwatcher' from whom the poet has to learn his craft. The waiting of the poet, of course, is not an effortless one. Like a keen birdwatcher, he has to remain very alert

for the perfect time. It is at the cost of eternal vigil that one is blessed with the gift of poetry and so even during the time of tension and apprehension the poet has to remain calm and poised. Though a poet has always to be on the move he should not be desperate. Like a birdwatcher waiting tolerantly for the perfect catch or like a lover waiting patiently for his true love, the poet should wait for the perfect words.

Ornithologists and lovers do not scuttle their way towards their destinations; they rather wait for the appropriate moment. Likewise, the art of poetic diction also does not result, at times, even after much thought. Just as an ornithologist waits for a bird patiently to identify its movements and specifically categorize and describe the bird and a lover waits patiently for his lady love to submit to him without much commotion, similarly, a poet must proceed with great resolve for his poetic perception to comply with him. The poet makes use of two apt metaphors, the first a bird for the 'flight of imagination' and, second-the ladylove as a source of inspiration. 'The hunt' is the search for birds or the desire to win a woman's heart. 'Patient love relaxing on a hill' is to assume an attitude of patience and relaxation while watching birds and 'until the one who knows that she is loved' indicates that a man should wait for a woman to respond to his love and should not force himself upon her. In these examples of the birdwatcher and the lover, the poet finds the right parallels between the two and tries draw a moral for his own guidance as a poet.

The poet is of the opinion that waiting patiently brings in excellent results and kind rewards. Therefore it is perfect endurance or slow movement that results in completion. If the bird-watcher needs to watch rare species of birds he has to go to remote places, deserted lanes or near the river. He has to watch in silence at the desert or coastal areas. If a man anticipates a constructive reaction from his beloved, he has to wait till she is no longer just 'flesh and bone' but they are one in soul. The lady no longer is just a mere physical presence but goes to the extent of becoming mythical and imaginary. It is in her enigma that a lady's beauty lies and so the lover has to wait patiently and hopefully for the correct time; similarly poets will be lost if they are reckless and in hurry in their poetic flight. When poetry comes from true poetic spirit, it is so powerful that it has the capability to make the blind see and the deaf hear. Ezekiel to some extent echoes Philip Sidney's definition of poetic creation that genuine inspiration comes from one's heart and not from external considerations.

Thus for all the three aspects, poet, lover and birdwatcher two things should be taken into consideration – first, patient waiting

for the correct time and second, taking the pains to go out of the way to achieve something special.

10.5 CONCLUSION

The three poems prescribed give a three-dimensional aspect with their wonderful theme and concept. Derozio's attachment, Tagore's simplicity and Ezekiel's pragmatism is very well-infused in their poetry. The love for the motherland, the child's obligatory curiosity and the poet's new found learning from the lover and the birdwatcher is excellently portrayed. The Indian feeling cannot be overshadowed with the essence of expression beautifully carved even through an alien language.

10.6 QUESTIONS

1. Illustrate how Derozio talks about India's glorious past and considers it to be a 'fallen country' in the present in the poem *To India-My Native Land*.
2. How does Rabindranath Tagore bring out the feelings of a small child in the poem *Authorship*?
3. Describe how Nissim Ezekiel suggests a poet to follow the footsteps of a lover and a birdwatcher in the poem *Poet, Lover, Birdwatcher*.
4. Short notes on:
 - a. India as described in *To India-My Native Land*.
 - b. The child's anger on his mother for having always favored his father in *Authorship*.
 - c. The 'patient wait' of the poet, lover and birdwatcher



AN INTRODUCTION, POSTCARD FROM KASHMIR AND THE ATHEIST'S CONFESSIONS

Unit Structure :

- 11.0 Objectives
- 11.1 Introduction
- 11.2 An Introduction
- 11.3 I am Indian, very brown, born in Malabar
- 11.4 Postcard from Kashmir
- 11.5 The Atheist's Confessions
- 11.6 Conclusion
- 11.7 Questions

11.0 OBJECTIVES

This Unit aims at taking the readers further into the world of Indian poetry in English with some very significant poets like Kamala Das, Agha Shahid Ali and Menka Shivdasani. The woman in Kamala Das revolts against the traditional bondage of a male chauvinistic society and justifies herself with confidence and maturity. It is nostalgia for Agha Shahid Ali who tries to hold his motherland and his past into the postcard that he has received from there. And Menka Shivdasani examines the fundamental phase of a girl tenure filled with action and reaction.

11.1 INTRODUCTION

Indo-Anglian poetry has moved forward with confident strides and women poets have contributed a lot for its growth and enrichment. Kamala Das has made her voice felt through bold and vibrant poetry like *An Introduction* and Menka Shivdasani has used her understanding and indulgence to bring out the passions and admonitions of a young girl in *The Atheist's Confessions*. *Postcard from Kashmir* holds on to the beautiful imagination in the context of the realistic situation and creates the feeling of love and possession

that once belonged but no longer originates. Indian Poetry in English has found a wonderful channel of expression through the writings of such eminent poets and has also set a strong and consistent stage for the future generations to follow.

11.2 AN INTRODUCTION

The Poet

Kamala Das (31 March 1934 – 31 May 2009) started writing poetry while in school but before contributing to Indian poetry in English she had won acclaim as a Malayalam writer. She spent several years in Calcutta where she went to Catholic schools. As she was married quite early, before she could finish her college, she is perhaps the only leading Indian English poet without a degree attached to her name. After marriage when she showed an inclination towards writing, her husband supported her decision as it would supplement the family income. At times she would often wait till nightfall, when her family had gone off to sleep and would write till early morning: "There was only the kitchen table where I would cut vegetables, and after all the plates and things were cleared, I would sit there and start typing". In 1963 she won the PEN's Asian Poetry Prize. Her first volume, *Summer in Calcutta* was published in 1965 followed by *Descendants* in 1967. *The Old Playhouse and Other Poems*, which appeared in 1973, brought her wide fame and appreciation. The first volume of her *Collected Poems*, published in 1984, won her the Sahitya Academy Award in 1985. Besides poetry she has also written a few short stories and novels. Her controversial autobiography, *My Story*, was published in 1974. She converted herself into Islam in 1999 at the age of 65 and changed her name to Kamala Suraiyya. Her conversion was somewhat controversial among the social and literary circles of society and later she seems to have realized that 'it was not worth it to change one's religion'.

Although Kamala Das has very frankly and honestly conversed and wrote about sexual desires of Indian Women, she has been classified as a confessional poet as well and there is no doubt that her poems are versions of intensely personal occurrences. But more than the confessional aspect, it is her atrocious openness of verse that stunned as well as fascinated the readers. She dealt on issues like sexual frustration and longing, of suffocation in an arranged, emotion-less marriage, of innumerable affairs, of the embarrassment and regret resulting because of the inability to find love after repetitive efforts, of the futility of desire, of the solitude and obsession that usually pursues women. Her poetry endorses her quest – an exploration into her personality and a search of her identity.

The Poem

An Introduction is Kamala Das's most famous poem in the confessional mode and she starts the poem with self-declaration. It is undoubtedly a subjective poem following the 'school of feminism'. It is her feminine gender that she is aware of and very clearly knows the status of her birth and bringing in a society dominated by the stronger sex. Posing herself as a rebel against the traditional Indian society, she defies the set rules and regulations of the society and wants to free herself from the bondage of 'dos and don'ts'. Though she is critical of this chauvinistic society, she is proud of being an Indian. She feels quite high of herself when she says that she speaks three languages, writes in two and dreams in one. She remembers how her acquaintances had even commented on her choice of English language in her writings. She openly talks about her childhood days and the plight she faced that time. So desperate was she to come out of the curse of womanhood that she would wear her brother's trousers to ignore her gender. The elders would not tolerate her extrovert attitude and would even scold her and tell her to follow the norms of the traditional aspects of womanhood. The poet speaks about her depressed life and her disappointment she faced in the present situation. Gripped with loneliness she wanders alone from one place to the other. She experiences guilt and feels that her painful exposures are completely her own as she had favoured the essence of individuality.

The poet claims that though she is not interested in politics she seems to know the names of all those who are in power. She states that these issues are involuntarily embedded in her and she even is confident of taking the challenge of repeating these names in the correct sequence like replicating the days of the month or the months of the year. Very satirically does the poet point out that these politicians are trapped in the repetitive cycle of time, irrespective of any self-identity. Then she comes down to her roots and declares that she is, by default, an Indian. She declares that though she is born in Malabar, she does not belong to the place. She tries to protect herself from regional prejudices and defines herself firstly in terms of nationality and secondly in terms of colour.

11.3 I AM INDIAN, VERY BROWN, BORN IN MALABAR

She goes on to articulate that 'she speaks in three languages, write in two, dream in one'. By suggesting so, Kamala Das wants to justify that medium is not the prerequisite to writing; the main requirement is one's essence of thinking capacity. Kamala Das reflects the main theme of Girish Karnard's *Broken Images* – the clash between writing in one's own language and making use of a foreign one. The language she speaks is essentially her's, the

prime ideas are not just an expression but an individual consciousness. Then she narrates her development, from a child to adulthood; revolting against the feminine changes of her physical self and trying desperately to retune her corporal existence. But she has no other option but to accept her situation and she slowly confronts with her state-of-affairs. Later her crave for love and affection is mistakenly understood by others as voracious sexual yearning. She explains her encounter with a man and to prove his universality refers him as 'every man'; and on his behalf the man classifies himself as 'I', exposing the supreme male ego.

Initially the poet speaks about the tragedy of having to choose her own language that she inherited and the foreign language that she loved. Then she moves on to describe her perplexing adolescence and the typical and terrible pain of growing up. This is followed by her desire to be equal with the male counterparts in her own terms in spite of the pressure forced upon her by the family and the society to adhere to the traditional feminine role. And finally the poet realizes that her experiences are not just hers; they are the agonizing exposures of every woman. There is pain in her voice, anguish in her gesture and rebellion in her tone.

The poem is a plea for more creative liberty or for expression in Indian English. There is an obsession in the request which comes as insolence against those who wish to silence the poet. Though the poem begins with a dilemma of language it concludes with an assertion of identity. It explores the crust of the poet's self who is not just an individual woman but refers to the women fraternity throughout the ages. The poem is candidly confessional, frighteningly genuine and absolutely a coherent voice of the feminine sensibility and the following lines justify all these attributes

—
*I am sinner,
 I am saint. I am the beloved and the
 Betrayed. I have no joys which are not yours, no
 Aches which are not yours. I too call myself I.*

11.4 POSTCARD FROM KASHMIR

The Poet

Agha Shahid Ali (1949–2001) was born in New Delhi, educated in Kashmir and later shifted to the United States. Though a Kashmiri Muslim, he has identified himself as an American poet writing in English. The recipient of several fellowships and awards and also a finalist for the National Book Award, Shahid Ali was eminent as a poet exceptionally able to merge multiple ethnic

influences and ideas in both traditional forms and elegant free verse. Hindu, Muslim and Western heritages reflect in his poetry. Although Ali began publishing in the early 1970s, it was not until *A Walk Through the Yellow Pages* (1987) that he received widespread recognition. His next book, *A Nostalgist's Map of America* (1991), recounts a series of travels through landscapes often blurred between his current American home and memories of his boyhood days in Kashmir. All his later books were widely praised. The poem '*Kashmir Without a Post Office*' was published in *The Country without a Post Office* (1997), taking its impulsion from the 1990 Kashmiri unrest against India, which led to political violence and, as a result, closed all the country's post offices for seven months. *Rooms are Never Finished* (2001), similarly articulate political and personal tragedy and one of his poems even explores his grief at his mother's death and the others continue his own sense of exile from his home and culture. Ali was a noted writer of ghazals as well. As an editor of *Ravishing Disunities: Real Ghazals in English* (2000), he has described the long history of attraction of the Western writers with ghazals, as well as contributing a concise hypothetical reading of the form itself.

The Poem

The poem *The Postcard* expresses profound sentiments and emotions, the reason being far away from one's home and the inescapable fading of memories of home after the passage of time. The postcard that comes is from 'home' and the word home transfers the imagination of the poet to that distant land that he has left far off but tries his best to hold on to its enchantment and aroma through his power of imagination. It is the sense of nostalgia that an exile has to deal with and the sensation is so difficult to apprehend that he feels totally out of control of his own self. The longing for the home that he has left behind is strong that everything around him looks lifeless and charmless as he is deeply engrossed with that part of his existence which is beyond his reach. Physically he is at some other place but mentally and emotionally he is at his 'home' which is too close to his heart. 'Home' is not just the place where one stays, it is the most intimate connection psychologically, ethnically and socially. People often travel to various places for different errands but finally seek the solace and peace that home offers to them. Leaving home is a great sacrifice and it is only one who has undergone that submission knows the depth of it.

The poem is a part of his book *The Half-Inch Himalayas* and the poet here believes that the postcard that he has received from his home 'is home, and this is the closest/ I'll ever be to home.' The imagery he employs in the poem expresses his loss; his home rendered insubstantial by time and memory. This idea is especially clear in the poem as Ali expresses his frustration that the home he

describes can never again be made corporeal, that he will actually be able to see it again. Ali uses a significant imagery in his poem in order to portray his frustration at the impossibility of bridging the gap between the past and the present. Ali's poems are like revealing 'impossible nostalgia in his sentences'.

The speaker of the poem is denationalized and finds himself without an identity. He attempts desperately to link his old home that no longer is his home in his present state, and his present home which never seems quite like home to him. The narrator, an exile from Kashmir, experiences three tribulations: the repentance of having left his home, the denial of feeling like an outsider and the struggle of coming to terms with the changes that would have unavoidably taken place in his absence. The internal encounter of the narrator is exposed as he looks at the postcard photograph of Kashmir, a place where he belonged to but now exists only in memory. He knows that his imagination of Kashmir is much beyond what it is in reality and this shows his deep love for the place he belonged to once. He knows that his long displacement has made his memory a little out of focus and he still tries to hold on to that reminiscence – a recollection so pure and 'ultramarine' that the recent blotches of contamination and coagulation might not affect Kashmir's great heritage.

11.5 THE ATHEIST'S CONFESSIONS

The Poet

The founder of Poetry Circle which started in Mumbai in 1986, Menka Shivdasani's first book of poems *Nirvana at Ten Rupees* was published in 1990. *Stet*, her second book of poetry, emerged in 2001. She is also the co-translator of *Freedom and Fissures*, an anthology of Sindhi Partition poetry published by Sahitya Academy in 1998. She has recently edited an anthology on women's writing, which is a part of a series being brought out by Sound and Picture Archives for Research on Women (SPARROW). Menka's poems have appeared in several literary journals and anthologies in India and abroad and these include *Poetry Review* (London), *Poetry Wales*, *Fulcrum* (USA), *Many Mountains Moving* (USA), *ARC* (Canada) and *Literature Alive* (New Writing from India and Britain).

Her work has also appeared in collections such as *An Anthology of New Indian English Poetry*, *Confronting Love* and *Fulcrum's Give the Sea Change and It Shall Change*. Her poems are also been included in *We Speak in Changing Languages* (Sahitya Academy), the *Bloodaxe Book of Contemporary Poets*, *Sixty Indian Poets*, *Both Sides of the Sky* (National Book Trust) and *Interior Decoration: Poem by Fifty-four Women from Ten*

Languages. Her poems have also been translated into various languages like Marathi, Malayalam and Gujarati. As a journalist, Menka's career includes a spell with *South China Morning Post* in Hong Kong and the publication of eight books co-authored with Raju Kane, two of which were released by the then Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee. Currently she is the Director of *The Source*, a content and communications company based in Mumbai. She is also the co-organizer of the Mumbai Chapter of the 100 Thousand Poets, the proceedings of which form part of the Stanford University archive.

The Poem

The Atheist's Confessions first appeared in Shivdasani's *Stet* and the poem has been translated into Marathi and Malayalam. It is a poem of devotion and disillusionment, of assurance and aloofness. It ironically recounts the journey of a young girl, from the age of thirteen to twenty-two, and involves the readers in the expedition with complete enthusiasm. The various experiences that the narrator had undergone within these years are very well expressed and the readers find themselves getting pulled towards analyzing which particular year they belong to and whether their experiences match to that of the narrator's. This sense of connection develops a beautiful involvement and attachment of the readers with the narrator.

The narrator starts her expedition from the age of thirteen – the adolescent age where belief and faith in God reigned and she felt completely captivated by the charm of the supreme. Totally engrossed in the holy musical tunes, she lost herself in the power and blessings of the almighty. It is her upbringing that guides her intuitions and teaches her discipline. The external symbols of religion, like 'agarbatti', 'prasad', 'rose-petal strewn at the earth-god's feet', etc. mean a lot to her and she is completely engrossed in the holiness created in and around her. She becomes involved so much that her head reels at the devotional incense stick aromas and her conscience doesn't allow her to have 'prasad' before taking bath. It is the adolescent mind's complete surrender to the supreme authority.

And then at the age of fourteen her trust is shaken when her purse is 'slashed' in the temple crowds. The 'purse' stands as a symbolic representation of any wrong doing that might come across to a girl at such a tender age. The thorough confidence that she builds about god no longer exists and she forces herself to reconsider that faith in this altogether different world. Fourteen-and-a-half and she starts questioning her own self, wondering at her belief and loyalty. She felt that the gods no longer smiled at her and for the first time she realized that they couldn't smile because they

were made of stone. Actually faith and devotion comes through acceptance and belief and when that is lost one feels that god is close and so does not exist at all. This is the age that one comprehends that one has been worshipping the stone statues and the distance between god and her widens.

At the age of fifteen the world of the narrator starts taking a different diversion. Youth icons, like the Beatles, become her new gods, the new areas of worship. It is the westernized liberated lifestyle that she starts admiring and trespassing. Watching channel 25, eating 'fish fingers in between gin', she seems totally mesmerized by this new outlook and accomplishment. She becomes so outspoken that on World Religion Day she goes to the extent of making a speech saying that god didn't exist. The arrogant self that has surrendered itself to the hands of western slavery forgets its traditional culture and custom including its faith in the supreme. She is eighteen now and knows nothing else but her own self. Everything she does is for the sake of her own self because in this age it is all she understands to worship of. Now she is an individualist, searching for freedom and self-dependence. And so she does not even fear to announce and authenticate that she is a confirmed atheist.

At twenty, life takes another route when love shines like a new god on her and she is thoroughly submerged in the warmth of affection and admiration. The freshness of youth comes with all happiness and she surrenders herself in the arms of her lover who treats her with rose petals, bouquets and dinners. Enchanted with the wonderful life, she feels at the top of the world. This heavenly life is shattered when she reaches twenty-two and discovers the hostility and sting that love can bring. She is totally devastated as she is completely disheartened with the man she loves and thus endures a total loss of self-respect. The practical world overshadows the romantic world of imagination and she comes out from the chains of her captivating dream. And this is the time that she feels that she no longer worships herself nor her partner.

Life takes a full circle and meets her again at the door step of the 'puja' room which she had abandoned a few years ago. A new faith begins to dawn on her and she wonders whether the gods have 'faintly beginning to smile again' at her. There is a clear 'philosophy' in the poem which is very well-established through the narrator's experience that is tangible as well as authentic. Every event has its own significance and yet is related to the other in such a magnificent way that one looks unfounded without the other. The motifs like 'rose petals', 'puja room' etc. are so well expressed that they augment the beauty of the poem as well as the realistic

approach of the experiences that a girl undergoes at such a crucial stage of her life.

11.6 CONCLUSION

All the three poems of the Unit enhance an astonishing theme and a significant concept in poetry writing. Kamala Das confident expression, Agha Shahid Ali's reflective outburst and Menka Shivdasani's confessional tone create a very meaningful atmosphere. A woman's flaring up of emotions, a soldier's coming to terms with the past and the present and a young girl's realizations of her exposure at various time periods of her age create a charismatic essence of pain and passion, love and longing, experience and imagination.

11.7 QUESTIONS

1. Illustrate the nostalgic element that is strewn in Agha Shahid Ali's *Postcard from Kashmir*.
2. Kamala Das writes in the genre of 'confessional poetry'. Comment with reference to the poem *An Introduction*.
3. *The Atheist's Confessions* by Menka Shivdasani is a poem about the journey from innocence through experience to maturity. Illustrate.
4. Write short notes on –
 - a. The homesickness in Agha Shahid Ali's *Postcard from Kashmir*.
 - b. Behavioral changes with the changing age as presented in *The Atheist's Confessions* by Menka Shivdasani.
 - c. A woman's conflicting mind in Kamala Das *An Introduction*.



KABIR

Unit Structure:

- 12.0 Objectives
- 12.1 Introduction
- 12.2 Kabir's Philosophy
- 12.3 Groups of Saint Poets
- 12.4 Bijak
- 12.5 Questions

12.0 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this unit are:

- To acquaint the students with Kabir, the great Indian poet
- To help the students understand Kabir's poetry

12.1 INTRODUCTION

Kabir's Life:

Kabir was one of the most significant signatories writing in Hindi dialect, Avadhi during Medieval India. Indian vernacular literatures saw the light of the day due to saint poets - cum social reformers who tried to reform the society by their free and frank expressions against inhuman practices being perpetuated in society without their proper implications.

Kabir's birth and parentage still remains an enigma as biographers of Kabir are not unanimous in their opinions. On the basis of some external and internal sources, there is near agreement on certain facts to be now accepted as an authentic pool of information. Kabir was born at a place called Lahartara near Kashi in 1398. He is said to be born of a Brahmin widow who abandoned him to avoid public disgrace. A weaver, Niru, found the baby lying in bush and brought him up as the couple was issueless.

Education:

Since the couple was miserably poor, they could not afford to send Kabir for formal education and initiated him into their own profession of weaving. The following couplet reflects his lack of formal education:

*I don't touch ink or paper
This hand never grasped a pen.
The greatness of four ages
Kabir tells with mouth alone.²*

Formative Influence:

Kabir was a disciple of great Vaishnav saint Ramanand who had channelized his entire energy to reform the society vitiated by unsound conventional practices. He had also set up a monastery on the bank of holy Ganges, which drew persons from different sects for spiritual guidance. Kabir was deeply influenced by his lofty thoughts and practical approach and decided to be his disciple. But he was filled with panic thinking that he would not be accepted by Ramanand as his disciple as he belonged to low caste. He, therefore, thought of a plan and accordingly hid himself on the stairs of Kashighat where Ramanand used to come for his pre-dawn bath every day. Once his foot fell on Kabir's chest, and he cried out the word Ram! Ram! Out of mercy, which Kabir internalized as '*mahamantra*' and accepted him as his guru (preceptor). Kabir was really fortunate enough to sharpen his spiritual faculty under the generous guidance of a saint like Ramanand.

Personality:

Though Kashi remained the centre of his activities, Kabir traveled extensively in the central and northern part of India. His frequent journeys offered him a mass of learning as reflected luxuriantly in his artistic manifestation. According to Mohan Singh Karki, "*His acquisition and assimilation of knowledge and wisdom compares to Shakespeare's who too had little Latin and less Greek.*" He was a man of dynamic personality who never hesitated in meeting scholars from various sects and religious or philosophical scholars in order to interact positively on all kinds of subjects. He would accept the views of other schools gracefully if found them in keeping with the tune of national justice. But at the same time, he would refuse to tone down if the things were not favorable to the greatest good of society, and would shower volley of comments on them.

Social Backdrop:

Kabir, one of the greatest saint poets of medieval India, was born at a crucial point of time when the social structure of the country was completely dismantled due to surging waves of

disparity caused by social, political, economic and religious topsyturvydom. Though a number of other saint poets did realize it and tried to set things right by sensitizing people and creating mass awareness among them about the derailment and upset of social set-up through their poetic expressions, they could not deliver much good towards social rectification. It was Kabir who also took up challenge and determined to revolutionize the entire society by his powerful poetic spells to be presented in accompaniment of musical instruments by his followers. He administered the cudgel strongly against those practices which were intentionally perpetuated by the so-called contractors of social cause. He also targeted every such thing which he felt incompatible with peace, prosperity and spirit of social and religious harmony. He did not spare the Hindu and Muslim religious teachers who were always fighting over the petty issues of religions without understanding their proper implications. But whatever was being done by Kabir was in keeping with the saintly cult of altruism which strove for the well being of mankind irrespective of caste, creed and religion. Initially he was disliked by those who were victimized and had to face counter attack but this did not go along way and his opponent gradually withdrew and finally yielded.

The period from 1318 to 1673 is designated as '**Bhakti Kal**' in Hindi literature. It is the hallmark in the history of Hindi literature as it produced a large number of poets who contributed substantially to the treasures of literature by their outpouring as the dictates of their soul. The artists, who devoted themselves exclusively to purge the society from the spell of ill practices, came to be known as the 'Saint Poets'. The word 'saint' signifies the spiritual elevation of the one who goes beyond the human bounds and transcends the knowledge generally experienced by common men. He engages himself to the divine task of searching truth and tries to establish it on earth to save the layman from the illusory truth propagated by self asserted social ignoble activists. Saint poets of 'Bhakti Kal' can be classified into three groups for the convenience of our study. The writers of the first group wrote dispassionately without any projection of 'God' or 'Image' as the fountain of their poetic inspiration. The second group of saint poets followed the cult of Lord Krishna for their devotional songs. The last group based their songs on Ram cult as the one to strengthen their poetic creativity. However, those saint poets, whether Bhakti cult of Krishna or Ram, were primarily concerned with the social issues. Therefore they created awareness among the masses to wrestle against those practices which could not be justified on any grounds. But all of them were not as prominent and fearless as Kabir in voicing their views about the prevailing ignominious behaviors of contemporary society.

12.2 KABIR'S PHILOSOPHY

Kabir's assumption was based on his experience which percolated from his long association with society, which is sometimes referred to as Kabir's philosophy of life. His philosophical insight depended much on what internalized from his own realization of the world. He had no well doctrinated philosophy because he had neither formal education nor did attend any specific school of thoughts. Through and through, he tried to safeguard the national integrity by establishing solidarity and coordination among the inmates of society who were so far said to have belonged to different cults and creeds. According to Kabir Atma and Parmatma are inseparably one. Atma resides in human body and Parmatma is God who is variously known by people of different faiths. Since, Atma of every being originates from Parmatma, everyone is the child of God and he is the Father. As per this equation we are one and belong to the same family. Thus Kabir discourages the man - made compartment which tends to desecrate the divine scheme of Nature and pushes the world into the precipice of annihilation. Kabir further guards us against the far reaching influence of Maya which may prevail upon us with its bewildering spell whereby one is completely disillusioned and fails to differentiate between the wrong and right. If we wade through the thick texture of Kabir's poetry, we do realize that his poems are relevant in modern contexts, have wider spectrum and need to be re-examined, evaluated and discussed in the light of recent critical theories which have order of the day in literary debates lime lighted through various seminars and conferences across the world. A preliminary survey of the age and contemporary writers need to be conducted in order to have clear understanding of Kabir's poetry.

12.3 GROUPS OF SAINT POETS

Groups of Saint Poets:

The pioneering saints of the **first group** who played significant roles in identifying and redressing the sufferings of mankind are being summarily introduced below:

***Ramanand* [1368-1468]:**

Born in Kashi in a Brahmin family, Ramanand was the fourth disciple of great saint Ramanujacharya. Since he was very sensitive and generous, he was moved to see the pathetic conditions of the poor, caused by the age-long caste system. He pledged to eradicate this chronic social malady of caste system to reshape a healthy society where everyone would share the bounty and blessings of the supreme without any discrimination. His poems are so simple and pregnant with meaningful messages that

even a layman can easily comprehend the meaning and taste the fruit of his expressions. He is credited to have initiated the 'Sant cult' which was further carried forward by his successors. Kabir is said to have been deeply influenced by his preaching and practical approach to handle the intricate situations of life.

Raidas:

As he himself utters: "aisi meri Jati vikhyat chamar" [I am famous to be born in a chamar caste], he was born in Kashi in a 'chamar' family. He laid stress on meditation which he thought would successfully lead to the realization of the self and God.

Nanak:

Born in Talvandi village near Lahore, Nanak is credited to have founded the "Nanak Panth". From the very childhood he had inclination towards serving mankind entangled inextricably in the narrow bonds of caste, religion and vicious social practices. Since he had mastery over Hindi, Punjabi and Sanskrit languages, he could easily convey his messages effectively to the masses by his powerful poetic utterances.

Dadudayal and Malukdas:

They were also acknowledged as saint poets and were committed to serve mankind by their songs written in both Avadhi and V [B]raj languages. Malukdas's couplets are still very popular and cited as the most befitting quotations for all kind of occasions.

The **second group** of saint poets followed the **Bhakti cult of Krishna**. They considered Him as their God and presented their devotional songs about him. Sri Ballabhacharya founded the Bhakti cult of Krishna. The followers of this cult believed in the saguna theory and accepted Krishna as an incarnation, who is born to perform Krishna Leela to please and preach his devotees and ease them of the spell of satanic forces. The followers of the Krishna cult are Surdas, Nabhadas, Kumbhandas, Meerabai, Paramanandadas etc.

Surdas:

Surdas enjoys the highest status among the other poets of Hindi Literature, who devoted their lives in praising the glory of Krishna and his charismatic roles executed by him for the redemption of mankind. He is designated as the pioneer of Pushtimarg by Goswami Vitthaldas. The tenure of Surdas is ascertained as between 1478 and 1583. He is said to be born blind. But his literary contribution in form of Sursagar, Sahityalahari and Sursarawati has enriched not only Hindi but also the literature of the world. His philosophical approach is based on purely Adwaitvad. Though his treatment of God, Jeev, Maya and world

have made his poetry highly philosophical and mystic, his poetic expression does not suffer the paucity of emotion and delicacy of poetic sensibility.

Kumbhandas [1468-1583]:

He was born in Gaurawa Kshatriy family. Besides being a man of worldly responsibility, he was blessed with a saintly temperament devoted himself completely to Lord Krishna. He took Diksha as the first shishya of Mahaprabhu Vallbhacharyain 1429. His poetic composition does not enjoy so much of literary merit as much as of aesthetics of music and melody.

Mirabai:

She was born in a well reputed Rathod family in Medata in 1504. As a widow, she relinquished all the pleasures of the Royal Palace and went finally to Vrindvan to dedicate herself to the feet of Krishna. From the very childhood, she had devotional leaning towards Krishna which was sharpened again after the death of her husband. As a mystic, she accepted Krishna as her lover and devoted her whole life in praising him through her devotional songs. She clearly mentions:

***Mere to Girdhar Gopal, doosarau na koe.
Jaake sir mormukut mero pati hoee.***

Other major poets of Krishna cult who made notable contribution to Bhkti literature were Paramanand Das, Govind Swami, Nand Das, Chhet Swami and Chaturbhuj Das.

The **last group** of saint poets belongs to the **Bhakti cult of Ram**. The literature of Ram cult is characterized by the blend of devotion and knowledge, establishment of an ideal social code, necessity of right conduct and inspiration to emulate an ideal character, right exercise of conscience, and proper analysis of what ought and ought not to be done. The literary luminaries of this school of the poetry include:

Vishnudas:

He occupies significant place among the leading saint poets of Hindi literature. His contribution includes ***Mahabharat katha, Rukmanimangal, Swargarohan, and Snehleela***. He has also translated Balmiki Ramayan from Sanskrit into English.

Agradas:

Agradas's name is taken with great respect among the shishya parampara of Swami Ramanand. *Dyanmanjari, Ashtayam, Rambhajan Manjari, Upasana –Bawani and Padawali* are his major works.

Tulsidas:

He is the greatest poet of Ram Bhakti cult who has acquired international dimension by presenting before the world a classical work called *Ramchritmanas*. In addition, *Gitawali*, *Kavitawali* is his well known literary manifestation which brought glory not only to Hindi literature but to the literatures of regional languages as well.

Nabhadas:

He is contemporary of Tulsidas and remembered for his excellent work, *Bhaktamal*.

Keshavdas:

Basically he is looked upon as a significant signature of *Reetkal* in Hindi literature, though he was a contemporary of Tulsidas. *Ramchandrica* is his significant work which was created for the purpose of salvation and can be treated as one to carry the philosophical thoughts of Keshavdas.

All these poets of Bhakt were primarily concerned in reaching out the masses to convey the fragrance of their messages in commonplace language rather than propagating their pedantic scholarship. Tulsidas was a great scholar of Sanskrit and initially wished to complete his '*Ramcharit Manas*' in Sanskrit. But then he found that Sanskrit was not a common man's language and if he continued writing the Ramayan in classical language, it would be confined to only limited readers and his purpose of conveying the message wouldn't be served. Therefore he changed his original plan and completed his magnum opus in 'Avadhi' language. *Ramleela* based on the '*Ramcharit Manas*' is the most popular performing art in India and even abroad. Keshavdas was also a Sanskrit Acharya but he tried his pen in Hindi in order to have proper dialogues with people to convey his views.

12.4 BIJAK

Bijak contains 84 Ramanis, 115 Sabdas, 353 Sakhis and 34 other poems. Being important work on Panth, his principles and philosophy towards life have been quite honestly incorporated in this great work. At present, *Bijak* has been published by Dhanauli Math in Bihar.

In addition to these works attributed to Kabir, there is a book by Rabindranath Tagore called *Hundred Poems of Kabir*. This translation seems to be based on Hindi text with a Bengali translation by Kashiti Mohan Sen. His translation is in four volumes containing 341 poems. The hundred poems which have been translated by Tagore are from the first three volumes which contain 264 poems.

Poem with explanation:

The prescribed poem has been taken from **One Hundred Poems of Kabir**, an anthology of 100 poems from Kabir which were noted by his disciples during Kabir's recitations.

Text:

*It is needless to ask of a saint the caste to which he belongs;
For the priest, the warrior, the trademan, and
All the thirty six castes, alike are seeking of God.
It is but folly to ask what a caste of a saint may be;*

*The barber has sought God, the washer woman, and the
carpenter-
Even a Raidas was a seeker after God.
The Rishi Swapach was tanner by caste.
Hindus and Moslems have achieved that
End, where remains no mark of distinction.*

In the above poem Kabir advises people not to ask the caste of any gentle and pure hearted person. Kabir says that it not the caste but the person is important who is looking for the full realization of God. According to Kabir, priest, warriors, tradesman and other 36 castes are persistently looking for god's blessing with equal devotion. If everybody from different castes is striving hard to achieve common goal, it is, then, foolishness to enquire of the caste which is no way helpful in facilitating his ultimate goal. He further illustrates that the barber has sought the refuge of God: the washer man and carpenter are also meditating to have the fragrance of His presence. Even a true seeker of god called Raidas has also sought to realize the unique presence of God. Rishi Swapach who was untouchable also realized omnipresence of God. Hindus and Muslims have also achieved God. But there is no mark of distinction between them.

Kabir says that God does not differentiate between two human beings, whatever caste creed and community they belong to. God encourages everyone to follow the path of humanity and to come forward to help others as brothers and sisters as they are created by the same Creator known differently by people like Allah, Ram, and Jesus. Kabir here intends to say that proper assessment of a person cannot be done by caste but by the deeds he does during his life and how much he contributes to upgrade the society. It is the social and noble deed and golden Heart that should be taken into consideration and not a caste. If one is well oriented in humanity, one can then only be suitably called saint.

Kabir in this poem tries to integrate society which was segmented in castes, creeds, sects and religious groups during medieval India. Kabir says that any person with human touch deserves to be called a saint irrespective of his caste and birth. This is how Kabir tries to harmonize society into a nutshell to create a sense of fraternity and brotherhood and mutual love and affection in inmates of medieval society. He expresses his deep feelings through poetic expression as it entertains and gives a kind preaching and a piece of noble advice to innocent people of society.

12.4 QUESTIONS

1. Write a note on saint poets
2. Write critical appreciation of *Bijak*.



A CRITICAL STUDY OF DILIP CHITRE'S POEMS FROM *SAYS TUKA*

Unit Structure

- 13.0 Objectives
- 13.1 Introduction to Dilip Chitre
- 13.2 Introduction to *Says Tuka*
- 13.3 Study of *I Am Cripple*
- 13.4 Study of *When He Comes*
- 13.5 Let's Sum up
- 13.6 Questions

13.0 OBJECTIVES

This unit will introduce Dilip Chitre as a versatile personality and his contribution to modern poetry in Marathi, English, Gujarati, and also to the field of translation of Marathi poems into English.

This will make the students familiar with Dilip Chitre's *Says Tuka* in general and finally the critical examination of two poems prescribed in the course will be carried out.

13.1 INTRODUCTION TO DILIP CHITRE

Dilip Purushottam Chitre, a bilingual writer and critic of the post Independence India, wrote in Marathi and English. He was also a painter and filmmaker. Chitre's tryst with literature started with his help to his father, Purushottam Chitre who ran a periodical named *Abhiruchi*. Chitre was born in Gujarat, but his family moved to Mumbai in 1951. Chitre's first collection of English poems appeared in 1960.

Chitre was one of the influences behind the 'Little Magazine Movement' in the 1960s in Marathi literature. With the influences of the new and angry writers in the West, who emerged as the new trend setters and rebelled against traditionalism, Little Magazine movement captured the new moods and literary and cultural trends of the East. These journals were characterized by departure from tradition, irregularities in publication, limited breadth of the

middleclass intellectuals, and weak economic base. Chitre started Shabda with Arun Kolatkar and Ramesh Samarth. He was awarded a visiting fellowship by the International Writing Programme of the University of Iowa in the United States. He worked as a director of the Indian Poetry Library archive, and translation centre at Bharat Bhavan, Bhopal. He also convened a World Poetry festival in New Delhi and also an international symposium of poets in Bhopal. He has also been the honorary editor of the quarterly *New Quest*, Mumbai.

The University of Iowa's International Writing Program Fellowship, the Indira Gandhi Fellowship, the Villa Waldberta Fellowship for residence given by the city of Munich, Bavaria, Germany and many others have been the awards and honors Chitre received in India and abroad.

His contribution to Marathi poetry is noteworthy. His *Ekun Kavita* (Collected poems) appeared in 1990s in volumes. He is also published poet of English poetry collection and his English translation of Marathi poetry has acquired the space in the history of Indian English poetry. He also edited an anthology of Marathi Poetry. He has translated prolifically prose and poetry alike. His most famous translations are of *Anubhavmrut* of Dnyaneshwar, the 12th century Marathi bhakti poet, and *Says Tuka* by the celebrated seventeenth century Marathi Bhakti poet, Tukaram.

Apart from travelling to different parts of India, Chitre has widely travelled across the globe for academic and creative writing purposes. He travelled in Asia, Africa, Europe and North America as a visiting faculty of many universities and institutions.

Chitre's major contribution to Marathi poetry, Indian English poetry, and his contribution as a translator of Marathi into English is listed below:

His Marathi poems consist of *Kavita*, (1960), *Orpheus* (1968), *Sheeba Raneechya Shodhaat*, (1969), *Kavitenantarchyaa Kavita*, (1978), *Chaavyaa* (1983), *Dahaa By Dahaa* (1983), *Mithu Mithu Porat ani Satak* (1989), *Tirkas Ani Chaukas* (1980) and *Punha Tukaram* (1990)

His English poems and His translation into English include *Ambulance Ride*, (1972), *Travelling In A Cage* (1980), *Says Tuka: Translation of Tukaram* (1991), *Shri Jnandev's Anubhavamrut: The Immortal Experience of Being* (1996), *Namdeo Dhasal: Poet of the Underground: Poems 1972-2006*, (2007), *The Mountain* (1998), *No-Moon Monday On The River Karha* (2000)

As Is, Where Is: Selected Poems (2008) Dilip Chitre died at his residence in Pune on 10 December 2009.

13.2 INTRODUCTION TO SAYS TUKA

Dilip Chitre was fascinated to Tukaram's poetry ever since he was a college going student. To introduce him to the world beyond Marathi speaking and knowing readers Chitre decided then to translate Tukaram. In one of the interviews, Chitre says: "It was in 1956 that I, then an 18-year old undergraduate in a college in Mumbai, decided to translate as much of Tukaram's poetry into English as I could. It was not exactly a vow, for I was my only witness. But it turned into a lifelong project of translation encompassing not only the work of Tukaram but also of his dazzling forerunner, Jnandev, the 13th century Marathi mystic and poet who pioneered the Bhakti renaissance in Maharashtra. In one go, I was trying to discharge several debts: my debt to Marathi, my mother tongue; my debt to English, my chosen other tongue; to both the poetic traditions I inherited; to two of the great masters of world literature who were virtually unknown outside Marathi; and last, but not the least, to my contemporaries among whom I lived and from whom I sought sustenance."

For Dilip Chitre, Tukaram is quintessential and classic poet of the world. Chitre says that poetry as a genre is incomplete without Tukaram. He believes that Tukaram is not a poet of Marathi and Maharashtra but of the entire world. Chitre had a fascination for Tukaram because of the fact that he shunned social hypocrisy in a brutal expression while pursuing the path of devotion.

A masterpiece, *Says Tuka*, which won Sahitya Akademi award for literature as well as for translation, consists of ten sections that deal with the different states of mind of Tukaram. The abhangas explore the relationship between the god and devotee. Tukaram sang his abhangas to Vitthoba, when Maharashtra followed a two caste system—Brahman and Shudra. Only the Brahman was supposed to contemplate upon God, religion and its intricacies. Tukaram went against them and talked of the god as well as composed and sang the devotional songs called abhangas. His abhangas spoke of God Vitthoba.

Tukaram's writing poetry on religious themes in colloquial Marathi was unacceptable to the Brahmins who alone were allowed to learn Sanskrit, the language of the gods and to read religious scriptures. Tukaram's first offence was to write in Marathi, and his second was that he was born in a low caste. That's why his poetry on religious themes was seen by the Brahmins as an act of heresy and of the defiance of the caste system itself.

Tukaram had a revelatory dream in which the great saint-poet Namdeo and Vitthal appeared and informed him to compose poems, the abhangas to be sung in praise of Vitthoba as Namdeo himself had done. This dream referred to the vow taken by Namdeo to Vitthal that he would compose "one billion abhangas" in His praise. Namdeo was unable to achieve this steep target in his lifetime. Therefore he asked Tukaram to finish his incomplete task.

In the beginning, Tukaram looked at poetry as a serious business. For him, all poetry was empirical and so was religion. Experience or "realization" was the crucial test. In his poetry, honestly and sincerely, he depicts his own past life and his anguished search for God. With his recent mystical enlightenment, his poetry acquired a magical quality. His poetry can be seen as a historical document. He represents the vital link in the mutation of a medieval Marathi literary tradition into modern Marathi literature. His abhangas encompass the entire gamut of Marathi culture. At the same time, he belongs to the future and bears the universal hallmarks and taste. To him, poetry was a precise description of the human condition and not merely a form of entertainment. Poetry, for him, is not ornamental either. Language, he believed, was a divine gift, therefore the divine must be repaid through poetry with selfless devotion.

The poems prescribed in this course can be better understood and interpreted if these lines are studied in the light of following brief account of Tukaram's personal life. Before he was twenty-one, Tukaram had to witness a series of deaths of his mother, his father, his first wife, and children. The famine of 1629, during which he lost his wife, was a devastating experience for Tukaram. The horror of the human condition that Tukaram speaks of comes from this experience. After the famine, Tukaram lost all urge to lead a householder's life. He showed no interest in farming or the family's trade. The famine and his other strenuous experiences reduced Tukaram to penury and humiliation of bankruptcy. He was incapable of repaying debts he had incurred and the village council stripped him of his position as Mahajan and passed strictures against him. He incurred the displeasure of the village Patil.

13.3 STUDY OF *I AM CRIPPLE*

Summary

Stanza 1

I Am Cripple appears in the section entitled *Being Human in Says Tuka*. The devotee is grieved that he is crippled who lost his hands, legs and all other limbs. Therefore, he has to move sliding

across the barbs of the fences, thickets and stumps of the trees that give him more pain. As he is crippled, he is unable to walk like a normal human being. The poet feels that he has become an orphan and he has none close to him to look after him.

Stanza 2

The poet, being a crippled and orphan is walking abnormally and thus his journey of life is a strenuous and perilous one. In search of someone who will take him out of these troubles, the poet is tired and fatigued as he fails in finding a support. This journey of his life has become more painful, and he cannot find the compassionate soul to rescue him from the grief.

Stanza 3

The poet prays to God Vitthal, the ruler of Pandhari. He entreats God to show him the way to come out of the troubles as the God has done in the past. Many saints sang abhangas for Hari, the God. And the same God has restored or cured the maimed souls and injured human beings. The poet, therefore, hopefully expresses his wish to restore the limbs and make him normal, and to save the orphan from the strenuous experiences of life.

Stanza 4

The poet looks upon God as his father and mother. And God, being the parent of all orphans in the world can provide the poet with food, because the poet has lost his property, and shared his hoarded grains among the masses during the famine of 1629. Later he has moved to many people for asking for the food, but he was turned away. Finally, he goes to God Vitthal for food.

Stanza 5

In this two-line stanza or a couplet, the poet speaks of his hapless plight. Though he is helpless, his hope does not let him stay still. So he continues to be moving.

Stanza 6

This stanza delves into the confused mind of the poet. He doesn't know what's right and what's wrong, nor does he know what his crimes are. He is hanging around and hovering at the same place. He seems to have lost his memory and cut off from his roots. The poet's condition is like a moth without wings which is unable to reach the flame; the moth can see the flame though. It strives to reach the illumination of the light from distance, but in vain. Likewise the poet is incapable of reaching his light because his wings are chopped off by the time.

Stanza 7

The poet earnestly requests the great saints to bless him, since he has come far off in order to get cured. He submits to the God and prostrates before him to heal his wounds and give him relief.

Appreciation

The poet has lost many things in his personal life. He has lost his wife, parents and child, and his elder brother leaves home renounced in order to be devoted to their clan god. It is therefore he has to look after his family including the deserted wife of his elder brother and his younger brother. The famine has stirred him greatly. Meanwhile, he has closely realized the importance and ephemeral nature of life. These are the incidents that changed him and made him feel that he has been crippled. His comparison to a cripple person whose life is fraught with many perils and pains calls for an external support from somebody to rescue the crippled person. Thus, he desperately needs support in life because he is an orphan, and he is turned away by the people surrounding him. He finds god as the only source of solace.

The poet compares his state of mind with three images: a crippled person, central image of the poem, an orphan, and a striving wingless moth. In all the comparisons the poet is a helpless creature though he has a strong will to conquer. On the other hand, the god is equated to a supporting cane in the hand of crippled the parents or caretaker of an orphan, and the wings to the birds or insects to mount up or progress.

The poem depicts the devotee - god relationship. It is a variant of archetype: relationship between creator-creature. Hari, Vitthal of Pandhari, has always been the source of inspiration, rescuer of the inflicted, and the patron of the whole world. The devotee delineated in the poem attempts to reach his God through the bhakti marg or selfless devotion.

The language of the poem (the abhangas) is so lyrical and musical as originally it was meant for singing in praise of God Pandurag. It has got the purity and divinity suitable to the language of communication/ negotiation between God and His worshipper.

The poem alludes to the painful experiences of Tukaram and mirrors the time in Tukaram's life when he was frustrated by the catastrophes in his life.

13.4 STUDY OF *WHEN HE COMES*

Summary

Stanza 1

The first stanza indicates the speaker's belief when there are certain catastrophes; it is a sign of the arrival of God. The catastrophe mentioned in this stanza is the meteorite shattering the home of the devotee. The poet appeals to the devotees to rest as he was sure that this is the sign of God visiting him.

Stanza 2

When the natural calamities, destruct the living and nonliving beings and wipe out everything, these catastrophes are incapable of ruining the relations between the God and His devotees. It signals that the God is visiting his devotee.

Stanza 3

This stanza reminds his other *abhang* in which speaks of the importance of words or language. "Words are the only/ Jewels I possess/ Words are the only/ Clothes I wear/ Words are the only food/ That sustains my life/ Words are the only wealth/ I distribute among people/ Says Tuka/ witness the Word/ He is God/ I worship Him/ With words". The language is everything for a human being. It has got a power to stir; it has got a sharpness to cut; it has got the power to soothe and so on. It is therefore, that one must respect the words.

God loves honesty, faithfulness, and sincerity that cannot be expressed in ritualistic language. When the language is 'stripped naked' of these ritualistic traits which the poet calls 'falsehood', it is again a sure indication of God visiting you.

Stanza 4

The poet says that when the human qualities are rent and ripen whose pieces cannot be brought together, it is the sign of God's visit.

Stanza 5

The poet says that when the man becomes desolate and despair, and he cannot see the rays of hope in the life, it is the sign of God's arrival for his devotee.

Stanza 6

The poet says that God comes for the rescue of the devotee when the latter is robbed of everything; he has nothing and nobody

to live with; and consequently the devotee becomes eloquent about his condition.

Stanza 7

The final stanza of the poem deals with the power of God, how He has grabbed His devotee completely. As a result, every movement of the devotee shows the presence of God in him, that is why the poet says: "Tuka is raging/Like God Himself."

Appreciation

When He Comes is a poem which is a part of the section entitled, *Being in Turmoil of Says Tuka*. The line 'God is visiting you' used as the refrain of the poem implies that the last savior of the human being is God. The most possible time for God to visit His creature is during the calamities, catastrophes and crisis in the lives of human beings. It is an optimism of the poet that though the natural calamities and crisis may finish all the materialistic things including all other human relationship but they will never dare or will be able to break or spurn the relationship between the God and his devotees. This is the central idea of the poem.

The semantic use of the stanzas of the poem is unique in which the unfavorable circumstances become the signs of meeting between the God and His devotee. Meteorite shattering home, catastrophes wiping out the human beings, devotees' language being stripped naked, the humanness being ripped off, mood being somber and hopeless, and man being robbed of all materialistic properties are employed as central images. These images evince that the destructive incidents are followed by the positive occurrences which is a natural course of happening; and thus these images signifying darkness give way to the brightness of God's arrival for His devotee.

13.5 LET'S SUM UP

Dilip Chitre's contribution to Marathi, English Poetry and his translation of Marathi saint poets are remarkable. His *Says Tuka* has received Sahitya Akademi for both the translation and literature. *Says Tuka* is a long poem - (abhangas) - the poems in praise of God - which deals with different aspects of Tukaram's personal experiences at different points of time. Most of the abhangas delineate the god-devotee relationship, but at the same time these poems are the outcome of the poet's empirical observations. He seems to be skeptic and even challenges God if the God does not stand to the test of the poet's rationality. This is a poem that is divided into ten different aspects of poet's life and time.

I Am Cripple is a poem from the division *Being Human* in which the poet, being a crippled creature who has been suffering the painful experiences in life, comes to the feet of God for getting relieved from the perils of life. While the other prescribed poem, *When He Comes* from *Being in Turmoil* of *Says Tuka* weaves the theme of the signs of God's arrival to His devotees. The poem brings out that God visits his bhaktas whenever His devotees are in trouble.

13.6 QUESTIONS

1. Write a note on Tukaram as a poet
2. Bring out the central idea of *I Am Cripple*.
3. Critically appreciate the poem *I Am Cripple*.
4. Bring out the central idea of *When He Comes*.
5. Critically appreciate the poem *When He comes*.
6. Comment on the significance of *Says Tuka*



DRAMA

Vijay Tendulkar - Kamala

Unit structure:

- 14.0 Objectives
- 14.1 Introduction
- 14.2 Vijay Tendulkar – An Overview
- 14.3 Story / Plot of Kamala
- 14.4 Characterization in Kamala
- 14.5 Themes in Kamala
- 14.6 Check your progress
- 14.7 Recommended Reading

14.0 OBJECTIVES

- To introduce Vijay Tendulkar, and his plays to the students.
- To make them understand the play '*Kamala*', its themes and characterization.

14.1 INTRODUCTION

The first part of this section introduces you to the life and works of Vijay Tendulkar, the writer of *Kamala* and his career as a dramatist. The second part is a brief critical analysis of the play *Kamala*, its themes and characterization.

14.2 VIJAY TENDULKAR

Vijay Dhondo Tendulkar was an eminent Marathi playwright, journalist, essayist and screen playwright. Though he abandoned formal education, the love of books festered in him by his father remained till the end. He had a rare ability to instruct himself, combined with a first hand knowledge of the world which went into the making of his plays.

Influenced in his formative years by Anant Kanekar's dialogue for Marathi films, Tendulkar's dramatic talents became evident in the fifties and sixties. In the first place was his mastery of the genre of one act plays as seen in *Ratra* (1957) *Ajagar* and *Gandharva* (1966) and *Bhekad* (1969). His intimate association with the experimental stage began with the plays he wrote for amateur groups like Rangayan, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Kendra and Avishkar. He started with *Shrimant* (1955) and went on with *Madhya Bhinti*, *Chimaniche Ghar Hote Menacha*, *Manus Navache Bet*, *Mee Jinkalo Mee Harlo*, *Kavlyachi Shala*, *Ashi Pakhare Yeti*. These plays him attracted the attention of discerning theatre goers and soon won critical acclaim. Tendulkar dug deep into the interiors of middle class existence without a trace of condescension, creating ordinary, characters who spoke normal language and faced real problems.

After 'Silence', the court is in session', he received national recognition in the form of 'Kamladevi Chattopadhyaya Award and the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award' for play writing

The earlier plays were marked by a mood of sympathy almost bordering on sentiment for the middle class and their problems. The mood was now replaced by an awareness of the violent impulses behind a respectable façade and the overwhelming compulsions of sex the smug smiles of ineffectual middle class type were now shown as concealing an ugly silence. He unleashed characters like sakham and ghashiram who were in a state of collision with accepted norms for their mode of expression Tendulkar forged a raw aggressive language and physically violent behavior. This behavior was evident in *Gidhade* (1971) which ran in to difficulties with the censors as also *Sakham Binder*, first performed in 1972 and soon banned by the Stage Performances Scrutiny Board, Government of Maharashtra. A protracted legal battle ensued, resulting in the famous judgment of the Bombay high court, setting aside the whole chapter of rules related to the Board and vindicating theatrical freedom.

Ghashiram Kotwal (1972) with its brilliantly conceived plot and innovative use of folk music and dance, highlighted not merely the decadence of the last years of the peshwa rule, but also the operations of social forces which created a human monster who terrorizes them.

As was predicted this play roused the strong opposition of casteist and reactionary elements, and almost as late as 1980, an attempt was made to prevent Ghashiram kotwal from undertaking a tour of Europe for his keen insight into the nature of social tensions and his ability to translate his findings into an artistic and dramatic

equivalent, Tendulkar was awarded the Jawarharlal Nehru Scholarship.

Tendulkar was the Vice President of the National School Drama from 1979 -1984. In 1984 the title of Padmabhushan was conferred upon him. Field work and travel during 1974-75 instilled in Tendulkar a deep understanding of the way violence expresses itself in society and the working of the power structure in both rural and urban India. Out of this experience were born the screenplay Nishant by Shyam Benegal, Saamna and Sinhasan by Jabbar Patel, Aakrosh by Govind Nihalani and Aakriet by Amol Palekar almost all these films won national and state awards and Tendulkar emerged as an eminent writer of screen plays.

Tendulkars grasp of the harsh realities in the Indian social fabric is also expressed in the more recent plays Pahije Jatiche, Baby Mitrachi Goshte, Kamala and Kanyadaan

Though he is not wedded to any party ideology Tendulkar has been lately associated actively with the Civil Liberties Movement. Besides, Tendulkar is also an excellent photographer and his collection 'Chehare' is an eloquent comment on the personalities he has met

Tendulkar's concern with all forms of oppression, his strong visual sense and anticipation of the actor's movement on the stage coupled with the gift to use a style and device appropriate to the theme of the play made him the most important figure in India's theatre movement and a force to reckon with in the new wave of films.

14.3 SUMMARY

CRITICAL SUMMARY OF KAMALA

Kamala is a play written in the naturalistic mode. Though not a political play in any sense, Kamala is a topical drama inspired by a real life incident. The Indian Express expose by Ashwin Sarin, who actually bought a girl from a rural flesh market and presented her at a press conference. Using this incident as a launching pad, Tendulkar raises certain cardinal questions regarding the value system of a modern success oriented generations who are ready to sacrifice human values even in the name of humanity itself. The innate self deception of this standpoint is exposed dramatically by the playwright. At the centre of the play is a self – seeking journalist, Jaisingh Jadhav, who treats the women he has bought from the flesh market as an object that can buy him a promotion in his job and a reputation in his professional life. He is one of those

modern day individuals with a single track mind, who pursue their goal unquestioningly. Jadhav never stops to think what will happen to Kamala after this expose. Tendulkar takes a jibe at the modern concept of journalism which stresses the sensational. For this, he uses Kakasaheb, a journalist of the old school, who runs a small paper with his own resources.

Kakasaheb provides the true ideals of journalism and in contrast to these, Jadhav's concept of newspaper reporting is shown in a critical light. Jadhav's medium is English also helps to highlight the elitist nature of journalism practiced by Jadhav. By introducing Jadhav's colleague into the play Tendulkar is able to depict the true nature of the race that goes on in this milieu.

But there is more to Kamala than this jibe at contemporary journalism. Once again, Tendulkar explores the position of women in contemporary Indian society through Sarita, Jadhav's wife, who is in her own way as exploited as Kamala. Tendulkar exposes the chauvinism intrinsic in the modern Indian male who believes himself to be liberal minded like Kamala. Sarita is also an object in Jadhav's life, an object that provides physical enjoyment, social companionship and domestic comfort. Kamala's entry into the household reveals to 'Sarita' the selfish hypocrisy of her husband and the insignificance of her own existence. Yet, she does not have the spirit to rebel against Jadhav when at the close of the play, he is treacherously deprived of his job. But the dramatist also suggests that Sarita cannot unlearn what she had come to realize and at the end of the play, there is a faint hope of her attaining independence sometime in the future. Kamala & Sarita are both built of the same material as his other protagonists like Leela Benare in 'Silence', Rama in 'Gidhade' and Laxmi in 'Sakharam'. The other type of women that Tendulkar portrays is more selfish and assertive, Manik in 'Gidhade', Champa in 'Sakharam' and, Vijaya in 'Mugabla'.

From the formal point of view Kamala has nothing new to contribute to Marathi theatre but there Tendulkar has always claimed that it is the content of his work that determines the form and it is difficult to think of any alternative structure into which the central theme of Kamala could be cast. The play provides a completely novel point of view.

14.4 CHARACTERIZATION

1) Sarita:

The principal action in Kamala revolves around Sarita, the woman protagonist. Sarita in the play stands for the central consciousness in the respective work of art. The character of Sarita consists of a great variety and depth in comparison to her male

counterparts. She reacts against social injustices and the subservient position of women in the institution of marriage. Like Kamala, Sarita is also an object that merely provides physical enjoyment, social companionship and domestic comfort to Jadhav. She is indeed a 'Lovely bonded labourer' taking note of all phone calls, attending to Jadhav's physical needs and running about in the house, carrying out all his presumptions instructions, an obedient and loyal wife. Kamala's unexpected question to Sarita that "How much did he buy you for?" enlightens Sarita on her position in the family.

2) **Kakasaheb:**

Kakasaheb, Sarita's uncle runs a newspaper in vernacular language. He lives a simple life on Gandhian principles. He has small resources. He is a journalist of the old school and provides the true ideals of natinalism. To quote Kakasaheb's words : "I'm a back number, a remnant of times past. A dead journalist who's just about staying alive"! In the very opening scene, Kakasaheb criticizes the high speed journalism practised by Jaisingh. He poob-poohs his craze for "eye-witness report".

3) **Jaisingh Jadhav:**

Jaisingh Jadhav is at the centre of the play. He is a self seeking journalist associated with an English daily published by an unscrupulous press baron Seth Singhanian. He is an agile, adventurous journalist. He takes risks, exposes scandals and feeds the sophisticated paper with sensational news. His work boosts the circulation of the paper and the owner increases his salary. Jadhav happily moves to a small bungalow in a fashionable locality around New Delhi. Jaisingh treats the woman he has purchased from the flesh market as an object that can buy him a reputation in his professional life and promotion in his job. He is one of those modern individuals, who pursue their goal unquestioningly, with a single track mind. Jadhav is never bothered of what will happen to Kamala after exhibiting her at a Press Conference. Jaisingh is outlasted by the society and loses his job in his bid to expose the racket of woman trade. Jadhav is referred by Kakasaheb as an irresponsible husband whose craze for publicity over -whelms him so much that he totally ignores his wife's existence.

14.5 THEMES

Themes in *Kamala*:

The play expresses Tendulkar's grasp of the harsh realities in our social fabric. In the worlds of Tendulkar, "Kamala for me is not just a character, she is a living person and she just doesn't remain on paper". The play exposes a flesh trade scoop and its

aftermath. It deals with the issue of buying and selling of tribal women. The theme of *Kamala* is flesh trade, and how well-known young journalists like Jaisingh Jadhav seek to capitalize on it in order to further succeed in their careers without caring, in the least, for the victims of this immoral trade in a democratic society like India.

The play also offers Tendulkar enough scope at the kind of trendy journalism practised by Jadhav, and also to strike a contrast between the journalism in the vernacular and that in English. Tendulkar used the play also to dwell on the characteristic suffering of the Indian middle class woman made to suffer by selfish, malicious and hypocritical male chauvinists. The man-woman relationship is also deftly touched upon in the complex relationship between Jadhav and his wife, Sarita. *Kamala* is a female centred play in the sense that it is built on the metamorphosis of Sarita emerging from being a docile wife to an assertive, mature and strong woman in the end.

Kamala is a satire on the trendy journalism shown in it. Jadhav is indifferent to the humaneness. He is capable of sacrificing human values. The husband-wife relationship between Sarita and Jaisingh is typical of the sort existing in cities like Delhi where executive husbands do not find adequate time for their wives.

In the play, Tendulkar has made a rude remark at the modern concept of journalism which stresses on sensationalism. That Kakasaheb edits a paper published in vernacular while Jadhav's medium is English, also helps to highlight the elitist nature of journalism practised by him. Tendulkar has tried to drive home the fact that it is the dailies in vernacular alone that reach the masses. And none can affect any meaningful social or political change in India through English dailies as they reach only to a very small section of Indian population.

The play not only scoffs at the hypocrisy of the urban middle class but also darts glancing barbs on power hungry politicians and unscrupulous press barons who work hand in hand in metropolitan centres like Delhi. For instance Kakasaheb observes "Our houseboy becomes the defence minister; he's got one foot in Delhi and the other in Karad. And finally he's neither one thing nor the other".

Towards the close, Jadhav's dismissal results from his proprietor Sheth Singhanian's questionable association with some political bigwigs of Delhi. The play also attacks the hawkish politicians, political figures who, instead of having the spirit of nationalism and working for the betterment of the nation are busy in

their own importunate welfare. The play stands against such an allegedly corrupt system. It is a reminder that such a despotic government needs to be amended. *Kamala* jibes at the contemporary political setup comprising of petty minded, mealy mouthed and opportunistic politicians who believe that running a nation is more of a trade and the aim is to earn more and more profit. The play points out the mechanization of power at various levels and the digression of moral values in a socio-political era.

There is inimitable satire and sarcasm aimed at the very core of dualism and in humanity of the male chauvinists in the Indian middle class society.

The play also offers Tendulkar enough scope to launch his diatribe against the presumptuous and reckless news reporters working for English dailies. It lays a strong stress on ethics.

The role of gender in power game is obvious in *Kamala* which focuses directly on the position of women in a patriarchal society. Here Tendulkar has underlined both the dark ambiguity of the cardboard figures of power and the real dangers of this never ending struggle for supremacy in the society in which gender has always played a pivotal role.

14.6 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. How does Tendulkar satirise the dark side of journalism in *Kamala*? Discuss.
2. Compare and contrast Kakasaheb and Jaisingh.
3. Explain the major themes of *Kamala*.
4. Analyse the major characters in *Kamala*.
5. Critically evaluate *Kamala* in the light of its characterization and theme.
6. Discuss *Kamala* as a woman oriented play.

14.7 RECOMMENDED READING

1. Tendulkar, Vijay 1995. *Five plays*, Delhi : Oxford University Press.
2. Tendulkar, Vijay, 1972. *The Second Sex*. Trans H.M. Parshley, New York, Penguin.
3. Raturi, Prachi 2000. Interview with Vijay Tendulkar : 'I shouldn't have been a Writer. Indian Express.



SAMMY!

Pratap Sharma

Unit Structure:

- 15.0 Objectives
- 15.1 Introduction
- 15.2 Pratap Sharma
- 15.3 Background
- 15.4 Summary
- 15.5 Questions

15.0 OBJECTIVES

- To introduce the students to the playwright Pratap Sharma and his contribution to literature
- To make the students understand the summary of the play

15.1 INTRODUCTION

In this unit the students will learn the contribution of Pratap Sharma to literature. The summary of the play highlights the salient features of the play. Pratap Sharma has explored the irrepressible mischievousness of the Mahatma in Mohandas.

15.2 PRATAP SHARMA (www.prapatsharma.com)

Pratap Sharma on born December 12, 1939, is an Indian playwright, novelist, author of books for children, commentator, actor and documentary film-maker. A gifted writer, Sharma covers a wide range of subjects and perspectives, and as a master craftsman delivers intricate ideas simply. Like Mahatma Gandhi, the subject of one of Sharma's most applauded plays *Sammy!*, Sharma found that uncovering the truth was not always popular. In *Contemporary Authors* Sharma explains: "Stories are perhaps a way of making more coherent and comprehensible the bewildering complexity of the world. I learn and discover as I write and I try to

share what I have understood. This began with me when I was a child, before I could read, and when I needed to deduce a story to explain the pictures in a book. But that is just the technique; the aim is to uncover an aspect of the truth. The truth isn't always palatable. Two of my documentaries and a play were, at various times, banned. The High Court reversed the ban on the play; it is now a text in three Indian universities and has been the subject of a doctoral thesis in drama at Utah University."

15.3 BACKGROUND

Partap Sharma (12 December 1939 – 30 November 2011) was an Indian playwright, novelist, author of books for children, commentator, actor and documentary film-maker. Sharma was born in Lahore, Punjab, India (now in Pakistan) and was the oldest son of Dr. Baij Nath Sharma and Dayawati (Pandit) Sharma. Sharma's father was a civil engineer who served as Technical Advisor to governments in Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), Tanganyika and Libya and later retired to their ancestral property in Punjab as a farmer. This colourful Punjabi village forms much of the backdrop of Sharma's novel, *Days of the Turban*.

Sharma's early education was in Trinity College, Kandy, Ceylon, and Bishop Cotton School, Shimla. Sharma received a triple promotion and completed school at 14 before going to study at St. Xavier's College, Bombay; all other universities in India required a minimum age of 16. He was married to Susan Amanda Pick and they have two daughters: Namrita and Tara Sharma.

Sharma's association with the Indian National Theatre, Mumbai, began in 1961 with the production by it of his first full-length play *Bars Invisible* and continued until the production of the banned *A Touch of Brightness*. While working on his writing, Sharma freelanced as a narrator for short films and newsreels and directed a few documentaries for the Government of India. Sharma has voiced many national and international award-winning documentaries and short films. He is the voice on most of the Son et lumière shows produced in India, including the one still running forty years later, at the Delhi Fort, in Delhi. Sharma was the TV host of the popular programme *What's the Good Word?* produced by Television Centre, Mumbai.

The Surangini Tales

The Surangini Tales (1973) is a children's book, about Surangini, daughter of the village zamindar. She is the most beautiful maiden anyone has ever seen. Kalu, the poor weaver, loves her, but only the wealthiest of eligible young men can ask for her hand in

marriage. Unless, Kalu with his deft hands, quick wit and unselfish love can produce something like a miracle, unexpected and amazing, on the day she is to choose her bridegroom....!

Dog Detective Ranjha

Dog Detective Ranjha (1978) is a story book about Sharma's Alsatian dog Ranjha. Sharma dedicates the book to animal lovers the world over, and particularly in India where some of the world's earliest animal stories were written.

Even today the streets in India are open not only to traffic and human beings but also for the friendly cows and bulls who wander freely as they please, sometimes absentmindedly standing in a bus queue or staring in with curiosity from the doorstep of a shop. There are even festivals for the less loved creatures, like snakes. Birds, of course, are often fed little morsels even by those who can hardly afford a daily meal for themselves. In the great epic, *Mahabharata*, it is said that when the legendary hero, *Yuddhister* went to heaven, he insisted that his dog should be allowed to accompany him.

'Sharma has written a good, old-fashioned adventure story book, its rather solid virtues enlivened by the amusing device of having events narrated by the dog.' - Rosemary Stones, Children's Book Bulletin (UK)

The Little Master of the Elephant

The Little Master of the Elephant (1984) tells the story of a parched land, where people are dying or leaving. Chintu and his elephant Vivek go in search of water to save a dying uncle. They come back with a retinue of people and animals and a river of water instead of just a bucketful. This is just the beginning of their adventures together and their search for the meaning of life. In a part Chintu finds love and is promised to be king and find the meaning of what he is looking for.

Top Dog

Top Dog (1985) has more stories about Ranjha, the dog detective. They live in Mumbai and Ranjha has been so skillfully trained in the art of tracking that he has become famous for the crimes he has solved. All the stories in this book are based on real cases and Ranjha tells us, in his own words, about some of the most puzzling he has helped to solve. He tracked down a local thief, he got involved in a particularly unpleasant case of what seemed to be ritual murder, he got to the bottom of a series of thefts from a warehouse that had reduced the owner of the goods to despair. He

helped to find and return to her family a little girl, who had been kidnapped.

Days of the Turban

Sharma's novel *Days of the Turban* (1986) presents a picture of Indian Society from the inside. It shows a country in transition, where old values are under attack from new ideas but where, in the end, the traditions and ways of life still have their place.

It tells the story of Balbir, the youngest member of a wealthy Punjabi family, the descendant of a great Brahmin warrior dynasty. In Punjab the family counts for everything. Over-educated and bored with life in a Punjabi village, Balbir wants only to escape, to get away from the demands of ever-present family. Most of all he would like to follow his glamorous elder brother Raskaan, who has escaped to Europe and become westernised and rich, a businessman in Berlin.

Searching for adventure and trying to raise the money to finance his escape, Balbir becomes entangled with local gunrunners. Venturing into the golden Temple at Amritsar with a message for the Sikh extremists who have fortified it, he is held hostage to ensure that his cousin Satyavan will provide the arms the movement needs.

The book provides an insight into the mind of extremists. It shows how extremism builds on fear and then has to reach further into terrorism, not necessarily to further its aim, but for its leadership to keep ahead of its supporters and rivals. The descent from revolutionary to terrorist can be jagged and rapid.

A Touch of Brightness

A Touch of Brightness (1964) centres around Rukmini, a girl sold to a brothel in Mumbai and her relationship with Pidku, a street urchin, who tries desperately to rescue her from her life as a prostitute. Rukmini mesmerises Pidku with her visionary stories of the gods and her dreams of a married life as the wife of the blue god, Krishna. Even in a brothel, her extravagant optimism never ceases but only deepens.

In 1965, the play was selected for the first Commonwealth Arts Festival from among 150 works of Commonwealth writers. It was also invited to tour four theatres in Britain for a commercial run. In September 1965 the production troupe, sponsored by the Indian National Theatre, was prohibited from proceeding to England. To prevent the troupe of actors from going abroad to present the work,

fifteen passports were impounded overnight. The authorities gave no explanation for this, but the reason was obvious. To quote directly from an editorial "Do these people honestly believe that the prestige of India will be enhanced by letting drama-lovers in London know the heartening fact of the existence of brothels in this country?"

The play was banned in Mumbai in 1966 on the grounds that it was set in the infamous redlight area of the city and therefore 'dealt with subjects which should not be depicted on stage'. Seven years later, in 1972, the Mumbai High Court decreed that the censoring authority had 'exceeded its jurisdiction' and the ban was revoked. The play was produced by the Indian National Theatre in Mumbai in 1973.

It is interesting to note that forty years on, in 2006 it was selected by Sahitya Akademi (India's National Academy of Letters) to launch a series of contemporary plays by Indian writers in English.

Meanwhile, the play had become a subject of academic study in universities in India and abroad. The play has also been produced and published in at least five countries in various languages. It was broadcast for the first time over radio by the BBC Third Programme on 3 November 1967 with a cast that included Judi Dench (as Prema/Rukmini), and music specially composed for it by the famous sitar player, Pandit Ravi Shankar. Well known literary critic Walter Allen wrote of this play when it was first broadcast "the most imaginatively satisfying" experience in his recent listening.

It was rebroadcast on BBC 7 in 2007.

In 1999, Geeta Citygirl staged the American premiere of *A TOUCH OF BRIGHTNESS* at Aaron Davis Hall in Harlem, NY. Partap Sharma was present for the opening night performance.

Zen Katha

The Zen Katha of Bodhidharma is a historical play about the founder of zen who was also a master of martial arts. Revered in China, Okinawa and Japan, the Indian monk Bodhidharma was, till the writing, performance and publication of this play, almost forgotten in his homeland India.

It tells the story of how Bodhidharma, born a prince in South India in the fifth century, had to discover ways to excel at unarmed combat because the royal Pallavas prided themselves on their wrestling skills. The Prince became a monk and fled from the

demands of a throne to China, but could not so easily escape the woman who loved him.

Sammy!

The irrepressible 'Mahatma' in Gandhi is the Inner Voice he could not ignore. This intricately crafted play portrays Gandhi's journey from a tongue-tied lawyer to a shrewd politician and finally the Mahatma (Great Soul). Set against the dramatic background of India's struggle for freedom, this outstanding play surprises our expectation at every turn of the story. Full of humour and style, the play makes past events seem like present gossip and the audience is transported deeper within themselves. This play won 4 all-India Mahindra Awards for Excellence in Theatre 2006

Sammy, English

The play brings alive Gandhi's philosophy, pragmatism, and sense of humour. Partap Sharma's play unwinds Gandhi's concepts and his techniques for non-violent struggle. The play is captivating as we realise that Gandhi's struggle has no enemy, no arms, no hate nor revenge, but only the inner strength of millions of ordinary men, women and children.

The play has won the 2006 META awards in India for Best Original Script, Best Director, Best Actor and Best Costumes. It is playing to great acclaim in India, and S.E Asia and after the European Premiere in Brussels in October 2006, travelled to the US, UK in 2007. It then travelled to New Zealand and Australia where it received standing ovations.

Sharma's Sammy! has also travelled all the way successfully to the Scotland. The story in itself will be a form of reviving the values of Mahatma in foreign lands through theatre and this play has been woven as the director (Pranay Ahluwalia) has tried to show history through modern eyes which would lead the audience into the era which shaped the future of India for generations to come.

90 Minutes for Gandhi was staged at the prestigious Edinburgh Fringe Festival 2009 as a horizontal adaption of the original play under the banner of The Holycow Performing Arts Group, an Edinburgh-based amateur theater group. The play has been very well received.

Begum Sumroo

Set in the late eighteenth century *The Rebel Courtesan, Begum Sumroo* (she is also known as Begum Samru), traces the picaresque

adventures of a legendary historical figure from British India, Begum (Queen) Sumroo.

Farzana is a peerless courtesan who morphs into a powerful ruler, known for her political accomplishments as well as her amorous liaisons. After seducing Walter Reinhardt Sombre, a Swiss German mercenary, she acquires the kingdom of Sardhana from Emperor Shah Alam, and commands a fierce brigade of 3000 European and Indian soldiers.

It is said that tourists who visited British India were advised to see the Taj Mahal, and to pay their respects to the Begum! The story is of an amazing Indian woman who was ahead of her time and ours.

Writings:

Books

- The Surangini Tales
- Dog Detective Ranjha
- The Little Master of the Elephant
- Top Dog
- Days of the Turban
- A Touch of Brightness
- Zen Katha
- Sammy!
- Begum Sumroo

Staged Plays:

- Brothers Under The Skin (1956)
- Bars Invisible (1961)
- A Touch of Brightness (1965)
- The Word (1966)
- The Professor Has A Wacry (1970)
- Queen Bee (1976)
- Power Play (1991)
- Begum Sumroo (1997)
- Zen Katha (2004)
- SAMMY! (2005)

Documentaries and Films

Partap Sharma has directed some outstanding documentaries, as independent producer and for the Government of India's Films Division, and Channel Four Television, U.K. His film credits include:

Documentaries

- *The Framework of Famine*, 1967, an investigation of how nature's devastation is compounded by human corruption and

inefficiency; banned for its “ruthless candour” then released after other documentary-makers protested.

- *The Flickering Flame*, 1974, a study of the mismanagement of the energy crisis and its effect on the suburban housewife; banned and never released.
- *Kamli*, 1976, a short film depicting the status of women in rural Indian society.
- *The Empty Hand*, 1982, (co-directed) a prize-winning audiovisual about the art of karate.
- *Viewpoint Amritsar*, 1984, co-directed a film about the Golden Temple and environs in the aftermath of Operation Bluestar.
- *The British Raj through Indian Eyes*, 1992, a documentary series telecast in 1992 by Channel Four Television UK. Part I: The Uprising of 1857. Part II: The Massacre at Jallianwallah Bagh 1919. The museum of the British Empire and Commonwealth in Bristol now has a permanent section entitled The Sharma Archive consisting of 30 video and 67 audio tapes made by Partap Sharma, Interviews and footage of Indian nationalists, freedom fighters and writers, Indian perspectives on the Raj. Some transcripts available (CDs, Videos and Cassettes).
- Sailing Around The World And Discover America Yachting Rally, two video programmes directed by Sandhya Divecha and produced by Sharma's Indofocus Films Pvt. Ltd. *British Raj Hindustani Nazron Se*, 1995-98, A Hindi TV Serial.

Children's Film

- *The Case Of The Hidden Ear-Ring*, 1983

Feature Films

As an actor Sharma played a role in the Merchant-Ivory film *Shakespearewallah*. Other films include the lead role in the following Hindi films:

- *Phir Bhi* (1971)
- *Andolan* (1975)
- *Tyaag Patra* (1980)
- *Pehla Kadam* (1980)
- *Nehru – The Jewel of India* (1989)
- *The Bandung Sonata* (2002) Filmed in China, Sharma played Nehru in this international film which was subsequently re-titled for release in China as Chou-en-Lai in Bandung.

Awards and Honours

- Sharma's literary genius was recognized at an early age, and he won numerous first prizes in school and university in debating, elocution and acting including first prize at the All India Inter-University Youth Festival, Delhi, in 1958.
- 1971 National Award for the lead role in the feature film "*Phir Bhi*" which also won the National Award for the best Hindi film of the year.
- Cleo Award U.S.A for best voice.
- 1976 RAPA First Prize for best voice in radio spots.
- 1992 the "Hamid Sayani" Trophy for a lifetime of all-round excellence in radio and television.
- 2000 Ad Club of Mumbai Award for Lifetime Contribution to Advertising.
- 2004 the "Dadasaheb Phalke Award" with the citation 'the voice of India' on behalf of 35 associations of professional cine workers representing all branches of the Indian film industry.

15.4 SUMMARY

Sammy! is play in two acts about the irrepressible 'Mahatma' in Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi. Through a witty, lively debate between two actors, Sammy traces the development of the Father of our Nation from a young, naive man to the enlightened, shrewd person that he later becomes. The title is explained early on in the drama; the word Sammy (sami), along with Coolie, was used by white proponents of apartheid in South Africa to insult Indians. It stems from the word Swami, which means master or guru. In Gandhi's own life he was said to have been plagued by his 'inner voice' which is given tangible form in the play where the realist, Mohan, and the idealist, Mahatma, are dramatised visually through two actors debating about him and their portrayal of him. The two voices never quite agree with each other and thus the action is driven on. This device enables us to understand the decisions that Gandhi took in life after battling them out in his mind, the arena of right and wrong.

Sammy! is the incredible story of Mahatma Gandhi. Led by a lively debate between Mohandas, the man, and the irrepressible Mahatma in him, the play highlights Gandhi's relationships and how he changed everyone he touched. The play traces the transformation of the young Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi into a shrewd politician and finally a Mahatma, and recounts his story from his earliest days in South Africa to his final assassination.

In a nutshell, Partap Sharma's *Sammy!* tells the story of Gandhiji's life starting from South Africa to his death bringing to life different events in our fight for Independence. What is more, the play explores the conflicts between Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi and the Mahatma Gandhi, his inner self. The technique is not that new, but it is the way the playwright uses it and the way the two actors Ravi Dubey as the Mahatma and Joy Sengupta as Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi project it that makes all the difference.

The play is full of gems of wisdom taken mostly from Gandhiji's writings and put into a discussion between the Mahatma and Mohan. The playwright has an interesting way of changing the scene to carry the play forward. Listen to Mahatma when he says, "If the good succeeds, God is good; if the evil succeeds, God is evil. So my concern is not God as God may turn out to be, but the Truth. Because truth is God."

... .. "But how can an ordinary person like me tackle such a vast crowd?" asks Mohan. "Reach out to them, take away the blindfold and they will see...they called you Sammy," without completing the sentence the Mahatma withdraws".

To explain the meaning of the word "Sammy", the title of the play, the scene dissolves into Mohan standing besides the Police Superintendent's wife, Mrs. Alexander who, a few minutes earlier had saved him from the mob. Mohan asks her if the crowd knew what the word Sammy meant. "Yes, of course. Most of our indentured labour comes from India and most of their names end in Sammy, Ramasammy, Narayanasammy, and so on." "The word is Swami", Mohan corrects her. "But that is not important at a time like this," says Mrs. Alexander. "But it is. Because it means master or teacher," says Mohan turning to the men who are standing about watchfully and says, "Thank you, gentlemen. I shall endeavour to live up to that." Indeed, a masterly way of explaining the title of the play.

As we go along we have some most touching scenes between Mohan and his wife Kasturba, and we learn something of his philosophy when he talks of his vow of celibacy. We are also told of his line of action against the government's decision requiring Indians to carry permits and how Kasturba was drawn into the movement.

Back at home in India the play touches upon some of the most important milestones in our struggle for independence like the Champaran agitation, the Dandi March, the massacre in Jalianwala Bagh, and the charkha as a weapon to fight the British. The pros

and cons of the movement itself are discussed between the Mahatma (the inner voice) and Mohan.

As we reach towards the end, the playwright discusses in depth the role of different leaders like Jinnah, Nehru and Gandhiji on the one hand, and the Viceroy and his advisors like Glancy on the other. In short the play is a kaleidoscopic presentation of our freedom movement with Gandhiji's philosophy thrown in.

Sammy! (2006) is a play about the irrepressible 'Mahatma' in Gandhi, the Inner Voice he could not ignore. This intricately crafted play portrays Gandhi's journey from a tongue-tied lawyer to a shrewd politician and finally the Mahatma (Great Soul). Set against the dramatic background of India's struggle for freedom, this outstanding play surprises our expectation at every turn of the story. Full of humour and style, the play makes past events seem like present gossip and the audience is transported deeper within themselves.

Partap Sharma's play brings alive Gandhi's philosophy, pragmatism, and sense of humour. It unwinds Gandhi's concepts and his techniques for non-violent struggle. The play is captivating as we realise that Gandhi's struggle has no enemy, no arms, no hate nor revenge, but only the inner strength of millions of ordinary men, women and children.

Commenting on the play, Sharma said: "Gandhi needed no introduction to the millions. He was a man of the multitudes. But it was interesting to examine what provoked him to become what he did. It took me twenty years of intermittent research and writing to put together "*Sammy!* The word that broke an Empire". Judging by the response of audiences and actors, the play works, and that is important to me."

15.5 QUESTIONS

- 1) Discuss the contribution of Pratap Sharma to Indian Theatre.
- 2) Attempt a summary of the play 'Sammy!' highlighting its salient features.



CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF SAMMY!

Unit Structure:

- 16.0 Objectives
- 16.1 Critical Analysis
- 16.2 Themes
- 16.3 Characters
- 16.4 Questions

16.0 OBJECTIVES

To explain the play '*Sammy*' through its plot, characterization, themes, motifs and symbols.

16.1 CRITICAL ANALYSIS

Partap Sharma's *Sammy*- a play in Two Acts employs theatrical conventions to recount the story of Mahatma Gandhi's inner thoughts and life in a nutshell. *Sammy* tells the story of Gandhiji's life starting from South Africa to his death bringing to life different events in our fight for independence.

The play through its major characters Mohandas and Mahatma explore the conflicts between self and conscience. The technique may not be new but the way the playwright uses it is unique. Whenever Mohan is in a dilemma, the Mahatma appears and advises him to come out of his moral trap.

The play is full of the gems of wisdom taken mostly from Gandhiji's writings. The discussion between the Mahatma and Mohan is thought - provoking providing the audience with the stark reality of the historical or the sociopolitical situation.

The play has some touching scenes between Mohan and his wife Kasturba. Through them we learn about his philosophy of 'Brahmacharya' when he talks of his vow of celibacy. Another scene tells the audience of Gandhi's line of action against the Government's decision requiring Indians to carry permits and how Kasturba was drawn into the movement.

When the scene shifts to India, the play touches upon some of the milestones in the independence struggle. The response of both Mohan and Mahatma to the Champaran agitation, the Dandi March, the massacre in Jalianwala Bagh and the Charkha as a weapon to fight the British are well depicted. Through them, the pros and cons of these movements are discussed.

As we reach towards the end of the play, the role of Jinah, Nehru and Gandhiji on one hand and the Viceroy and his advisors like Glancy on the other is discussed at length. In short the play is a Kaleidoscopic presentation of the freedom movement with Gandhiji's philosophy as a backdrop.

None of the characters are black or white. The play expresses each characters' point of view as to what happened - Gandhi, Nehru, Sarojini Naidu, Kasturba, Gandhi's eldest son, Jinnah and even Nathuram Godse.

16.2 THEMES

1) India's Freedom Struggle:

The play is a Kaleidoscopic presentation of the freedom struggle. It highlights the several milestones in the independence struggle. We are shown the discussion of Mohan and Mahatma on the various events that take place like the Champaran agitation, the Salt Satyagraha, the Jalianwala Bagh Massacre, the Chaurichura incident, the various pacts by the Viceroy's like Irwin, Rowlatt etc. and the counter action by Gandhi. The partition sickened the Mahatma making him feel that the entire fight for freedom had been for naught.

2) The struggle in South Africa:

The plays begin with the famous incident in the train where Gandhi suffered racial discrimination and was thrown out of the first class compartment. The first Act very elaborately shows

Gandhi's rise and development of his nonviolent philosophy through his interaction with Dada Abdullah, Aenoch Aasvogel and his fight for the Indian workers in South Africa. This particular period of Gandhi's life transformed the young Mohan from a naive tongue tied lawyer into a shrewd politician and finally a Mahatma.

3) Gandhiji's philosophy:

The basic premise of the play is to give audience the deeper insight into Gandhiji's philosophy of non - violence and Satyagraha. Each event in the play, the lively debate between Mohan and Mahatma probes into Gandhi's philosophy. His interaction with Kasturba and Polak explores the idea of Brahmacharya. His face off with the British officials shown us how Gandhiji's philosophy transformed them by touching their lives. In South Africa, Gandhi fought domination by whites by implementing non - violent methods of Resistance. As he struggled with racism, he turned inward trying to understand what a moral response would be. This internal dialogue is portrayed in the play, and the same moral compass dictated all his actions as the head of the Congress Party in India.

The title *Sammy*!:

Sammy was a derogatory term used by South Africans to refer to Indians, since many Indian names ended with 'swamy'. In the first part of the play, Gandhi is confronted by an angry mob in Durban that used the word. He smiles back hoping that he will one day be able to live up to its true meaning that is 'Lord' or master.

The weapon, satyagraha:

The play realistically depicts how Satyagraha was an application or an offshoot of Gandhi's philosophy. He started it as a way of registering a silent protest representing a united front of a united people's unequivocal opinion against something they found unacceptable by doing nothing, by laying down tools or just stopping participation in the process of active life for a certain time to show solidarity.

16.3 CHARACTERS

Mohan

Mahatma

Kasturba

Nehru

Jinnah

Lort Irwin / Lord Mountbatten

Sarojini Naidu

Henry Polak

Mohan: Mohan is introduced as a young man in a spruce coat recently arrived in India. Mohan is a naive inexperienced lawyer. But as the play progresses, we see Mohan growing up as an ordinary man. His scenes with Kasturba are adorable, the way he tries to take up Brahmacharya and his penchant for the service of the people much against her wishes. The audience is given a glimpse of his personal intimate life. Although in the first Act he is a mere protestor in South Africa, back home in India he grows into an enlightened soul, the torchbearer of freedom for the nation. Through Mohan we see the conflict faced by Mohan as a fallible man and a passionate leader. Mohan represents the human in the Mahatma but still he is above all because he is determined to look for truth, to bring freedom to his countrymen and equality for blacks in South Africa.

Mahatma: Mahatma is the inner voice not exactly the alter ego of Mohan because he is not in conflict with the Mahatma but he is the supporting voice who guides him in his endeavour. Right through his trials and tribulations, the Mahatma in Gandhiji enables Mohan to face life and his mission from South Africa to India, the most when Kasturba dies and even readies him for his own assassination. The hallmark humour is seen through Mahatma's dialogues.

Henry Polak: Polak comes across as a young Englishman wearing a rough and simple coat, Gandhi considered Polak as his close disciple, a 'Chotta bhai'. The play has a long discussion between Mohan and Polak, especially during Gandhi's formative years when he took a vow of celibacy. In the play, Polak is extremely in awe of and grateful to Mohan for his marriage with Millie. Polak supports Mohan in his protest at Phoenix. He even accepts Mohan's vegetarianism.

Another significant thing was that Polak was a Jew who married a Christian Girl, Millie. He worked as a subeditor of an English newspaper, in Johannesburg called 'The Critic'. He was Mohan's

closest friend in South Africa and almost a member of Gandhi's family. Taking inspiration from Gandhi, Polak fearlessly wrote against the social injustices prevailing in South Africa.

Kasturba: Kasturba was Gandhiji's wife in an arranged marriage. Act I Sc 8 of *Sammy* introduces Kasturba washing a chamber pot reluctantly. Kasturba seems unconvinced by Gandhi's philosophy and thoughts. Initially Mohan even resorts to violence and abusive language to reprimand her but he relents later on. She is worried about the upbringing of her children and the upkeep of the family and is disturbed at the thought of going to jail. In Act II, Kasturba has already been molded by Gandhiji's teaching and is thoroughly supportive. She is a devoted wife who tends to Mohan's bruises. Only once in the train, she does not share the oranges given by Harilal with Mohan. Perhaps she had that little grudge against Gandhi with regard to their eldest son, Harilal that Gandhi did not give him his due. Silence was her weapon.

Sarojini Naidu:

Sarojini Naidu is introduced into the play in Act I Sc 17. He is about thirty five years of age, well bred, confident and sophisticated. At first she is aghast, amazed and in disbelief at meeting Mohan. She is referred to as the nightingale of India and gifts Mohan her two volumes of poetry to read. Initially reluctant, she is finally won over by Gandhi who explains his stand. Sarojini refers to Gandhi as the Mickey Mouse. She appears in many scenes later in the play voicing her views with Nehru and Mountbatten. In fact she is in a way responsible to change Nehru and align him with Gandhi. She is shown to be an active participant in the various movements like the Dandi March and Civil Disobedience Movement and as a devout student even in jail, where she takes care of Mohan.

Nehru: Nehru is introduced in *Sammy* as a thirty year old dressed in riding breeches and carrying a crop in hand. He is absolutely amazed at the way the 'phenomenon of Gandhi sweeps through the country side 'like a forest fire'. He has a western style of behavior. In Sc5 we see him a transformed man, a Gandhian dressed in Khadi Kurta and dhoti. Nehru is extremely distressed at the massacre at Jalianwala Bagh. After his stint in prison in the civil Disobedience Movement Jawahar comes to meet Mohan. He expresses his bewilderment about Mohan describing the Indian

political reality in biblical terms. Jawahar learns the reason behind using nonviolence to fight the British. Mohan advises Jawahar to tone down his temper. There is an uncomfortable discussion between Nehru and Jinnah in Sc 9 about Muslim representation in the Congress. Towards the end of the play, there is a note of dissent, especially on the issue of partition. In the last scene after Gandhi's assassination, the play ends with Nehru's funeral speech 'The light has gone out of our lives....'

Jinnah: Jinnah appears, In Act II Sc 9, as a leader of the All India Muslim League. He does not conform and is rather critical of Gandhi. He chastises Jawahar over his use of Khadi and the Gandhi cap. He discusses the Khilafat Movement. He aptly says 'To play with religion is to play with dynamite' and later adds "... the more of a Mahatma he becomes, the more of a Muslim I must be". Jinnah comes across as an astute lawyer politician and perhaps is brutally frank in his remarks about Muslim representation. He crusades for an independent Pakistan and achieves it.

Lord Mountbatten and other British authorities:

They are passing characters and do not have much of a role to play. But by and large, all of them are highly impressed by Gandhi and are even scared of him. In their hearts they idolize him to an extent but owing to their situation and position, they have to take action against him. Mountbatten has no choice left but partition.

Meaning of the word "Sammy"

Sammy is The word that broke an Empire. This play is a two-hour journey into the travails of being a Mahatma in an ordinary world. It spans Gandhi's life from his first case in South Africa in 1893, to his assassination more than four decades later.

The irrepressible Mahatma in Gandhi is the inner voice he could not ignore. This intricately crafted play portrays Gandhi's journey from a tongue tied lawyer to a shrewd politician and finally the Mahatma. Set against the dramatic background of India's freedom struggle, this outstanding play surprises our expectation at every turn of the story. Full of humour and style, the play makes past events seem like present gossip and the audience is transported deeper within themselves.

The play brings alive Gandhi's philosophy, pragmatism, and sense of humour. Partap Sharma's play unwinds Gandhi's concepts and

his techniques for nonviolent struggle. The play is captivating as we realize that Gandhi's struggle has no enemy, no arms, no hate nor revenge, but only the inner strength of millions of ordinary men, women and children.

Sammy brings out the human in Gandhi with all his perfections and flaws and establishes him as a human and not as someone out of the world. The play brings out Mahatma out of dusty books and presents him as you and me. Many Gandhians saw the play and they could not point out any mistake. This is not about any controversy. This is a story of trials and errors in the life of Gandhi, who is as normal as anybody else and is in search of truth. It is a story of Gandhi beyond his image. Usually, image takes over real humans because we tend to remember the image but forget the human being behind it. The broken down the character and dealt human and not the Mahatma. So we had Gandhi as a human and still he was above all because he was determined to look for truth, to bring freedom for his countrymen and equality for blacks in South Africa

Sammy it seems is a result of several years of research on Mahatma Gandhi by Pratap Sharma. It is indeed a very well researched and innovatively conceived piece of theatre. In the play, these actors play many parts as the plot unfolds to recount Mahatma Gandhi's story from his earliest days to his final assassination. The plot traces the development of the young Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi from being a protestor in South Africa to that of a shrewd politician and finally into an enlightened person - a Mahatma or Great Soul. The title of the play is easily explained and becomes clear in the early part of the action. The word sammy along with the word coolie, was used as a derogatory term by the whites in South Africa to insult Indians and other coloured people. Its origins could be traced to the word swami, which actually means master or guru. When Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi first hears an angry mob in Durban shouting the word as an insult to describe him, the young man smiles and harbours the hope that some day, he may actually be able to live up to the positive origin of the name. The play is also marked by Gandhiji's hallmark humour. An extraordinary man about whom Einstein is said to have said "Generations to come will scarce believe that such a one once walked upon the earth"! SAMMY is important not just as a vibrant piece of theatre but is especially relevant because of the times we live in, where his creed of nonmaterialism and nonviolence is sorely needed in an age of terrorism and consumerism! It is hence a play that aims to bring alive a man whose influence changed politics forever and set in

motion the journey of others like Nelson Mandela and Martin Luther King. With its dynamic style of presentation, it hopes to straddle a large cross section of audiences, especially younger ones, who know him only from dusty textbooks.

Gandhi's name is synonymous with India's independence and *Satyagraha*, non-violent resistance. He was an inspiration to millions in India and beyond, including some political giants such as Martin Luther King Jr. and Nelson Mandela, to name but two.

The title *Sammy* carries some of the magnitude of the man who turned a slur into a triumph of strength. *Sammy* is derived from the word 'swami' which was used by South African whites as a demeaning term for Indian workers. Gandhi, who was not spared that insult, succeeded in elevating the term.

Sharma's attempt to provide an insight into Gandhi's life is a very ambitious undertaking, particularly as films including the 1982 award-winning film *Gandhi*, an opera and plays have been written and produced about his life.

This play amounts to a zigzag journey into the life of the man that led India to independence and inspired movements for civil rights and freedom across the world.

The large and deep stage affords smooth scene changes which are marked by dimming lights. Supporting characters performed more than one role.

The drama created to convey something of the great man's achievement is turned to resemble a slide show rather than an evolving drama. There was an attempt to follow his life chronologically which led certain events being performed as disjointed episodes sandwiched between other episodes in the protagonist's life.

Gandhi traveled to the UK, South Africa and back to India. His transformation from the young barrister with half-baked ideas into a man with strong convictions evolves before our eyes in the course of the diffused scenes, meetings, dialogues some of which come across as monologues from figures such as General Smuts and Jawaharlal Nehru, Jinnah, Lord Edward Irwin, the Viceroy of India and Lord Mountbatten. In consequence, they appear as an artificial implant in the patchy depiction of Gandhi.

Gandhi's conscience is personified by the creation of a character named 'The Mahatma' (the Great Soul). The dialogue between The Mahatma and Gandhi communicates something of the process where conflicts and doubts are integral to fashioning his views and actions.

The domestic scenes are affectionately and humorously drawn. The young Gandhi's loving wife, Kasturba is delightfully performed. Though illiterate, she comes across as wise and intelligent woman whom he could consult. His views on education and women's right are summed up in his comment to his wife: "I should have taught you to read and write and not merely had lust for you", to which she replies "lust?" and the word "love", on Kasturba's lips fleetingly, dissolved unuttered.

His aspiration for purity that led him to promote celibacy was pronounced as the adoption of Brahmacharya. In order to practice that philosophy he informs his wife that they ought to stop sharing the same bed and even avoid being left alone in the same room. These scenes generated roaring laughter from the audience .

Led by a lively debate between Mohandas, the man, and the irrepressible Mahatma in him, the play highlights Gandhi's relationships and how he changed everyone he touched. It traces the transformation of the young Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi from a naive, tongue-tied lawyer into a shrewd politician and finally a Mahatma and recounts his story from his earliest days in South Africa to his final assassination. Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was an extraordinary man about whom Einstein once said Generations to come will scarce believe that such a one once walked upon the earth! The play aims to bring alive a man whose influence changed politics forever (and set in motion the journey of others like Nelson Mandela and Martin Luther King)

Reviews

Quotes by eminent critics and reviewers.

"Most eagerly awaited play, a wonderful production, *Sammy* will be the sixth production on Gandhi in recent times, making the Father of the Nation the most watched character on stage." DEEPA GAHLOT, *THE TIMES OF INDIA*, MUMBAI

"Outstanding. *Sammy* is by far the most interesting, comprehensive, dramatic work on Gandhi. A great play!" PETER RUHE, *GANDHI SERVE*, BERLIN

"Playwright Partap Sharma's painstakingly crafted *Sammy*... delves into the irrepressible mischievousness of the Mahatma in Mohandas...takes a look at lesser known incidents of Gandhi's life. The script is a veritable guide which will make people learn – and unlearn – various aspects of Indian history and yet entertain. Before you wonder whatever or whoever is this Sammy – Sammy is the

word that broke an empire.” SHAHEEN PARKAR, *MID DAY*, MUMBAI

“Outstanding portrait of Gandhi. Epic treatment in this tremendous touring production.”

RICHARD MAYS, *MANAWATU STANDARD*, NEW ZEALAND

“Masterly. Full of gems of wisdom. A kaleidoscopic presentation.” ROMESH CHANDER, *THE HINDU*, DELHI

“Mahatma must-see! Excellent script. Insightful and enriching.” LEE TSE LING, *THE STAR*, KUALA LUMPUR

“Wonderful. Even more enriching to see the play a second time.” AMIT ROY, *THE TELEGRAPH*, LONDON

“Standing ovations in Sydney. Partap Sharma's latest play on Gandhi's life premieres to packed houses in Australia. Award-winning play...” *IANS*, AUSTRALIA

“Brilliantly written, with fine performances!” *HINDUSTAN TIMES*, DELHI

“Wonderful rapport between the actors...the play puts a human face on the man who broke an empire.” *TIMES OF INDIA*, MUMBAI

“A very moving experience. Scores on every count.” *THE TELEGRAPH*, KOLKATA

“A wonderful production!” *BOMBAY TIMES*

“Splendid! **** !” *THE WEEK*

“Brilliant.....deeply researched and innovatively staged!” *INDIAN EXPRESS*, PUNE

“8.5/10 rating!” *MIDDAY*. MUMBAI

“The ordinary face of greatness.” *INDIAN EXPRESS*, CHENNAI

“A fascinating account of how the real man Mohan Das became a Mahatma. Among the best scenes are those showing Gandhi's relationship with his beautiful young wife Kasturba. ‘Don't make your public speeches to me,’ she chastises when ordered to wash a bowl of Untouchable's urine, reminding us just how radical Gandhi's belief in the abolition of castes is still.” *GUARDIAN*, UK

“Partap Sharma's award-winning play charts the private journey of a very public hero.” NANCY GROVES, *RICHMOND & TWICKENHAM TIMES*, UK

“Standing ovations. Audiences touched and shaken. Stellar performances. An excellent and, more importantly, a memorable play.” *THE UNDERTONES*, DELHI

16.4 QUESTIONS

1. The Mahatma has been well portrayed in Pratap Sharma's '*Sammy*', comment.
2. *Sammy* takes a look at the lesser known incidents of Gandhi's life. Elucidate.
3. Write a note on the dramatic techniques used by Pratap Sharma in *Sammy*.
4. The women play a very important role in the drama. Justify your answer with two main women characters in *Sammy*.
5. Illustrate the character of Mohan, the actor.
6. The main theme of the play centers around the controversial situations the political leader including Gandhi faced. Justify.
7. Write short notes on :
 - a. Discussion of Nehru and Jinnah about the Mahatma
 - b. Gandhi's nonviolence that Viceroy and MrClancy talk about
 - c. The conclusion of the drama
 - d. The character of Jawarharlal Nehru
 - e. The beginning of the drama
 - f. Kasturba's reaction on Mohan's decision regarding untouchability



A CRITICAL STUDY OF *ASHHAD KA EK DIN* - I

Unit Structure:

- 17.0 Objectives
- 17.1 Introduction
- 17.2 Authour
- 17.3 His Contribution
- 17.4 Critical Summary of the Play
- 17.5 Critical Analysis of the play

17.0 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 to literature

17.1 INTRODUCTION

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

Before ***Ashhad Ka Ek Din*** Hindi plays, based on literary themes, were either idealistic or didactic or devoid of connection with contemporary reality. And above all their language remained the 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 highly Sanskritised and well ornamented language. Mohan Rakesh went on to write two more plays, and left one unfinished by the time of his death in 1972, but he had shifted the landscape of Hindi theatre.

17.2 AUTHOUR

Mohan Rakesh, whose real name is Madan Mohan Rakesh Guglani, was born on February 8, 1925 at Amritsar. His father Shri Dharmachand Guglani was an eminent lawyer, who was deeply interested in literary pursuits. His mother was very simple woman who was highly spiritual and committed towards her duty as mother and wife. Mohan Rakesh's father would invite scholars from every sphere and discuss thoroughly various aspects of art, music and literature for hours together. This continuous parley with the scholars indirectly shaped the career of Mohan Rakesh as an artist. He post graduated in Hindi and English literature from Punjab University. Initially, he started writing in Sanskrit, as he was a student of Sanskrit and he practiced prose and poetry in Sanskrit only. But in due course of time, he realized that Sanskrit is not the language to be commonly read and understood and he switched over to Hindi as medium of his expression. He felt that his experiences will be better conveyed to people in Hindi, being a common place language in India.

However, this pleasant literary feast could not continue for a long time, as his father died on February 18, 1941. He was just 16 years old and had to shoulder the household responsibilities of looking after his aging mother and younger brother. In his words, *"There was no option left. I was fitted in the yoke of life at the age of just 16. I had to adjust myself to the set frame of life."* He started carrying out his duty as responsible head of the family by taking tuition and other ways which would fetch him some money to run the house. During the days of mental and economic crises caused by the burden of responsibility, he was consoled and emotionally supported by a girl of 17 years Premika Divya (which is perhaps not the real name of the girl). Mohan Rakesh used to share the sufferings of life with her to distress himself from his routine goings-on. To alleviate his mental agony, she used to come from Amritsar to Lahore to meet him at the cost her lectures.

At the age of 22, Mohan Rakesh had to face two tragedies in his life – one was partition of India and the other one was sudden demise of his intimate friend, Premika Divya. The first was human tragedy and the second being the personal tragedy. He was left traumatized by the severity and grossness of the riots between Hindu and Muslim and killings of innocent people who were not even least concerned with any political agenda. On 15th August, 1947 he was in Amritsar. From there he was forced to come to Mumbai via Delhi in search of employment.

In Mumbai, Mohan Rakesh led a miserable life as he was not equipped with the kind of life Mumbai demanded. He was deeply ingrained in morality and hence could not compromise everywhere in his life and this sometimes led him to quit his job frequently. However, after completing his Master's degree in Hindi, he worked as a lecturer in Sydenham College of Commerce, Mumbai, Elphinstone College, Mumbai, Bishop Cottage School, Shimla, and D.A.V. College Jalandhar from 1947 to 1951. From 1950 to 1954, he had the worst kind of life as he had neither job nor mental peace. He was wrongly removed from his jobs as he was not complying with their terms and conditions demanded by the job. Meanwhile, he was married in order to get involved himself in family life in 1949, but it turned out to be quite unpleasant experience and in 1952 again he had to leave the job. He then was determined to lead life based on his writings but this adventure also proved a kind of 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 the department where he was not confirmed and removed. After working four years in D.A.V. College, he resigned from the job in 1957. It was again a bad phase of his life, as his married life proved to be unsuccessful and thus the relation between them ended forever officially. Under the financial crisis again he was forced to work as lecturer in Delhi University in 1960. In 1962, Mohan Rakesh took over as editor of **Sarika** and standardized it to a higher level, but in 1963 he left that job too.

Mohan Rakesh's mother tongue was Punjabi but his education was through Sanskrit medium. However he did not find either Punjabi or Sanskrit suitable to be a medium of his literary expression. He, therefore, switched over to Hindi and thus contributed significantly to the growth and development of Hindi Literature. However, the impact of Sanskrit is reflected on his writings and his language turns out to be highly modified and

standardized expression of his lofty feelings. Despite his association with Sanskrit scholars, he was familiar with the western culture and literature and kept himself free from the shackles of traditional practices in contemporary society.

Having reflected on his biographical details, it is reasonable to dwell upon the political, social, cultural and literary situations which went a long way in shaping his career as literary artist. When Mohan Rakesh was born, India was entangled in the yoke of British government and people in India charged with patriotic feelings were determined to throw aside the shackles of slavery of British Government from India forever. On the political portal, political leaders like Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Gandhiji emerged, who were trying to reawaken the dormant feelings among Indians by blowing new message of freedom among common people. By 1942, the freedom movement came to be strong driving force resulting in the freedom of India in 1947. This was the year when India was divided into two nations, Hindustan and Pakistan, and caused a lot of traumatic situations across the borders.

Though in 1947, India became free from the clutches of British Government, the selfish politicians tried to elevate themselves politically and did not accomplish the job which they were supposed to do during post independence. It was commonly noticed that so - called politicians have involved themselves in dirty politics of vested interest and departed themselves from the common goodness of common people who elected them to be their representatives for resolving their recurring problems in life. The trend shows that there was gradual deterioration in moral and human values which further endangered the unity and integrity of the nation. These unhealthy situations in the country compelled the author to express his experiences of life through literary forms. Twentieth century, which is characterized by the scientific advancement, has alarmingly affected the unity and integrity of a family. It witnessed that people who preferred the ideology of joint family are now in the favor of unit family. Even the material wellbeing and independence of wife gave rise to misunderstanding between husband and wife, which dismantled the aura of entire family bond and their children suffered painstakingly the barbs of the marital discord of the parents.

Besides the political and social conditions, literary situations are credited to have substantiated his creative sensibility in art of

writing. Perhaps, Mohan Rakesh experienced the dying age of Chhayavad (a literary Movement in Hindi literature) and humble beginning of Pragativadi Yug (a literary movement in Hindi literature). In 1935, the extreme imaginative Chhayavad was announced officially stopped and in the same year, the most celebrated Pragativadi writer, Munshi Premchand announced the manifesto of Pragativadi writing and stressed that literature should be always written in the context of real life and literature should be linked with the realistic phase of life which is teemed both with joys and sorrows. He further stressed literature should not be the ideal entity to be imagined but a realistic platform which gives full insight into the real life led by common man. During this phase of literary production, there emerged a literary movement in a context of stories called New Stories. Prominent artists like Rajendra Yadav, Kamleshwar and others equally powerful story writers try to relate literature with life. These writers did not believe in empty presentation of ideas but rather switched over to facts of life. Many regional writers like Phanishwar Nath Renu try to present the regional sensibility and common understanding of regional people through their works.

17.3 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 disagreement prevailing in the contemporary society and tried to give voice through his literary works. The external and internal conflicts in his life shaped his career as a writer, playwright and his conflicts are fully reflected in his works.

His novels *Andhere Band Kamare*, *Antraal* and *Na Aane Waala Kal* portray the mental conflicts - internal and external - and explicate how existing contemporary milieus are responsible for orientation and disorientation of man's life. These novels bring out the modern trends and tendencies of contemporary society, as most of the characters of these novels are highly educated and sensitive of urban backgrounds. They are so self centered that they do not go to the common people around and get entangled permanently in their own problems. These novels underline the recurring problems and issues commonly faced by urban people in contemporary 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, his other play *Aadhe Adhure* underlines and focuses the incongruity and disagreement among the members of middle class family over trivial issues of daily life. For his historical novels, he has selected the plot from the history and tried to contextualise them in modern times. *Ashadh ka Ek Din* is based on the life of Sanskrit poet Kalidas and his imaginary beloved called Mallika. He has brought out the fact that Kalidas of past will behave differently in modern world which is primarily set out for material pursuits and success. Through this play, he has tried to establish the fact that the inner urges one has, should be properly attended to get permanent satisfaction and peace of mind, and not the imposed ones which result in shattered dreams and broken heart. *Leheron Ke Raj Hans* is also a historical play which is based on Ashwaghosh's *Saundarnand*. The play is not completely historical as few characters like that of *Ashadh Ka Ek Din* are imaginary, and are selected to fulfill the requirements of the thematic concern which the writer undertakes. The playwright has dramatically presented that the inner conflicts of Nand and Sunderi in the past were no lesser than the modern people who are confronted with the varied problems in life.

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

11.4 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 of the play. It is also important from the point of view of stage craft and novelty of vision which it has envisaged through this play. Though the title of the play indicates the happening of one day, it has successfully entwined the events of a number of years in its plot. It has three acts and each act has a gap of many years between them. However, they have one thing common in them, i.e. every act

has the same scenic beauty of dense clouds and thunder in a rainy day.

Ashadh Ka Ek Din is a three-act play which is based on the life of the prominent Sanskrit poet Kalidas, sometime in the 100 BC -400 BC period. In the first act, he is leading a peaceful life in a Himalayan village and is captivated by the bewitching beauty of nature which enkindles the fire of his poetic urge resulting into the composition of his first play *Ritu - Sanghar*. During these days, he has romantic involvement with Mallika, who recognizes his poetic talents and tries to promote it to the highest point. Her movement and love affair with Kalidas is not approved by her mother, Ambika who treats him as a vagabond who cannot take care of his daughter being a resource less person. However, the creation of *Ritu Sanghar* catapulted the name of Kalidas far and wide and he becomes very famous in Ujjayini. Looking to his unbridled poetic genius, he is invited to appear at King Chandragupta II's court in far-off Ujjayini to be felicitated and is offered the designation of national poet. Torn between his current idyllic existence and love on one hand, and the desire to achieve greatness on the other, he leaves for Ujjayini in a conflicted state of mind. Mallika wants the best for the man she loves, so she encourages him to go to Ujjayini:

“Why don't you think that new place and position will offer you better fertility than here? You have exploited whatever maximum you could have done. At present you need a new pasture which will lead you to perfection”.

In the second act, Kalidas enjoys the royal treatments and proceeds with literary excellence by writing other works such as *Kumar Sambhava* and *Meghdoota*, *Abhigyanshakuntala* and *Raghuvansha*. Mallika though does not directly get any information from him, she happens to get information about his literary activities from dealers and from whom she manages to collect the copies of his works. The emergence of Kalidas as a distinguished literary luminary pleases Mallika who justifies the departure of Kalidas in these 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 sophisticated noblewoman, Priyangu Manjari. Besides her, he has the liaison with a number of women, dishonoring the pure love of Mallika. Mallika,

on the other hand, does not sacrifice her love for trivial things and continues 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 Priyangu Manjari does. Priyangu Manjari demandingly offers to help Mallika by making her a royal companion and marrying her to one of the royal attendants, but Mallika declines. Priyangu Manjari comes to meet Mallika to know the assets which honed the poetic skills of Kalidas. 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 is there to look it after. Mallika's mother is suffering from illness and mental agony of young daughter to remain unmarried. Looking to the bad condition of house and penury, Priyangu Manjari offers them either to accompany or to get their house rehabilitated. But both of them gracefully decline both the options: “*You are very kind-hearted. 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 now Ambika is no more on the scene. Suddenly Matul brings the news that the people of Kashmir are rebelling and Kalidas being unable to suppress the rebellion has left Kashmir. He further informs her that people tell that he has renounced the world, and instead of coming to Ujjayani, he has gone to Kashi. Mallika is disheartened to know that instead of engaging himself in literary activities, he has left the world. This is a dishonor and gross injustice on her. The echo of her inner conflict is reflected in her soliloquy:

“I never said to go away from here for this. I also did not say that you should go there to shoulder the responsibility of kingdom. Yet when you did so, I gave my best wishes- though you did not directly accept them. Even if I did not remain in your life, you always remained in mine. I never let you wander from my side. You continued to create and I believed that I too am meaningful, that my life is also productive”.

During this dejected mental maneuvering of Mallika, Kalidas reappears in the village. Mallika is now married to and has a daughter from Vilom, a kind of villain whom Mallika and Kalidas always hated for questioning their relationship from a worldly

perspective. Kalidas tries to convince her that he has not renounced the world but simply has transformed from the role of Matrigupta as a king of Kashmir. He also expresses that his wish to start a fresh life with Mallika cannot be cherished as he hears the child crying. He reveals to her that though he was away from her but it is she who inspired him and that she has been portrayed in various roles in his works:

“Whatever I have written has been gathered from this life. The landscape of *Kumarasambhav* is this Himalaya, and you are the ascetic Uma. The Yaksha's torment in *Meghaduta* is my own torment and you are the Yakshini crushed by longing. In *Abhijnanashakuntalam*, it was you whom I saw in the form of Shakuntala. Whenever I tried to write, I reiterated the history of your and my life”.

17.5 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 to underline modern tendency which evaluates the person's competence and ability in terms of money. Kalidas who is an emerging writer is not appreciated in his village simply because of the fact that his writing does not fetch him any material wealth. This is the reason why Ambika, Mallika's mother does not approve her daughter's name to be associated with him. It is her desire that her daughter should be married to one who is financially sound and can take proper care of her. But Kalidas is treated in village as vagabond who keeps on moving and looking at the pristine beauty of nature and does nothing to support his maternal uncle Matul. He comes into limelight when his work *Ritu Sanghar* is appreciated for its literary merits and he is gracefully invited to be the court poet of Ujjayani. Though he is not willing to leave his village for this honour, he is convinced by others to go there and accept the royal wish. He is further convinced that talent fully develops if it is taken care of by some patronage. Nikshep feels that:

“Kalidas is forgetting out of emotion that he will lose everything by disregarding this opportunity. Competence contributes to form one fourth of the personality. Remaining is accomplished by regal honour. Kalidas must go to the capital (Ujjayani)”.

In above lines, modern key to success is reflected. A man succeeds to the fullest if he is well connected. This happens even today that a talented person may not necessarily excel at his own

but it is ensured if he has royal patronizing agency to flourish his talent. Vilom who is always critical of Kalidas and Mallika expresses his desire that Kalidas needs to enjoy royal honour. He craftily advises so because he knows that he may be able to wed Mallika only in absence of Kalidas. The other character Matul, maternal uncle of Kalidas, wants Kalidas to proceed to Ujjayani so that he may be benefitted being a relative of Kalidas. He really enjoys the benefit of this connection and gets his house well constructed though the royal assistance of Priyangu Manjari. In modern times, it is generally seen that people establish their political and other connection so that they may reap the benefit of such connections when they require. It is only Mallika who tries to persuade Kalidas to go to Ujjayani so that his talents may fully blossom. She has no vested interest of her own. She loves him for his poetic talents and this is the reason that despite his poverty, she craves to enjoy his company as portrayed in the beginning of the play. Kalidas is also tempted to material well being as he suffered the life of destitution in his childhood. Although he is appointed as a national poet, he accepts the position of a ruler to become rich and to take revenge on those who had humiliated him in his bad days. He admits to Mallika when he comes back from Kashmir as an unsuccessful ruler:

“You were surprised that I was going to take over as a ruler of Kashmir. You might have felt it quite unnatural. But it does not appear unnatural to me. It was a natural reaction of a poverty-stricken life. Possibly it was the mood to take revenge on those who had 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 understand that wealth is essential for happy life. Thus, the playwright has successfully 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 the critical portal in modern age. The main protagonist of the play, Mallika comes out to be a strong character who is singularly not tempted by the shining glamour of material success. She is a dynamic character who tries to establish her own identity independently and responds to the call of her inner soul. She is romantically in love with Kalidas, which is apparent when she comes back home, all drenched in rains. Ambika, her mother, does not approve her love for him, as he does take work seriously. She wants to control Mallika's activities as traditional mother does but Mallika gracefully tries to explain her about the poetic talents which he has. Whereas Ambika is a traditional mother who is always

worried about her daughter's marriage with a suitable person, Mallika, on the other hand, is a progressive and modern daughter who wants to exercise her own conscience with regard to marriage and has given herself completely to Kalidas. She tells her mother: *"But I told you that there is no need of sending Agnimitra to anywhere. You know that I do not want to marry, then why do you make efforts? You think that I talk unnecessarily"*. It is she who is able to convince Kalidas to accept the request of Ujjayani as a poet. She is least bothered about her happiness and sensual pleasure and encourages him to proceed to Ujjayani. She says to Kalidas:

"Can you be away from me if you go there....? Where will you get opportunity to develop your genius in this rural surrounding? Here people do not understand you. They evaluate you on very simple scale".

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

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

She tries to bait her that she along with her mother should accompany her but she declines to do so. She also does not accept the offer of rehabilitation of her old house. In this respect Ambika and Mallika both are similar and very self - respected as to not accept any offer pathetically given by the queen. The queen wants to orient Kalidas in politics but his natural talent lies in art, and thus he does not succeed in suppressing the rebellion of Kashmir.

The basic difference between Mallika and Priyangu Manjari is that Mallika recognises his natural talent and promotes it at the cost of her happiness; on the other hand, Priyangu Manjari, despite her knowledge that he is interested in creativity, pushes him into politics which he is not equipped with. She feels that Kalidas is a king, and she will enjoy all royal pleasures through him. This is the

reason that she goes to Kalidas's village to bring everything which Kalidas used to appreciate. She feels that if everything comes there in Kashmir, Kalidas's mind will not be deviated and he will focus his full attention in administration.

Thus, it is seen that there are three female characters who have various dimensions. Ambika is a traditional woman who thinks for the well being of her daughter and to restraint her association with Kalidas, which is socially unacceptable. Mallika is the second character who is powerful, energetic, and self - respected and self - reliant. She is loyal and honest in her love towards Kalidas and takes all positive measures to promote his artistic temperament. Priyangu Manjari, the third female character, is very weak and selfish who wants to purchase honour of Mallika and Ambika, which she fails to do. She pressurizes Kalidas to be King but he cannot prove line up and becomes an unsuccessful ruler. If she had promoted artistic temper of Kalidas, she would have commanded our respect.



CHARACTERISATION IN *ASHADH KA EK DIN*

Unit Structure:

18.0 To acquaint students with major and minor characters

Major characters:

18.1 Kalidas, Mallika, Ambika, Priyangu Manjari

Minor Characters:

18.2 Vilom, Nikshep, Matul, Dantul, Anuswar and Anunasik, Rangini and Tarangini

Ashadh ka Ek Din is a unique play from the point of view of characterization. Each character in the play is dynamic and self assertive and different from the other as far as human traits and approach to life is concerned. Thus the characters are complementary to each other and provide mobility, beauty and strength to the plot. The female characters in the play are rendered perfect, determined and stable; on the other hand, male characters are unstable, indecisive, and shaky in carrying out their assigned roles. Even the male protagonist of the play does not have capacity to take right decision and is compelled to role on female protagonist to directe his future action in life. The major characters are being presented below to facilitate the understanding of students so that students by themselves can go ahead with their own explanation and evaluation while analyzing the characters of the 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 cultured Kalidas, but unique treatment of his character in the context of modern age makes him altogether different from historical Kalidas who is known as the greatest poet of Sanskrit. If one reads the works of Kalidas of the past, one fins him a great scholar, poet and

genius who is well oriented in spirituality even in the worldly pleasures. But the character of Kalidas rendered by Mohan Rakesh is quite controversial. Mohan Rakesh regards the classical traits essential for an ideal hero and presents him having human sensibilities of modern age. This rendering offers the readers a new Kalidas, who is not accepted to be hero of the play. Even readers have no sympathy for such Kalidas who is deprived of even basic human traits.

Mohan Rakesh's Kalidas is portrayed as a young man who is a lover of nature and appreciates its immaculate beauty and grandeur and composes poems on nature. Besides, he is very kind towards the animals and takes care of them. This is the reason that he picks up a wounded fawn and treats it with all care and affection. He is very fearless and does not yield to Dantul, a royal official, who claims for the fawn. He wishes to have it from Kalidas even at the point of sword and he chases him but Mallika stops him from using sword, as Kalidas does not bother muscle power: *"Stop, royal officer! Don't insist for the fawn, for you, it is question of right, for him emotional 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 tells Mallika:

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

Suddenly Kalidas is invited to have the honour of national poet of Ujjayani. He is unwilling to accept the royal invitation because it is not possible for him to either leave the pristine glory of nature or to disassociate himself from Mallika. However, he finally gets ready to go to Ujjayani against his wish. There he is married to Princess Priyangu Manjari and is lost in the dazzling splendor of capital and becomes the king of Kashmir. There he misuses his kingly power and has illegitimate relations with a number of women. But despite all the luxury and affairs, he cannot remove the impression of Mallika from his heart and sometimes he craves to enjoy her company. 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. The landscape of *Kumarasambhav* is this Himalaya, and you are the ascetic Uma. The Yaksha's torment in *Meghaduta* is my own torment and you are the Yakshini crushed by longing. In *Abhijnanashakuntalam*, it was you whom I saw in the form of Shakuntala. Whenever I tried to write, I reiterated the history of your and my life”.

While going to Kashmir, Kalidas does meet Mallika Priyangu Manjari goes to have dialogue with Mallika and her mother Ambika and discusses a number of issues regarding Kalidas's life and his art. 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 had a fear that your eyes will make me more unstable. I wanted have myself from this”*.

Kalidas's talent does not suit to political affairs for which he is being constantly persuaded by his wife. Ultimately, he fails drastically quashing the rebellion in Kashmir and leaves the place to seek permanent respite in the company of Mallika. But to his surprise Mallika is already wedded to Vilom.

Thus, Kalidas of Mohan Rakesh is not the one who conforms to the merits and features of an ideal protagonist. He is modern and teemed with contemporary weaknesses like an ordinary man. Despite contributing to literary domain, he unnecessary gets entangled in the regal affairs and wishes to earn wealth to compensate his childhood deficiency and to revenge on those who humiliated and disgraced him for his poverty. He admits: *“It was a natural reaction of a poverty-stricken life. Possibly it was the mood to take revenge on those who had humiliated and made fun of me some times”*.

Mallika: Mallika, though an imaginary character, is central to other characters – male or female. She emerges as a protagonist from beginning till the end of the play, and spectators appreciate her endurance and balanced thinking even in adverse situations. In the words of Matul, *She is most cultured, modest and innocent girl in entire village*. She is a round character who tells her mother about Kalidas's talents openly, despite her mother being a traditional woman. Her mother does not like her moving along with Kalidas, as he is not considered a competent man materialistically in modern context. But she is blessed with tremendous power of judging the character and recognizes the poetic creativity of Kalidas and enjoys his company, despite people's disgrace and humiliation. She is not only the beloved of Kalidas but also the promoter of his literary

creativity. Kalidas's emergence as a unique poet is consequent upon Mallika's devotion and dedication towards her sensual pleasure and worldly happiness. Therefore, least bothering about her emotions, she persuades Kalidas to accept the invitation of Ujjayani to be a national poet. She fears that his romantic love for her may blunt his poetic sharpness and hence advises him to proceed to Ujjayani immediately:

"Do you feel that I will be happy if you reject this royal invitation and remain here? I know that your departure will create blankness in me. Possibly external world might appear barrenness. Nevertheless I cannot betray you".

But Kalidas after going to Ujjayani forgets the role of Mallika in his life and marries Priyangu Manjari and becomes King of Kashmir. Though his poetic work continues, he never bothers to send the copies of his works to Mallika. Mallika is so concerned about his works that she manages to get their copies from the traders coming from Ujjayani. Kalidas, while going to Kashmir, does not meet Mallika, which hurts her emotionally. She does not express her displeasure to anyone. But she feels disappointed when she comes to know that Kalidas has renounced the world having failed to suppress the rebellion of Kashmir and has gone to Kashi. Finally, having left no hopes from Kalidas, she is compelled to accept Vilom as her lifelong companion and has a daughter.

Mallika is very self reliant and self respected character who does not expect any assistance from anyone. This is the reason that she feels hurt when Priyangu Manjari takes pity on her and offers helps for rehabilitating her old house. She quite gracefully turns down the offer and tells: *"You are very kind-hearted. But we are used to live in this house, so there is no inconvenience here"*. Priyangu Manjari even hurts her by offering marriage proposals and also accompanying her to Ujjayani along with her mother Ambika. But her crafty devices do not work on Mallika and these offers are also declined jointly by Mallika and her mother, Ambalika.

She is not tied down to old tradition but is progressive character who exercises her right to select life partnership for her, despite the opposition and humiliation of the people. But nowhere is she found to be rude with people and even with her mother. She always convinces her mother that Kalidas is a talented poet, has who received invitation from Ujjayani. She discusses about his extraordinary talent to her mother.

Thus, it can be concluded that Mallika is the protagonist who lives on the portal of emotions and keeps herself away from the worldly

requirements of life and sharpens the poetic sensibility of Kalidas to be a great creative writer of Sanskrit literature.

Ambika: Ambika, the mother of Mallika, is an old woman who lives on realistic situations of life. Her bitter and factual experiences of life 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 not approve Mallika's association with Kalidas as he is not worldly-wise and can do no good for Mallika if both get married. Here, for Ambika, materialistic pursuits are essential for a married life. Since Kalidas appreciates pristine glory of nature and writes something which does not fetch him wealth, she does not consider him suitable for Mallika. When Mallika explains her mother that she loves her own emotions, her mother gives her own experience of life: *"What you say emotion is betrayal and self - deception"*.

Ambika understands that Kalidas's refusal to go to Ujjayani is just a pretension because he wants to promote his honor. Though she unwillingly asks Mallika to propose Kalidas, she finds Vilom more suitable for her. She is a proud woman who does not accept the help offered to her by Priyangu Manjari for rehabilitation of her old house. After Priyangu Manjari goes away, she comments on the integrity of Kalidas:

"But who is responsible for princess to come here? Undoubtedly, she has come not here without insistence of anyone. The royal artisans will repair the walls of the house. Today he is a ruler; he has resources what better ways could have been other than this to show 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 suitable man so that she may have quite good, peaceful and happy future. However, her presence in the play as a traditional woman, hones the sharpness of Mallika as a protagonist who asserts her right in modern context.

Priyangu Manjari: She is the princess who gets married to Kalidas and asserts her complete right on him. She is possessive in her love, which is in compliance with the kingly stature. Whereas Mallika's love is based on emotional and liberal background, Priyangu Manjari's love is born of authoritative and tough reality of life. She, unlike Mallika, writhes in jealousy. She compliments Mallika for her beauty and delicate modesty: *"Really, you are very beautiful. You know, being stranger to me you do not appear to be unknown to me"*. In spite of her knowledge that Mallika has been Kalidas childhood beloved, she hurts her by offering help to mend

her house: *"I see that your house is in bad condition, its repairing is required. If you wish I can order for this work"*.

Besides, she offers her marriage proposals in Ujjayani, though she knows that Mallika has emotionally given herself to Kalidas : *"Perhaps, you consider none of them to be suitable for you. But in the 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 from such discussions.

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

Vilom: Vilom is a male character who is temperamentally opposed to Kalidas. Though he is not a villain, he is always set to confront him with all possible means to compensate his weakness and incompetence. He never tries to harm Kalidas physically, but does everything to hurt him mentally. This is why, he is always considered as opponent of Kalidas. He always comments on the romantic relationship of Kalidas and Mallika. Ambika, Mallika's mother also finds him more suitable than Kalidas. It is a meaningful statement of Kalidas about Vilom: *"Nothing is unexpected from Vilom. Yes, not doing anything can be unexpected"*. But ultimately Vilom happens to wed Mallika and becomes the father of a female child.

Nikshep: He is one of the minor characters who always questions on the intimate relationship of Kalidas and Mallika, and is willing that Kalidas should go to Ujjayani to accept the royal treatment as a national Poet. However, he is sympathetic to Kalidas and acknowledges his poetic talent. He knows about the self repected nature 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 also knows that if anybody who can persuade him to attend to royal invitation, it is only Mallika.

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

Dantul : Dantul is a statesman and imbibed all qualities warranted for a statesman. The fawn wounded by him is taken away by Kalidas to nurse it. Dantul demands that he should be given back the fawn. But Kalidas makes him speechless by telling that hunting is prohibited in that vicinity. He wants to use power to snatch the wounded fawn, but when he knows that it is Kalidas, he feels apologetic for his uncalled for behavior. He says to Mallika, *"I am sorry 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 the vicinity of the mountain.

Rangini and Tarangini: They are the research scholars who are set to learn the tenets which shaped and sharpened the creative talent of Kalidas.



SYBA
English - Paper II
Indian Literature in English (May 2015)

3 Hours

(Revised Course)

Total Marks : 100

- N. B. :** (1) Attempt **all** questions.
(2) **All** questions carry **equal** marks.

1. Write short notes on any **four** of the following :— **20**
 - (a) Major themes in Modern Indian poetry in English.
 - (b) The concept of nativism (give examples)
 - (c) Write the contributions of two modern Indian English dramatists.
 - (d) Non-Fictional prose in Indian writings in English (with reference to two major writers)
 - (e) Contributions of Dalit writers to Indian writings in English.
 - (f) Discuss the writings of any two Indian women poets who have written in English.
2. Attempt any **two** of the following :— **20**
 - (a) What clear message does Manto's story "The Assignment" give to Indian readers ? Discuss the story line.
 - (b) Analyze the ways in which Rama had dreamt of becoming successful in his business and ironically his dreams have shattered at the end. Discuss in the light of the story "The Martyr's Corner".
 - (c) "The Storeyed House" presents the plights of Dalits identity crisis. Discuss the story and justify this statement with examples.
 - (d) How does the writer explore the human relationship between Muhammad Ali and Rehana in the story "Good Advice is rarer than Rubies".
3. Attempt any **one** of the following : **20**
 - (a) Discuss the themes of the novel "Cocoon" by Bhalachandra Nemade.
 - (b) Discuss the thematic concerns of the novel "The Glass Palace" by Amitav Ghosh.
 - (c) How does Bibhutibhushan Bandopadhyay bring out the aspiration and despair of a family life as it has been presented in the book "Pther Panchali" (The song of the Road).
4. (a) Attempt any **one** of the following :— **10**
 - (i) How does Henry Derozio present the element of patriotism in his poem "To India—My Native Land" (Give examples).
 - (ii) What is the concept and meaning of "Authorship" in the eyes of a little child as it has been beautifully narrated in the poem by Tagore ? (Quote a line or two)

- (iii) How does the poet Nissim Ezekiel compare the poet, lover and Birdwatcher in the poem of the same title (What is his message to his readers ? Quote a line or two)
- (iv) Comment on the frank, bold and authentic feminine experiences of Kamala Das as they have been narrated in her poem "Introduction".

(b) Attempt any **one** of the following :—

10

- (i) Write an appreciation of the poem "Postcard from Kashmir" by Aga Shahid Ali. (Quote a line from the poem in support of your appreciation)
- (ii) Critically analyze and interpret the poem "The Atheist's Confession" by Menka Shivdasani
- (iii) How does Kabir describe the qualities of a true saint in his poem "It is needless to ask of a saint the caste to which he belongs" ?
- (iv) What are the themes of the poems "I am cripple" and "when he comes" of Dilip Chitre's translation of Sant Tukaram's Poems.

5. Attempt any **one** of the following :—

20

- (a) "Kamala" by Vijay Tendulkar is a symbol of slavery. Discuss the major themes of this play.
- (b) What are the major concerns that the playwright has presented in the play "Sammy" ?
- (c) Mohan Rakesh presents a social theme of human relationship in his play "Ashadha ka Ek Din" (One Day in Ashadha). Discuss the themes and bring out the play wright's message to his audience/ readers.

SYBA
English - Paper II
Indian Literature in English (May 2016)

3 Hours

Total Marks : 100

- N. B. :** (1) **All** questions are **compulsory**.
(2) Figures to the **right** indicate **full** marks.

1. Write short notes on any **four** of the following :— **20**
 - (a) Contribution of two modern Indian English dramatists.
 - (b) The concept of nativism (give examples)
 - (c) Major Themes in Modern Indian poetry in English.
 - (d) The voice of Dalit writers in their short stories.
 - (e) Give a brief outline of rise of English studies in India.
 - (f) Themes of partition Literature (give examples).
2. Attempt any **two** of the following :— **20**
 - (a) What social message does Manto's story "The Assignment" give to Indian readers ?
 - (b) "Rama had dreamt of being a successful businessman but ironically his dream has shattered completely at the end of the story." Discuss the story line.
 - (c) "The Storeyed House" presents the plight of Dalit identity crisis." Do you agree ? Justify this statement.
 - (d) How does the writer explore the human relationship between Muhammad Ali and Rehana in the story "Good Advice is rarer than Rubies."
3. Attempt any **one** of the following : **20**
 - (a) Discuss the father-son relationship as it has been depicted in the novel "Cocoon" by Bhalchandra Nemade.
 - (b) Discuss the themes of poverty and hunger in the novel "Pather Panchali" (The Song of the Road)
 - (c) Bring out various themes in the novel "The Glass Palace" (Amitav Ghosh)
4. (a) Attempt any **one** of the following :— **10**
 - (i) Voice of patriotism shown in the poem "To India —My Native Land" (Henry Derozio)
 - (ii) The concept and meaning of "authorship" in the eyes of a little child as it has been beautifully narrated by Tagore.
 - (iii) How does Nissim Ezekiel compare the poet, lover and bird watcher in the poem of the same title.
 - (iv) Comment on the frank, bold and authentic feminine experience of Kamla Das in her poem "Introduction."

(b) Attempt any **one** of the following :— **10**

- (i) How does Agha Shahid Ali present his nostalgia and hopes in the poem "Postcard from Kashmir"
- (ii) Critically analyze and interpret the poem "The Atheist's confession". (Menka Shivdasani)
- (iii) How does Kabir describe the qualities of a saint in his poem "It is needless to ask of a saint the caste to which he belongs" ?
- (iv) What message do we get from Dilip Chitre's translation of Sant Tukaram's poem "I am cripple" and "when he comes"

5. Attempt any **one** of the following :— **20**

- (a) "Kamala" is a symbol of slavery (Vijay Tendulkar) Discuss the major themes of the play with reference to this statement.
 - (b) Discuss Pratap Sharma's play "Sammy" as a Gandhian fiction.
 - (c) Mohan Rakesh presents a social theme of human relationship in his play "Asasha ka Ek Din". Discuss.
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