

# **INDIAN WRITING IN ENGLISH**

**B.A. (English) – First Year**

**Paper – I**

**Paper Code: BAEG 1911**



**PONDICHERY UNIVERSITY**

(A Central University)

**DIRECTORATE OF DISTANCE EDUCATION**

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## B.A. ENGLISH -SYLLABUS

Paper code: BAEG 1911

### PAPER I

#### INDIAN WRITING IN ENGLISH

**Objectives:** To introduce students to different genres of Indian writing in English.

##### **UNIT- 1: Poetry-**

1. Sri Aurobindo, 'Bliss of Identity'
2. Sarojini Naidu, 'Autumn Song'
3. Nissim Ezekiel, 'Goodbye Party For Miss Pushpa T.S.'
4. Kamala Das, 'The Old Play House'
5. Shiv. K.Kumar, 'Indian Women'

##### **UNIT – 2: Prose –**

1. Swami Vivekananda, 'Work and its Secret'
2. Dr.AbdulKalam, "My Visions for India"

**UNIT-3: Drama:** ManjulaPadmanabhan, *Harvest*

**UNIT-4: Short Stories:** -R.K.Narayan – 'An Astrologer's Day' Sudha Murthy,  
'Humility in Sahyadri Hills'

**UNIT-5: Fiction:** Mulk Raj Anand – *Coolie*



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## **Introduction: INDIAN WRITING IN ENGLISH**

### **Introduction**

India is a nation of multi-diverse in religion, language, culture and tradition and it has been rich in its heritage and literature. Indian literature is vast in nature as well as ancient one, dating back to 2000 years approximately. The Vedas, the Upanishads, the Puranas and the other scriptures of India prove the scholars of India as great as the other classic scholars of various places in the world. Indian literature does not belong to one particular language as it covers the languages from Jammu to Kashmir as well as the Eastern and Western languages of India. Indian literature is enriched with thoughts and ideals of Indian culture which is diverse in nature.

Indian writing in English is the term coined to denote literature written in English by the Indian writers. After colonization, the entry of the British East India Company has made tremendous changes in the country. The impacts of colonization are felt everywhere including the education system of India. The introduction of English among the students of India has cultivated the Indians to accept English as their common language to communicate among themselves; earlier, the Indians have no common language for communication. Now, it is widely accepted that English is one of the official languages of India. All these have paved way for the Indians to read in English and accept English as one of the superior languages.

Indian Writing in English was then called as Indian English and it had its beginning in the late eighteenth century. This also had various names because it was difficult to define its scope and nature as there existed multiple dimensions of ideas in the huge body of literature. It was also called as Indo-Anglian Literature and Indo-English literature. Finally it got settled with the name Indian Writing in English.

The 'Anglo-Indian literature', is the literature in the Indian languages translated into English and the literature of original composition in English by Indians. In that, along with the English writers, some Indian writers like, Toru Dutt, Sarojini Naidu, Rabindranath Tagore and Sri Aurobindo are also included. This creates confusion that the Indian Writers who have written in English have been viewed as English writers; as the name suggests as Anglo-Indian writers. Some

critics have included the translated works of Indian writers in creative writings in English. This has created confusion because Indian literature cannot be called as English literature just because if the texts get translated into English.

Indian English Literature is the term used to strictly mean that literature written in English but the writers who are born in India and the ancestry or nationality of India is emphasized. Hence, the writers such as Kipling, Forster, F.W. Bain, Sir Edwin Arnold, F.A. Steel, John Masters, Paul Scott and M.M. Kaye are included under the category of Indian English Literature. Their works belong to the British Literature but they have their origins in India. Anyhow, the translated works of Indian literature is not included under this body of literature.

There exists another category of writers; whose culture gets fused; for instance, the Anglo-Indians or the Eurasians have one of their parents being English and claim that their mother tongue is English. Their writings are included in the body of the British literature. For instance, writers like Henry Derozio, Aubrey Menen and Ruskin Bond have chosen to write in English.

There are some exceptional cases like Ruth Prawar Jhabvala and Ananda K. Coomaraswamy who own two different nationals as their parents. Jhabvala has different parental background, yet she is married to an Indian and has lived in India throughout her life and her writings focus on Indian culture. Coomaraswamy has no background in India but he has written based on Indian landscape and culture. V.S. Naipaul has Indian background but his writing focus on the other culture mostly. Therefore, these writers too cannot be excluded from the body of literature, "Indian literature" as their literature purely focus on India. Henceforth, it is obvious that Indian English literature, thus defined, is not part of English literature. It is legitimately a part of Indian literature, since its differentia is the expression in it of an Indian ethos. (Naik 4)

Finally, it is accepted to use the term Indian Writing in English as the most suitable term to represent this body of writing by the Sahitya Akademi (India's National Academy of Letters, is an organisation dedicated to the promotion of literature in the languages of India). This body of literature becomes part of Indian literature and it also is an inevitable product of the nativization of the English language to express the Indian sensibility. (Naik 5)



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## UNIT – 1

### POETRY

#### 1. Objectives

Studying Indian Poetry in English will make one to understand the literary background of the Indian English Poetry. It also makes one to understand the growth and development of Indian English verse along with the themes and diverse cultural backgrounds. The students also tend to interpret multiple possible meanings that emerge from poetry. This lesson also teaches the techniques and devices used in poetry along with symbolic meaning.

#### 1.1. Bliss of Identity - Sri Aurobindo

All Nature is taught in radiant ways to move,  
All beings are in myself embraced.  
O fiery boundless Heart of joy and love,  
How art thou beating in a mortal's breast!

It is Thy rapture flaming through my nerves  
And all my cells and atoms thrill with Thee;  
My body Thy vessel is and only serves  
As a living wine-cup of Thy ecstasy.

I am a centre of Thy golden light  
And I its vast and vague circumference,  
Thou art my soul great, luminous and white  
And Thine my mind and will and glowing sense.

Thy spirit's infinite breath I feel in me;  
My life is a throb of Thy eternity.

#### 1.1.1. Glossary:

- Radiant – glowing; radiating light
- Fiery – burning

- Ecstasy – intense pleasure; delight
- Throb – to beat rapidly; pulse
- Eternity – infinity

### 1.1.2. Sri Aurobindo – Bio Note

Sri Aurobindo was born in Calcutta as Aurobindo Ghose in 1872. His father Krishnadhan Ghose was a popular civil surgeon and his mother Swarnalatha Devi was a daughter of Rishi Rajanarain Bose. Rishi Rajanarain Bose was one of the great men of the Indian Renaissance in the nineteenth century who embodied the new composite culture of the country that was at once Vedantic, Islamic and European. Aurobindo was sent to Loretto Convent School at Darjeeling for his school education and then to Manchester, London and Cambridge for his higher studies. He went to England in 1890 and stayed there for a period of about fourteen years. He learnt English, Latin, French and History. He secured the Butterworth Prize in Literature and the Bedford Prize in History; he won a scholarship that enabled him to proceed to King's College. In 1950, Sri Aurobindo died after a short illness.

Sri Aurobindo was an Indian nationalist, freedom fighter, philosopher, yogi, guru, and poet. He joined the Indian movement for freedom to be attained from the British rule and for some time, he became one of its most important leaders. Later, he developed his own vision of human progress and spiritual evolution. He was also one of the famous Radical leaders of India during the Indian National Movement.

In 1884, Aurobindo joined St Paul's School. He learnt Greek and Latin and spent the last three years reading literature, especially English poetry. To become an ICS official, Aurobindo had to study at an English University, so he joined King's College, Cambridge University by availing a scholarship. After two years, he decided not to serve for the British and so quit the selection tests of ICS and joined the state service in the Survey and Settlements Department; then he moved to the Department of Revenue and then to the Secretariat.

Aurobindo spent thirteen years at Baroda which was the significant seed times of Aurobindo's life because he pursued his varied interests-teaching poetry, even politics – simultaneously, *Songs to Myrtilla* appeared in 1895. He studied

Indian culture, Sanskrit, Hindi and Bengali when he was in state service in Baroda. He was transferred to the Baroda College as a teacher of French, where he became popular because of his unconventional teaching style. He was later promoted to the post of Vice-Principal. He published the first of his collections of poetry, *The Rishi* from Baroda. He also started taking active interest in the politics of India's freedom struggle against the British rule. His position at the Baroda State barred him for being involved in political activities. He linked up with resistance groups in Bengal and Madhya Pradesh, while travelling to these states. He established contact with Lokmanya Tilak and Sister Nivedita. He also arranged for the military training of Jatindra Nath Banerjee (Niralamba Swami) in the Baroda army and then dispatched him to organise the resistance groups in Bengal. Aurobindo started writing a series of impassioned articles under the title *New Lamps for the Old*. When the Partition of Bengal was announced, there was a public outpouring against the British rule in India. Aurobindo started writing for *Bande Mataram*, as a consequence of which, his popularity as a leading voice of the hardline group soared. In April 1910, Aurobindo, signalling his retirement from politics, moved to Pondicherry; earlier he had been arrested by the British police for his political involvement through his writings, speeches and activities.

Aurobindo's conversion from political action to spirituality occurred gradually. In Pondicherry, Sri Aurobindo completely dedicated himself to his spiritual and philosophical pursuits. In 1914, after four years of concentrated yoga, he was proposed to express his vision in intellectual terms. This resulted in the launch of *Arya*, a 64 page monthly review. For the next six and a half years this became the vehicle for most of his important writings, which appeared in serialised form.

Aurobindo's main literary output was his voluminous correspondence with his disciples. His letters, most of which were written in the 1930s, numbered in the several thousands. These were later collected and published in book form in three volumes, *Letters on Yoga*. In the late 1930s, Sri Aurobindo went back writing his poem which he had started earlier. *Savitri*, an epic spiritual poem in blank verse of approximately 24,000 lines (in 12 volumes) became his greatest literary achievement. The huge epic, *Savitri*, is a marvel, which places him, at one in the company of the absolute top rankers by a sustained abundance of the first rate.

Aurobindo's writings synthesized Eastern and Western philosophy, religion, literature, and psychology. His works include philosophy, poetry, translations of and commentaries on the *Vedas*, the *Upanishads*, and the *Gita*, plays, literary, social, political and historical criticism, devotional works, spiritual journals and three volumes of letters. His voluminous literary output includes philosophical pondering, poetry, plays, and other works. He has used quantitative meters with great skill. His mystical and spiritual utterances hail from planes of inspiration, higher than any usually found in the major poets. He stands as a creator of a new Vedic and Upanishad age of poetry.

Some of Aurobindo's works are *Essays on the Gita* (1928), *The Life Divine* (1940), *The Human Cycle* (1949), *The Ideal of Human Unity* (1949), *Collected Poems and Play* (1942), *The Synthesis of Yoga* (1948), *Savitri: A Legend and a Symbol* (1950), and *On the Veda* (1956). He has tried his hand at different types of poetry which is lyrical and dramatic, mystical and metaphysical. Aurobindo wrote like an English writer and not like a foreigner.

Aurobindo has experimented with words. He has been compared to T.S.Eliot for his knowledge on many languages. As a poet, he displayed immense capability in handling the English language and metre and wrote epigrams, translations, adaptations, lyrics, narrative poems, poetic plays, a series of remarkable experiments in quantitative metre and the monumental epic, *Savitri*. He has also a hold on modern Bengali literature. Some of his critical theology can be mentioned here – the function of poetry and the future of poetry.

The function of poetry, according to Sri Aurobindo, is neither to teach truth nor to pursue knowledge or to serve any ethical purpose, but to have life of its own and to embody beauty and give delight. The future course of poetry is to be directed towards the fathoming of the self of man and the large self of the universe and the discovery of the life of divine, the supreme reality and man's own divine possibilities.

The future poetry, according to Sri Aurobindo, may take any or all forms – the lyric, the drama, the epic – but each form has to run along new line and fix its own new aim. But its aim is to put forth the very heart of the life Divine in the concrete body of the five elements of Truth, Beauty, Delight, Life and Spirit.

### 1.1.3 Introduction to the poem “Bliss of Identity”:

Sri Aurobindo’s writing mostly focuses on spirituality as he claims that he has attained the height of spirituality. His poems touch upon his connection with the God and how he makes the connection between himself and the God. He usually rejects the body for attaining spiritual bliss; because he believes that one’s mind and soul is essential to reach the spiritual bliss.

In this poem, “Bliss of Identity”, Sri Aurobindo describes how he attains the spiritual bliss and how he becomes one element of the spirit itself. Towards the end of the poem, he points out that he becomes part of the eternal spirit. Thus, the poem is about the ways he has tried to reach the God, the infinity and his happiness for achieving it; his identity to become a spiritual person is expressed with happiness.

Other than that, Sri Aurobindo is considered as a great spiritual leader in India and all over the world by his followers. During his spiritual call, Mirra Alfassa from Paris has been chosen and she visits Pondicherry (now Puducherry) to meet Sri Aurobindo and to commit herself in the spiritual world founded by Sri Aurobindo. Then, their service to the spiritual community has created a great impact on the minds of their followers. The community, then together, has been working for the spiritual bliss, which is guided by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother’s (Mirra Alfassa is fondly called as the Mother by the followers) principles on spirituality. The followers are being guided to attain the spiritual bliss.

The poem, “Bliss of Identity” is a sonnet. The sonnet is a fourteen-line poem written in iambic pentameter, employing one of several rhyme schemes, and adhering to a tightly structured thematic organization. The name is taken from the Italian word, ‘sonetto’, which means "a little sound or song."

The poem, “Bliss of Identity” is about Sri Aurobindo’s wonder when he sees and identifies the God in his soul. The poem can be interpreted in two possible ways; it may refer to the soul of Sri Aurobindo who seeks spirituality or it may be read, as if he is showing path to the readers how to attain spirituality.

#### **1.1.4 Analytical Summary of the poem “Bliss of Identity”:**

All Nature is taught to move along in radiant ways. Nature, here, indicates the sum of natural forces reified and considered as a sentient being, will or principle. Nature is regarded as if it is a concrete material thing, but it is something abstract, a conceptual thing and not a concrete material. The poet wonders how the powerful Nature is moving along by radiating light. Nature is a powerful element which is magnificent to provide glory.

The poet believes that his body and mind is under his control and that is why he claims that all his beings are embraced by him. The radiant moves of Nature are sensed by the poet. His heart enjoys uncontrollable bliss of happiness. His heart is joyous and filled with love and he wonders how such spiritual bliss of happiness can be felt through a human body. The poet is surprised to sense this happiness though he is in the form of human because this spiritual bliss can be received only through immortal souls. Thus, he wonders how a mortal’s heart can feel such endless joy and love.

The poet also senses that pleasure in abundance; he believes that all these happen just because of God. He feels that the God is present everywhere on his body; he senses his presence through his nerves and all his cells and atoms. This sensation triggers thrill in his body because he realizes the presence of God within him; the God and the poet become one and this thought brings excitement to him.

The poet metaphorically states that his body is the medium for the God to enter his mind. He happily offers his body to the divine to use it as a vessel. He is humble and pious to offer his body for the divine power to stay within him.

There is a reference of ‘wine-cup’ in this poem. In literature, wine is used as a symbol of happiness and togetherness; for instance, if it is shared and consumed when there is a gathering, the group shares their opinions and develops a bond among them. Another possibility of using wine in literature is to refer to the custom of the Greeks and the Romans. Wine has been used as a gift from the gods and there are some specific gods, whom wine is offered as a gift too. There are some festivals which offer wine to those gods.

The poet, here, offers his body to the divine spirit, so that the divine being can enjoy it utmost. The metaphorical references such as the body as the vessel of God and the body as a wine-cup offered to the God imply that the poet is ready to dedicate his body, mind and soul to the God; he wants the God to enjoy the benefits. These are dedicated as offerings to the God and in turn, he becomes part of the God. He identifies himself as the God by offering his body, mind and soul to the God. The poet is in no way attached to this mortal world but is trying to attain the eternal world of the divine power. The poet does not seek anything from the God, but he wants to be the part of the God's ecstasy. He wants to take part in each and every atom and cells of the God to make him happy; he believes that his body can be used as a medium by the God; so that the God would remain happy. The poet's act is selfless because he wants the God to be happy and is least bothered about his happiness and at the same time, he identifies himself as part of the God, so he derives pleasure by making the God to be delightful.

The poet, next, assures his presence within God by comparing himself as a light; the presence of the God emits light and spreads happiness to all. Symbolically, the God gives life and light to the world; here, the poet becomes the centre of the God's golden light. So the poet shines brightly by being part of the God's heart. Along with God's brightness, the poet also insists that the space covered by the light which he emits is vast and huge and the circumference of the light rays cover a huge area. The light is vast and vague because nobody can decide the distance covered by the light emitted by the poet. The light is very bright and powerful because the poet becomes the part of the God and emits the light by being in a prime position of divine power. He, further, adores the God that the God himself is his soul who produces great, luminous and white light. Thus, he points out that the God is responsible for the light emitted by the poet.

The poet is part of the God and produces the light; yet, the God is the reason behind all the causes, the emission of light as well as the brightness that surrounds the distance beyond. The poet also glorifies the God that the God is his mind and the glowing sense of mind and body. Therefore, the God himself is the light which glows brightly, yet the poet remains in the center of the light and merges with the God.



Now the poet and the God are inseparable. This can be interpreted that the dedication and devotion, which the poet has towards the God makes him divinely and that is why he becomes part of the God himself. The poet attains the eternal divine world just because he whole-heartedly prays to the God; where he confirms that not only his body but his mind and soul also is dedicated to the service of the God. Here, the poet can be identified as the God himself as he is pure like the soul, mind and heart of the God. Hence, the poet is happy to be identified as the divine power as a devotional and dedicated soul.

The poet, then, feels the breath of the God; the God's spirit breathes and it is sensed by the poet. The breath of the spirit is infinite and endless because it is an immortal spirit and has no death for the spirit. Surprisingly, the poet feels the breath of the God's spirit in him. This shows that the God is present within the poet; the poet has reached the eternal life because he has surrendered his soul and mind at the service of the God. The poet's life is dedicated to the eternal divine power and so the poet realises that he is ever present along with the God. Therefore, the life of the poet becomes the rhythmic heartbeat of the God which beats rapidly. The poet is excited for reaching such an ecstatic state through the God. Through this poem, the poet proves himself as part of the God and identifies himself as the part of the eternal world.

#### **1.1.5 Questions:**

1. Write a short note on Aurobindo's spiritual bliss.
2. Why did the poet feel joy and love?
3. When did the poet get into the level of ecstasy?
4. How does the poet identify himself?
5. How does the poet reach the height of eternity?
6. How does the poet use the image 'light'?
7. How does the poet make the God happy?
8. What happens to the body, mind and soul of the poet?

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## 1.2. Autumn Song - Sarojini Naidu

Like a joy on the heart of a sorrow,  
The sunset hangs on a cloud;  
A golden storm of glittering sheaves,  
Of fair and frail and fluttering leaves,  
The wild wind blows in a cloud.

Hark to a voice that is calling  
To my heart in the voice of the wind:  
My heart is weary and sad and alone,  
For its dreams like the fluttering leaves have gone,  
And why should I stay behind?

### 1.2.1 Glossary:

- Sheaves – stalks and ears of wheat or grain
- Frail – weak
- Fluttering – to flap or wave quickly
- Wild – harsh
- Hark – listen carefully
- Weary – tired after toil

### 1.2.2 Sarojini Naidu – Bio Note

Sarojini Naidu was an Indian political activist and freedom fighter as well as a writer who belonged to Indian Writing in English. She was born in a literate Bengali family of Hyderabad on 13 February 1879. Her father was the principal of Hyderabad College, which later became Nizam College. He held a doctorate of Science from Edinburgh University. Her mother wrote poetry in Bengali. Naidu's creativity was encouraged and she met many intellectuals among her parents' visitors. She was an intelligent child and matriculated at the age of twelve from the Madras Presidency. She had the rare opportunity of studying at King's College, London, and at Cambridge University but she could not pursue higher studies because of her poor health. However, her stay in England was a blessing in another form. She met two men of letters who helped her with her creative work – Edmund

Goose and Arthur Symons. In England, she met artists from the Aesthetic and Decadent movements. She married Dr. Govindarajulu Naidu on her return to India in 1898; that was an inter-caste marriage which faced criticism during the period, yet their marriage life was a successful one.

After leaving England, she became a suffragist, who fought for the rights of women in India. She joined Indian National Congress movement, which fought for India's independence from the British rule. She became a part of the Indian nationalist movement and became a follower of Mahatma Gandhi and his idea of Swaraj. She was appointed as the President of the Indian National Congress in 1925 and after India won independence in 1947, she became the Governor of the United Provinces in 1947, and was the first woman to hold the office of Governor in the Dominion of India. She died of a cardiac arrest in office at Lucknow on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 1949. Jawaharlal Nehru paid her a rich tribute by saying that she was a gifted person who 'infused artistry and poetry into our national struggle'.

Sarojini Naidu is known as the 'Nightingale of India' (fondly called by Mahatma Gandhi) because her poetry has unique colour, imager and lyrical quality. She, is perhaps, the foremost among the Indians who have written poetry in English, and no anthology of poetry is considered complete without her poem. Her lyrics vibrate with a sweet melodious tone. The first Indian edition of her collected poems was published under the title *The Sceptred Flute* in 1943.

Sarojini Naidu invariably wrote poems on various aspects of Indian culture and history. Her poems fill our heart with pride for her thought 'wonder that is India'. Naidu's poetry includes both children's poems and others written on more serious themes including patriotism, romance, and tragedy. "In the Bazaars of Hyderabad" remains one of her most popular poems, published in 1912.

Beginning in 1904, Naidu became an increasingly popular orator, promoting Indian independence and women's rights, especially women's education. Her oratory often framed arguments following the five-part rhetorical structures of Nyaya reasoning. She addressed the Indian National Congress and the Indian Social Conference in Calcutta in 1906. Her social work for flood relief earned her the Kaisar-i-Hind Medal in 1911, which she later returned in protest over the April 1919 Jallianwala Bagh massacre. She met Muthulakshmi Reddy in 1909, and

in 1914 she met Mahatma Gandhi, whom she credited with inspiring a new commitment to political action.

With Reddy, she helped to establish the Women's Indian Association in 1917. Later, in the same year, Naidu accompanied her colleague Annie Besant, who was the president of Home Rule League and Women's Indian Association, to advocate universal suffrage in front of the Joint Select Committee in London, United Kingdom. She also supported the Lucknow Pact, a joint Hindu–Muslim demand for British political reform, at the Madras Special Provincial Council. As a public speaker, Naidu's oratory was known for its personality and its incorporation of her poetry.

Naidu joined Gandhi's *satyagraha* movement of nonviolent resistance against the British rule. She went to London in 1919 as a part of the All India Home Rule League as a part of her continued efforts to advocate for freedom from the British rule. The next year, she participated in the non-cooperation movement in India.

In 1924, Naidu represented the Indian National Congress at the East African Indian National Congress. In 1925, Naidu was the first female president of the Indian National Congress. In 1927, Naidu was a founding member of the All India Women's Conference. In 1928, she travelled in the United States to promote nonviolent resistance. Naidu also presided over East African and Indian Congress-1929 session in South Africa.

In 1930, Gandhi initially did not want to permit women to join the Salt March, because it would be physically demanding with a high risk of arrest. Naidu and other female activists, including Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay and Khurshed Naoroji, persuaded him otherwise, and joined the march. When Gandhi was arrested on April 6, 1930, he appointed Naidu as the new leader of the campaign.

The Indian National Congress decided to stay away from the First Round Table Conference that took place in London owing to the arrests. In 1931, however, Naidu and other leaders of the Congress Party participated in the Second Round Table Conference headed by Viceroy Lord Irwin in the wake of the Gandhi-Irwin

pact. Naidu was jailed by the British in 1932. The British jailed Naidu again in 1942 for her participation in the Quit India Movement. She was imprisoned for 21 months.

Naidu began writing at the age of 12. Her play, *Maher Muneer*, written in Persian, impressed the Nizam of Kingdom of Hyderabad. Naidu's poetry is written in English, and usually took the form of lyric poetry in the tradition of British Romanticism, which she was sometimes challenged to reconcile with her Indian nationalist politics. She was known for her vivid use of rich sensory images in her writing, and for her lush depictions of India. She was well-regarded as a poet, considered the "Indian Yeats".

Some of her works are *The Golden Threshold* (1905), *The Bird of Time: Songs of Life, Death & the Spring* (1912), *The Broken Wing: Songs of Love, Death and the Spring* (1917), "The Song of the Palanquin Bearers," (1917), *The Speeches and Writings of Sarojini Naidu* (1918) and *The Sceptred Flute: Songs of India* (1928). Other than these works, Sarojni Naidu also edited a biographical text, *Mahomed Ali Jinnah, An Ambassador of Unity: His Speeches & Writings 1912-1917*. After her death, Naidu's complete poems, including unpublished works, were collected in *The Feather of the Dawn* (1961) and edited by her daughter Padmaja Naidu. Naidu's speeches were first collected and published in January 1918 as *The Speeches and Writings of Sarojini Naidu*, a popular publication which led to an expanded reprint in 1919 and again in 1925.

### 1.2.3 Autumn Song – Introduction:

The poem "Autumn Song" is set in the season autumn. There are many poets who have written on this season. John Keats' "To Autumn", Emily Bronte's "Fall, Leaves, Fall", John Clare's "Autumn", R.L. Stevenson's "Autumn Fires", Linda Christensen "The Autumn's Beauty", T.E. Hulme's "Autumn", D. H. Lawrence's "Autumn Rain" and W. H. Auden's "Autumn Song" are some of the poem written by many poets across the world. Among these, John Keats' "To Autumn" is considered as a classic poem on autumn season. Sarojini Naidu is the first writer of Indian Writing in English who has focused on this season in her poem "Autumn Song".

The season autumn falls during the months of September and October. The hot and humid weather starts disappearing and leaves start falling off the trees in this season, so it is also known as the fall season. Fall makes for the perfect time to get outdoors and increase the physical activity. With cooler temperatures, the risk of heat-related health issues is reduced; activities of this season may include walking, biking, hiking, horseback riding and raking leaves. It's a time when colours change, moods change, and weather changes. Many people love this season because of its romantic aspect. The trees change colour and look really pretty; the changes in temperature makes the leaves starting to turn a beautiful orange and yellow welcoming the changing season. Autumn reminds us of the temporariness of life. It reminds us that change is unavoidable. Autumn shows us that far from shunning change nature achieves this transition effortlessly; it shows us how to embrace change in glorious splendour. Thus, one may have a mixed nostalgic feeling during the autumn season; it can be an optimistic view or an abstract unhappy one.

The impermanence of life and season are metaphorically meant through seasons. Autumn also stands for the same; which shows the impermanence of life and here too, the poet, Sarojini Naidu describes the temporariness of life by metaphorically comparing life through the season, autumn. The poem actually is an ode in two stanzas, which describes the poet's vision on the season. An ode is a type of lyrical stanza; it is an elaborately structured poem praising or glorifying an event or individual, describing nature intellectually as well as emotionally. Here, as part of nature, the season autumn is chosen by the poet.

#### **1.2.4 Autumn Song – Analytical Summary**

The song is sung through the voice of the season, autumn itself. It is justifying the reason for its temporariness. The season shows the other things around the environment and points out that they are short-lived; similarly the season claims the same reason for its brief stay. It can be taken philosophically, because nothing is permanent in this mortal world, so the season gives the same reason for its temporariness.

Firstly, the season autumn cites an example from the heart of a sorrow; let it be happiness or sadness, neither cannot stay for ever. It is like a cycle, where one

overtakes the other. For instance, if a man is happy for a while; it does not mean that his whole life gives him happiness alone. He experiences other feelings such as sadness, anger and hatred in his life. Any feeling is temporary when someone's heart is concerned and similarly autumn excites that it also lives for a short period of time.

The joy of sorrowful autumn, which is short-lived, is next connected to the sunset that hangs on a cloud. The cloud is described as golden in colour, because the sunlight has coated the cloud in golden colour. Symbolically, it can be understood in the other way, that the season autumn makes the leaves to change its colour; the green leaves of the vegetation changes its colour into golden one before falling down. The sunset is hiding behind the clouds and this also does not stay for a longer time. Again there is an emphasis on the impermanence of the world.

The poet senses the heaps as the cultivated crops of the farmer. The wind blows and disturbs the thoughts of the poet. This indicates the arrival of winter season. The poet is disturbed by the change.

The golden leaves which have fallen down from the trees lay down in heaps. They are golden in colour and when the wild wind blows, these heaps of leaves like a golden storm of leaves move, which makes a flapping sound. The heaps of leaves which have fallen down from the tree, during the season, is described as glittering sheaves, because the fallen leaves are golden in colour. The leaves are of different patterns, where some of them are fair and some of them are weak and fragile. When the wild wind blows towards a cloud, these leaves like a golden storm move around making a flickering sound.

Though the season misses the bright sunlight, yet the beauty of the scenery is added when the golden shade is made through the clouds, when the hidden sun emits its light through the clouds. Symbolically, the wild wind is used here to denote that happiness is taken away but it is compensated with the golden colour leaves. Though happiness is gone with the sunlight, some sort of happiness can be regained by the gracious presence of the golden coloured leaves everywhere. Both happiness and sadness is present in the poem; the season autumn has its defect that it has no bright light and at the same time, it has its positivity, by colouring all the leaves and the entire atmosphere into shiny golden colour.



In the second stanza, the poet asks one to be careful to hear the voice that is heard through the voice of the wind. The poet can hear the voice of the wind and she asks everyone to listen to that. The voice is actually heard by the heart of the poet. Usually the voice of the trees can be heard when there is a wind blow; but unfortunately, during the autumn season, the leaves are withered away from the trees and so, even the heavy winds cannot make louder through the trees and so we cannot hear the voice of the trees. The tree is alone and sorrowful because the branches are empty without any leaves and so it cannot make its voice too. Similarly, the heart of the poet is tired, sad and alone like the trees in the autumn season. The poet is sad because she is alone and as well her dreams are gone from her mind. The tree has lost its leaves and the poet has lost her dreams. The poet compares herself with that of the tree in the autumn season, which is sad and alone. The poet does not want to be sad all the time, so she is positive to accept the change.

The last stanza can be interpreted from the season's point of view too. The season feels lonely and sad because it has to leave and provide space for the winter season to occupy its place. There is a shift from one season to the other season and so the season, autumn questions, why it has to stay if everything else is changed. The season is sadly getting ready to move away and to provide space for the other season.

Thus, the poem teaches practical real life situation to the readers; it implies that change is unalterable in life. One should not get stuck when some misfortunate incident happens in life, but to go ahead with sportive mind. The message of the poem is thus simply implied as 'move on'.

"Autumn Song" captures the theme of Romanticism in the Indian context. Sarojini Naidu's poetic works present nature as a source of inspiration like the popular romantic poems written by the second generation romantic poets of English literature. The nationalistic touch is also there in the poem. The image of the sheaves and the epithet "golden", points to the backbone of the Indian economy and the agricultural sector. There is hope in her heart for the country's better future. But there is also a sense of pessimism as India has been under colonial rule.

### 1.2.5 Literary Devices in “Autumn Song”:

A literary device is a tool used by the writers to point out larger themes, ideas and multiple meaning in a piece of writing. It is also considered as an ornament in a piece of writing. It is not only used for beautification of a literary piece but also to understand an underlying meaning in a piece of work. Simile and metaphor are the common literary devices used in literary works. They are used to compare and contrast two different things or people; this helps the reader for a better understanding, as well, it helps in making the literary work into an art form. Some devices are used at the sentence level (as phrases) and some devices are used to be applied in the whole text (as major themes). Simile, Personification and Alliteration are some of the literary devices used in the poem, “Autumn Song”.

Simile is a method of comparison and it is a literary device used as a form of a figure of speech too, which involves comparing one thing with another thing of a different kind. It is used to make a description more clear. In this poem, the simile is represented by the word ‘like’. The ‘sunset’ is compared with a kind of ‘joy’ and ‘sorrow’ which gets stuck behind the cloud. This shows the double stranded nature of a being; both joy and happiness exist at the same time. Similarly, the sunlight does not go away and at the same time, gets stuck behind the clouds. Therefore, the simile is used to show the dull sunlight during the sunset of the autumn season.

Metaphor is another literary device used in the poem. A metaphor is a figure of speech in which a word or phrase denoting one kind of object or action is used in place of another to suggest a likeness or analogy between them. In simile, words such as ‘like’ and ‘as’ are used to compare two things, but in metaphor, an object becomes the other, hence these words of comparison are not used. The ‘fluttering leaves’ in the poem are used to compare with the dreams of the poet. Like the fluttering leaves get disappeared at the end by the heavy blow of a stormy wind, the dreams of the poet also get shattered away. The poet loses all her hope towards the end as the autumn season and the trees appear bare and naked without any greenery. Here, the leaves of the trees metaphorically stand for the dreams of the poet.

‘The heart of a sorrow’ is another metaphor used in the poem. The poet, here, refers to her heart sorrow-filled using the metaphor. The word ‘sorrow’ is shown to have a heart, but the poet’s heart is filled with sorrow. Another metaphor used in the

poem is 'the wild wind'. The stormy wind metaphorically denotes the separation of grains from the produce of the farmers. 'The setting sun' is also metaphorically means the state of hopelessness which exists within the poet.

Personification is another literary device used in the poem. Personification is the attribution of a personal nature or human characteristics to something non-human, or the representation of an abstract quality in human form. In this poem, Nature is personified as a human being. Some of the phrases used as personification in the poem are, "heart of a sorrow", "voice of the wind" and "heart is weary and sad and alone".

Alliteration is an additional literary device used in the poem. It is the occurrence of the same letter or sound at the beginning of adjacent or closely connected words. In literature, alliteration is the conspicuous repetition of identical initial consonant sounds in successive or closely associated syllables within a group of words, even those spelled differently. As a method of linking words for effect, alliteration is also called head rhyme or initial rhyme. "The wild wind", "fair and frail and fluttering leaves", "why should I stay" and "golden storm of glittering" are some of the alliterations used in the poem.

#### **1.2.6. Questions:**

1. How does the poet identify herself with the season autumn?
2. What is the speciality of the season 'autumn'?
3. Write on the literary devices used in the poem?
4. How does the poet give importance to Nature in her poem?
5. Write a note on the symbolical representations used in the poem.
6. Why does the poet use 'monotonous tone'?
7. Why the autumn is compared to the sunset?
8. How does the poet emphasize impermanence of the world?
9. What happened to the poet's dreams?

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### 1.3. Goodbye Party for Miss Pushpa T.S. - Nissim Ezekiel

Friends,  
our dear sister  
is departing for foreign  
in two three days,  
and  
we are meeting today  
to wish her bon voyage.

You are all knowing, friends,  
What sweetness is in Miss Pushpa.  
I don't mean only external sweetness  
but internal sweetness.  
Miss Pushpa is smiling and smiling  
even for no reason but simply because  
she is feeling.

Miss Pushpa is coming  
from very high family.  
Her father was renowned advocate  
in Bular or Surat,  
I am not remembering now which place.

Surat? Ah, yes,  
once only I stayed in Surat  
with family members  
of my uncle's very old friend-  
his wife was cooking nicely...  
that was long time ago.

Coming back to Miss Pushpa  
she is most popular lady  
with men also and ladies also.

Whenever I asked her to do anything,  
she was saying, 'Just now only  
I will do it.' That is showing  
good spirit. I am always  
appreciating the good spirit.

Pushpa Miss is never saying no.  
Whatever I or anybody is asking  
she is always saying yes,  
and today she is going  
to improve her prospect  
and we are wishing her bon voyage.

Now I ask other speakers to speak  
and afterwards Miss Pushpa  
will do summing up.

### **1.3.1 Glossary:**

- Depart – leave
- Bon voyage – an organized expression of goodwill at the start of a trip or new venture
- Renowned – well-known or famous
- Prospect – a fine position
- Internal – interior; centre
- External – outside; superficial

### **1.3.2 Nissim Ezekiel – Bio Note**

Nissim Ezekiel is a poet, playwright, actor and critic of art, music and dance. He was a foundational figure in postcolonial India's literary history, specifically for Indian Poetry in English. He was born in Bombay in 1924. His father was a professor of Botany at Wilson College, and his mother was the Principal of the school run by her. He was educated at Antonio D'Souza High School and graduated B.A. in

English Literature at Wilson College, Bombay. Then for two years 1947-48, he taught English Literature and published articles before leaving England for higher studies. He studied philosophy at Birbeck College in London. Judaism was their parental religion and their vocation was teaching.

Nissim Ezekiel began his career by teaching. He was a lecturer in Khalsa College for some time, and then became a Professor of English at Mittibhai College, Bombay. He became a Reader in American Literature and then a Professor of English at University of Bombay. Apart from this regular academic career, he had been invited as a distinguished academician at various educational institutions. He was a Visiting Professor in Leeds University and at University of Chicago. He retired as a Professor from Bombay University where he taught American Literature.

Nissim Ezekiel also worked as an editor in journals like *Quest*, *Imprint* and *Poetry India*. He was working as an Associate Editor in the Indian PEN Association (PEN is a worldwide association of writers, founded in London in 1921 to promote friendship and intellectual co-operation among writers) and the *Illustrated Weekly of India*. He worked as the General Editor while publishing the series, *Bibliography of Indian Writing in English Series* and also in the journal, *Art Critic* and in the newspaper, the *Times of India*.

Nissim Ezekiel had organized several poetry-reading sessions at various universities in India as well as in the other cities of many countries such as Washington, New York, Boston, Cambridge, Urbana in Illinois, Gowa in Indonesia, Berkeley in Chicago, Oakland in California, Michigan in the US and Rotterdam in Holland. He was the Chairman of International Panel of Judges for Commonwealth Poetry Award.

Nissim Ezekiel was invited by the US government as part of its International Visitor's Program in 1974. He also went to Australia in 1975 as a Cultural Award Visitor. He was a recipient of Fair Field Foundation Grant. He received the Sahitya Akademi Award for *Latter Day Psalms* in 1983. In 1988, he received the Padmashri Award for his contribution to literature in English. A film was made on the biography of Nissim Ezekiel by Jane Swamy. In 2004, he died at the age of 79 at Bombay in Maharashtra.

Nissim Ezekiel began his writing when he was studying in college. He was one among the Indian Writers in English, who had set a new trend by fusing modernism as well neo-symbolism. He wrote only in English, though some Indian writers prefer writing in two or more than two languages.

Nissim Ezekiel published his poems in several volumes of poetry: *A Time to Change* (1952), *Sixty Poems* (1953), *The Third* (1959), *The Unfinished Man* (1960), *The Exact Name* (1965), *Snakeskin and Other Poems* (1974), *Hymns in Darkness* (1976) and *Latter Day Psalms*. Some of his notable poems are “On an African Mark”, “Communication”, “The Worm”, “The Double Horror”, “Something to Pursue”, “God Revealed”, “To a Certain Lady”, “Night of the Scorpion” and “Enterprise”. His poems were published in literary journals and magazines such as the *Encounter*, *The Illustrated Weekly of India*, *The London Magazine*, *The Spectator* and *The Span*. He also contributed five plays and three of them were published as *Three Plays* in 1969. He also translated some Marathi poems into English.

Nissim Ezekiel’s poetry is haunted by feelings of personal loss, longing and deprivation. His poetry is simple, introspect and analytical. He skilfully used prosody, restraint, conversational style, mastery of irony, purity of diction and perfect control over emotions in his poetry. His poetry covers a variety of subjects such as, love and sex, the problem of marriage, the Indian contemporary scene, and modern urban life. The need to overcome alienation and to create integration among the various aspects of his characters is his other themes in his poetry. His poetry uses imagery and symbol and his poetic style is modern and conversational which easily grasps the attention of the readers.

The theme of alienation is central because he has felt as an outsider with his Jewish background in Indian setting; that can be felt in almost all his poems. Anyhow, his poems reflect Indianness; Ezekiel believes that he belongs to India as he has claimed “India is my environment”. Ezekiel’s poems have exerted a tremendous influence on the writings of the most other Indian Poets in English and they have been models and pace-setters too.



### 1.3.3 Goodbye Party for Miss Pushpa T.S. – Analytical Summary:

The poem, “Goodbye Party for Miss Pushpa T.S.”, is based on an incident where Miss Pushpa T.S. is given a farewell party for her departure. The narrator of the poem addresses the participants of the party and talks about Miss Pushpa T.S. The narrator introduces the nature and attitude of Miss Pushpa T.S. The narrator is unnamed and unspecified about the gender. The narrator of the poem addresses the participants of the party as friends. He refers to Miss Pushpa as ‘dear sister’. The purpose of the party is then disclosed that Miss Pushpa is leaving to a foreign place within two or three days, and to wish her good luck for her future endeavour, the farewell party is arranged.

The narrator then recalls how sweet Miss Pushpa is, which means that she is a nice personality. Then the narrator describes Miss Pushpa is sweet at her heart and the narrator is not talking about the outer appearance of Miss Pushpa, but about her inner nature.

Miss Pushpa, usually, smiles for no reasons, which means she treats everyone very friendly and she may have a cordial relationship with her colleagues. Actually, the narrator claims that she smiles for no reason, but the actual reason behind her smile is to have good relationship with her colleagues. Moreover, Miss Pushpa is a happy person, so she shows her happiness through her smile which is noteworthy. Generally, in the working place, due to work pressure, people forget to smile but Pushpa handles the situation very lightly. This shows her positive attitude towards life, especially at the work place.

The narrator, then, refers to the familial background of Miss Pushpa. She is from an elite family of highly educated one. Her father is a famous advocate who has worked in cities like Bulsar or Surat. The narrator forgets the exact place where her father has been working because the meet with her family has happened long time back. Then, the narrator recalls being stayed with Miss Pushpa’s family, when her father has been working in Surat. Miss Pushpa’s family is the friends of the narrator’s uncle. The narrator also remembers the nice food served by the wife of the narrator’s uncle.

The narrator admires Miss Pushpa for her popularity. She is admired both by men and women. The narrator specifically mentions both genders – men and women – like Pushpa because it has to be understood that Miss Pushpa is not admired because she is a beautiful woman but for her good-nature. Sometimes, it is understood that a lady is attracted by men and to avoid this understanding the narrator specifies that Miss Pushpa is admired by both men and women. The male chauvinistic society admires women for her external beauty and appearance and so here the narrator makes it clear that Miss Pushpa is an amicable personality.

The narrator also praises Miss Pushpa for her helping nature. She always helps when she is requested. Whenever the narrator seeks help from Miss Pushpa, she readily offers it. She responds that she will do it immediately. The narrator finds it as the good spirit of Miss Pushpa which is her unique nature and the narrator admires her for that good spirit.

Moreover, whenever Miss Pushpa is asked to do something, she will do it immediately. She will not say no to anyone, let it be the narrator or anybody else. She volunteers to help. She is always willing to offer her helping hand to anyone. She readily helps without thinking even if she finds it little difficult.

The narrator comes to the end of the speech where the departure of Miss Pushpa is mentioned. Miss Pushpa is leaving to improve her career and so she is leaving to a foreign country. The gathering is expected to wish Miss Pushpa good luck in her future endeavour.

Then, the narrator invites the other participants of the party to deliver their address on behalf of Miss Pushpa's departure. The narrator also informs that after everyone completes the respective turns, Miss Pushpa will finally address the members who have come to the farewell party. Therefore, the narrator invites the other speakers to deliver farewell speech on Miss Pushpa's departure as well invites Miss Pushpa to speak at the end of the party.

#### **1.3.4 Themes:**

The poem is written in dramatic monologue (a speech by one character only) and is **satirical**: it is mocking at the language deficiency of Indian speakers whose second language is English. He humorously and deliberately makes mistakes in the

poem that is quite common among the speakers of English in India. It is quite common because English is not the mother tongue for them. The poem should not be taken seriously and no one is expected to be offended by the use of English language. The purpose behind those mistakes in the poem is just to enjoy the satire to look at how some people in India speak English.

The poem misuses the present continuous tense and uses turns of phrases and syntax found in the Indian language, like when Ezekiel writes, “Whatever I or anybody is asking/ She is always saying yes.” The present continuous tense is not advisable while describing or narrating about a person and so here the poet deliberately uses the wrong tense. The poem also hints at dramatic irony (satire) if the reader infers that the speaker’s audience at the farewell party does not know that his English is grammatically incorrect.

The language used in the poem is realistic as the Indians speak with mistakes in English. They mix the structure of their mother tongue with English structure and it becomes the prime reason for such mistakes in English. The influence of mother tongue is evident in the poem and the poet expresses this in a humorous way. Sometimes, this English is otherwise called as “Babu English”, which is the mixture of Hindustani and English.

The word ‘bon voyage’ is used in the poem to indicate that the poet deliberately wants to emphasize the language skill of the narrator. Moreover, the narrator is shown as if he has no public speaking skills as he points out that Miss Pushpa is “sweet” both inside and outside, which indicates it is the wrong usage in English; the better words such as gentle or kind would have been used.

Ezekiel has used colloquial language in his poem; it is used to satirize Indian culture again. There is no capital letter used in the first letter of every line; it is the custom of writing poetry that every line begins with capital letter.

When the poet says that Miss Pushpa is popular among both men and women, it actually ridicules the ungrammatical speech of Indians and their way of exaggerated speech. The unnecessary usage of the words, ‘just’ and ‘only’ denote the ignorance of the Indian English speaker. Even, towards the end of the poem, the narrator expects Miss Pushpa to ‘sum up’ which is not correct. Miss Pushpa is

the chief personality in the farewell party and she is supposed to deliver her speech, instead she is asked to sum up as if she is delivering vote of thanks; but she is expected to express her gratitude before she leaves.

The mother tongue influence is also seen when the narrator says ‘two three days’ and the phrase is used ‘with men also and ladies also’. Instead, ‘two or three days’ might be used as well ‘both men and women’ might be used. The indefinite article ‘a’ is not used at the required places.

The poem is a parody (satire) of an Indian speaker, who has learnt English as the second language. It is a satire on Indian educated people who believe that English is a superior language. The parody includes irony, unclear speech, literal translation from vernacular language and wrong usage of the tenses.

### 1.3.5 Questions:

1. Write on the context of the poem by Nissim Ezekiel.
2. What is meant by internal sweetness in the poem?
3. Write on the themes used in the poem?
4. Write an essay that Nissim Ezekiel’s poem is a satire.
5. Why is Miss Pushpa going abroad?
6. Write on characterisation of Miss Pushpa.
7. What are the problems faced by the second language learners of English?
8. How does the influence of vernacular language affect the Indian speaker while speaking in English?

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#### 1.4. The Old Play House - Kamala Das

You planned to tame a swallow, to hold her  
In the long summer of your love so that she would forget  
Not the raw seasons alone, and the homes left behind, but  
Also her nature, the urge to fly, and the endless  
Pathways of the sky. It was not to gather knowledge  
Of yet another man that I came to you but to learn  
What I was, and by learning, to learn to grow, but every  
Lesson you gave was about yourself. You were pleased  
With my body's response, its weather, its usual shallow  
Convulsions. You dribbled spittle into my mouth, you poured  
Yourself into every nook and cranny, you embalmed  
My poor lust with your bitter-sweet juices. You called me wife,  
I was taught to break saccharine into your tea and  
To offer at the right moment the vitamins. Cowering  
Beneath your monstrous ego I ate the magic loaf and  
Became a dwarf. I lost my will and reason, to all your  
Questions I mumbled incoherent replies. The summer  
Begins to pall. I remember the rudder breezes  
Of the fall and the smoke from the burning leaves. Your room is  
Always lit by artificial lights, your windows always  
Shut. Even the air-conditioner helps so little,  
All pervasive is the male scent of your breath. The cut flowers  
In the vases have begun to smell of human sweat. There is  
No more singing, no more dance, my mind is an old  
Playhouse with all its lights put out. The strong man's technique is  
Always the same, he serves his love in lethal doses,  
For, love is Narcissus at the water's edge, haunted  
By its own lonely face, and yet it must seek at last  
An end, a pure, total freedom, it must will the mirrors  
To shatter and the kind night to erase the water.

#### 1.4.1 Glossary:

- Swallow – a bird
- Raw – fresh
- Shallow – low
- Convulsions – seizures
- Dribbled – drooled
- Spittle – saliva
- Nook and cranny – something remote/ far away
- Embalm – conserve
- Lust – desire
- Saccharine – sugary
- Cowering – shrinking
- Pall – curtains down
- Rudder – steering mechanism
- Fall – autumn
- Pervasive – spread
- Lethal – deadly
- Haunted – weird or ghostly
- Shatter – smash

#### 1.4.2 Kamala Das: Bio Note

Kamala Das is one of the most important, women and prolific writers of Indian Writing in English. Her writings reflect her own life and are mostly considered as autobiographical pieces. She is very transparent in expressing her ideas and so her works get into controversy. The reasons are, she is devoted to writing her true expressions and her poetic vision is sensational. One of the important works which brought her into the attention of the reader's world is *My Story*, which clearly depicts her inner mind without any flaw or hesitancy.

Kamala Das was born on 31<sup>st</sup> March 1934 in Malabar (Kerala). She was named Madhavikutty and her feminist sensitivity compelled her to change her name into Kamala Das for her writing career. Her mother, Balamani Amma, was a renowned poet in Malayalam literature. Unfortunately, she had no formal education;

but she interestedly studied at home. At the young age of fifteen, she was married to K. Madhava Das. Kamala Das missed her liberty and formal education just because she lived in the patriarchal set-up both before and after her marriage life. These ideas had been developed in her writings and so her expressions became more powerful.

Kamala Das began her writing under the pen name Madhavikutty when she was eighteen years old. A bilingual writer of Malayalam and English, Kamala Das contributed thirty novels in Malayalam and three volumes of poetry in English. *Summer in Calcutta*, *The Descendants* and *The Old Playhouse and Other Poems* are the three collections of English poems written by Kamala Das. *My Story*, the autobiography of Kamala Das is written in both the languages (English and Malayalam). Her *Summer in Calcutta*, has brought the attention of the reading public.

Kamala Das, though caught into severe criticisms for being controversial and unconventional, was recognized for her sexual sentimentalism and eroticism in her writings. She was awarded the Asian PEN poetry prize for her poem “The Sirens”. She won the prestigious Kerala Sahitya Akademi Award in 1969 for her fiction, *Thanuppu*. As a fearless journalist, she received the Chimanlal Award. She also worked as the poetry Editor of the *Illustrated Weekly* for a while.

Kamala Das is a revolutionary writer, who has established tradition and convention in her writings very openly which is not usually written very openly. She is a fierce feminist, who has induced the thoughts of women for their emancipation. Being a confessional poet, she has outpoured her intimate private experiences with honesty and frankness, mostly focusing on love and sexuality of women. She personally feels that women in the society are not experiencing true love as they are bound within the firmly established patriarchal society. She is an important figure among the women writers of contemporary Indian Writing in English.

#### **1.4.3 Analytical Summary of the poem:**

##### **The Title of the Poem:**

‘The Old Playhouse’ is a dilapidated and deserted house without light, where nobody is playing or using it. This old playhouse being the metaphor of her physical

body implies non-functional and inactive due to strenuous physical and mental strains over the years. Saying so, the poet is accusing the matrimonial customs which is actually deceiving the women community. She thinks that the patriarchal society has no value or respect for women and the women suffer in confinement and suffocation in the name of marriage.

The poem begins with an accusation from the poet that the husband has tamed her. She compares herself with the bird, swallow. Swallow is a bird, which obviously denotes freedom and liberty. But here, the rights of the bird are at loss because it is tamed and confined in a cage. The poet, who is like the bird, longs for her lost freedom, but is caught under the clutches of her husband in the name of love. The poet blames that the husband is intentional in making the poet to forget the seasons. The husband succeeds in the plan because the poet has forgotten the other attractive seasons, but only to experience the long summer. The summer is not long but the way the husband has made her life in the name of love, allows her to think that the summer is long whereas the brighter sides of the other seasons are neglected in the name of her husband's love. That is how she begins her accusation through the poem.

The poet has not forgotten only the seasons, but also her past life. 'The homes left behind' refers to the places where the poet has lived before her married life. She is forced to forget the past way of life and to adapt to the new life because the marriage has become a mismatched one. Therefore, she has forgotten how to fly or enjoy her freedom and as well she has forgotten the ways to get her liberty back.

Once the poet enters into the wedlock, she has anticipated learning more about her inner self. The presumption of marriage has made her to learn more about her husband and his priorities. She says she has no interest at all to gain knowledge about her husband, but she is made to learn about him. The lessons of her husband are deliberate to make her to forget about her 'self'. Thus the poet realises that her identity is lost.

The first part of the poem is about the psychological constraints of marriage life. The next part of the poem describes how the poet's body is used as an object during love-making. During the sexual relationship, the poet's body is responding according to the wishes of her husband; which means the poet is not happy with the way her body is being used. The husband is happy about the body's response (of the



poet), even if the poet's body is happy about it or not. The urgency is given to the way the husband wants to do in his way. The poet is accusing her husband for having sex with her as he has intended to have. She says that she has not been satisfied in the act of sex and the way she describes shows how dominant and male-chauvinistic the husband has been who has totally forgone the desires of the poet.

The next part of the poem talks about the responsibilities dumped on wives in the name of marriage. As the typical wife of patriarchal society, the poet has accepted the role that is given to her after marriage even though she is not interested. She bears the new role as wife and has been entrusted with many responsibilities. She has listed out some of the duties in the poem as, cooking dishes perfect according to his taste and to provide vitamins regularly to maintain his health.

The male-ego becomes the villain for every woman in the patriarchal society. The ego of the poet's husband is described as a 'monstrous' one. The poet has to adjust with him by restricting her wishes and her longing for freedom. She describes this intelligently as, she has eaten a magic loaf and so she has shrunk and become small in front of her husband. Now the husband's ego is monstrous and big, whereas the poet becomes a dwarf and so the husband always overtakes the situation as a dominant figure. Therefore, the poet has lost her self-identity and cannot respond to him whole-heartedly. The responses to her husband are not real as she is not speaking her mind but she is speaking according to the expectations of her husband. The incoherent replies are not coherent to the poet because they are not the real responses she has wanted to utter, but the replies may be convincing to her husband. These replies are meant for agreeing with the male-egos of a male-centric world.

The seasons get changed in the real world but there is no change in the poet's life. The summer begins to 'pall', covers her lifetime completely. As she is caught into the household of her husband, she can only remember the steering breeze of the autumn but she cannot feel the breeze of the autumn again. The husband's house is completely occupied with the summer. The poet gasps for her breath; there is no fresh air in the house even if the air-conditioner is used. She also remembers the burning smell of the dried leaves during the autumn. She feels suffocation in the husband's house because there is no change in season or in her life. There is no life in the house; this symbolically represents the image of cut flowers in the vases. The

flowers which have natural fragrance are also tainted with the artificial smell. The flowers kept in the house have lost its natural fragrance because the occupancy of humans has made them to give up the natural fragrance.

Subsequently, the house has lost its life of the outer world and is smoked with artificial life. As there is no fresh air in the house, there is no enjoyment or freedom in the life of the poet. The poet believes that she cannot sing or dance with these restrictions of marriage. So she compares her mind as an old playhouse with its lights put off. Once, the playhouse has been well used, bright, and lively and engaged and now the old playhouse has become unused with its unattractive, fading colours and identity.

The poet concludes the poem by again blaming the man (the husband) that the strong man's technique of love is the same. He provides love in lethal doses, which means love is merely based on his priorities and not respecting the feel of his partner. The love-making of her husband hurts her feel. She connects her emotions to Narcissus, a Greek mythical character that falls in love with his own image, when he happens to look at his own image that's reflected on the surface of the water. She ends the poem with a wish to demolish this conventional set-up. She wishes that a pure, total freedom has to end all her problems and it will happen if the mirrors are shattered and if the water is erased. Once the mirror is broken and if the water is removed from the earth, the self-loving man cannot look at his image and enjoy himself by forgetting others next to him. Then the selfishness of the man will get changed and he cannot remain as a narcissist and this, ultimately, helps the poet to get back her lost freedom.

#### **1.4.4 Imagery**

Kamala Das's use of imagery is very effective in expressing her ideas. In this poem, "The Old Playhouse", she has used imagery to show the mismatched-uninterested conjugal relationship in the name of marriage and custom of the society in which she lives in.

'Swallow' is one of the imageries used in the poem, which actually represents the woman (Kamala Das) and then she is captured by a cruel and heartless husband and the husband plans to tame her. Here 'swallow' refers to a small bird with dark,

glossy-blue backs, red throats, pale underparts and long tail streamers. The birds, swallows, are extremely active in flight and mostly spend their time on their wings. This imagery is particularly used to depict the cruelty of the man, who denies and curbs the liberty and life of the bird (the poet) and controls over her in the name of marriage. This imagery is also used to show how the identity and freedom of the wife (poet) is curtailed not to live upto her higher expectations.

The seasons, 'summer' and 'autumn' are used as the imageries in the poem. These are used to show the bright and dull phases of the poet's life. The summer is long to the poet, which means the sufferings are prolonging than short-lived happiness in her life. Yet at another place in the poem, she talks about the summer which 'begins to pall', which actually shrinks her free space. 'Mirror' is yet another image used in the poem which captures loneliness. It faithfully mirrors loneliness, sufferings and anxieties on the face. Besides, the images such as 'kind night' and 'the water' are used to show the poet's depressed mood and loneliness. Overall, these images are used to show her husband as an egoist who cannot think of her sexual and sensual desires.

In addition to that, the 'Narcissist' image from the Greek mythology is brilliantly used to describe the self-centred nature of men in delineating women's desire and pleasure. Narcissus is a character from the Greek mythology. Narcissus is a hunter who is known for his beauty. He is the son of the river god Cephissus and the nymph Liriope. Once, Narcissus happens to look at his own image on the surface of the water. He is attracted by his own beauty and admires his own image. Usually, this image is used to refer to someone, who is self-centred and gives priority to oneself by not bothering the wishes of the others. In this poem, this image is used to describe the personality of her selfish husband who is satisfied with his own pleasure and wishes and never bothers about the poet's pleasure or wishes. Thus, this image suits very aptly the cunning nature of her husband who is satisfied with his own pleasure.

Overall, the imageries used by the poet commonly denote the egoist, male-dominated, patriarchal husbands in the society, unexceptionally her husband.

## **1.4.5 Themes – The Old Playhouse**

### **1.4.5.1 Patriarchy:**

The poem is an attack on the patriarchal society, which binds women in bondage of marriage. The struggle that the woman encounters and the way she suffocates under pressure of patriarchal norms are expressed in the poem. The poem begins with an accusation; it directly blames the man by addressing 'you'. This word 'you' pinpoints the men in the society who adopts patriarchy. The man is clever and cunning here because he makes the woman to forget about everything, including the seasons and the other outer world experiences she has been acquainted with. For instance, she forgets all the other seasons and all the seasons appear to be summer to her which again indicates that the happiest seasons are removed from her lifestyle by the man. Gradually, she is made to forget about her freedom or free movement in her life on accepting confinement.

### **1.4.5.2 Confessional Poetry:**

Confessional poetry is a style of poetry; it is a form of personal poetry which focuses on extreme moments of individual experience and personal trauma. This mostly reflects the poet's mental illness, sexuality related issues and other social related issues which affects the psyche of the poet. The poetry of Kamala Das too is categorized under confessional poetry. Through her poems, she is frank and bold in revealing her unfulfilled longing, love experiences, inner longings and yearnings. In the prescribed poem, "An Old Playhouse", too, she is making a frank admission and bold treatment of her private life. Her obsession towards her husband is very clear in the poem. The descriptions related to love-making are transparent without any concealment. This courageous outcome of her expressions assures Kamala Das as a confessional poet.

### **1.4.5.3 Feminism:**

Feminism is a movement, which emphasises equality of genders with related to rights and opportunities. Kamala Das questions the conventional roles of the patriarchal society in her poems. She is also angry at the norms followed in the conventional society, which she feels, that are against women's priority or wishes.

In this poem, Kamala Das is making bold confessions and serious attitudes to her protest against the male-centric household settings. She is one among the first Indian women writer who has spoken boldly about body and sexuality. She demands sexual gratification because she thinks that her husband gets the satisfaction from her but she cannot get it from her husband. She questions the other disparities found in the domestic setting, where the woman turns out to be the care-taker of the man; whereas the woman is not at all taken care of. She attacks male domination, male ego and patriarchy in almost all her poems because these things lead to women's subjugation to men. Therefore, the attack in the form of poetry against the male-centric society on the exploitation of the women by the male becomes one of the stronger feminist elements in the writings of Kamala Das.

#### **1.4.5.4 Love:**

Kamala Das, as a confessional poet, has confessed upon her dissatisfied marriage life. She realises that marriage does not offer love-relationship; instead, it uses the body of women to satisfy the sexual gratification of men. She also feels that the love of her husband only touches her body and his love does not touch her soul. Here, she is not talking about the love-making but about a pure relationship of mutual love and understanding. According to Kamala Das, her husband may not understand this idea, as a male-chauvinist. This dissatisfied love is expressed throughout her poem. Apart from that, there is another accusation that her husband is not ready to satisfy her sexual needs while love-making. These are expressed very well in her poem and her longing for love is common in her writing.

#### **1.4.6 Questions:**

1. Who is the narrator of the poem?
2. Why did the poet call herself as 'an old playhouse'?
3. Write on the sufferings of the poet?
4. What are the duties assigned to a wife of a conventional Indian family?
5. Write on the tone of the poem.
6. Does this poem belong to confessional poetry?
7. Is there a feminist tone in the poem?
8. Bring out the imagery used in the poem.

9. Write a critical appreciation of the poem “An Old Playhouse”.
10. Justify. Kamala Das is a confessional poet by deriving substantiating points from the poem “An Old Playhouse”.
11. Describe the male-chauvinistic elements present in the poem “An Old Playhouse”.
12. Elaborate. Kamala Das is a fierce feminist poet charging against the patriarchal society.
13. Examine Kamala Das as a poet of protest.
14. What aspects of Kamala Das as a poet are revealed in the poems prescribed?

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## 1.5. Indian Women - Shiv K. Kumar

In this triple-baked continent  
women don't etch angry eyebrows  
on mud walls.  
Patiently they sit  
like empty pitchers  
on the mouth of the village well  
pleating hope in each braid of their Mississippi-long hair  
looking deep into the water's mirror  
for the moisture in their eyes.  
With zodiac doodlings on the sands  
they guard their tattooed thighs  
Waiting for their men's return  
till even the shadows  
roll up their contours and are gone beyond the hills.

### 1.5.1. Glossary:

- Triple-baked – very hot
- Etch – cut
- Pitcher – a vessel or a jar
- Pleating – tucking and making neat
- Moisture – wetness
- Zodiac – an astrologer's chart which has 12 signs
- Doodling – drawing
- Contour – outline

### 1.5.2. Shiv K. Kumar - Bio Note

Shiv K. Kumar was an Indian English writer who had contributed poetry, plays, novels and short stories during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He was born in Lahore, British India in 1921. He was from the family of academicians, as his father and grandfather were teachers. He completed his school education in Davanand Anglo Vedic High School in 1937. He completed his under-graduation at Government College, Lahore and post-graduation at Forman Christian College, Lahore. Later when he was

working at a college in Cambridge, he received his Ph.D. in English Literature from the Cambridge University.

Shiv K. Kumar began his career as a lecturer in D.A.V. College in 1943. Later he moved to Delhi during the partition then, continued as a lecturer at Hansraj College, Delhi. Then, he worked as a programme officer at the All India Radio, Delhi. After a while, he moved to Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge in 1950. During this period, he got the chance of getting acquaintance with great academicians such as David Daiches and F.R. Leavis as tutors.

After his Ph.D., Shiv K. Kumar taught English Literature as a Professor both at Osmania University and at University of Hyderabad. He was the prime reason behind the emergence of the Department of English at the University of Hyderabad. He became the Vice-Chancellor of the University and retired in 1980. After his retirement, he extended his service by being the “Distinguished Visiting Professor” at many Universities and educational Institutions such as the University of Oklahoma. He died in 2017 after contributing a lot to the literary and academic world.

Shiv K. Kumar had published thirteen volumes of poetry, five novels, two collections of short stories, a play, and the translation of Faiz Ahmed Faiz’s poetry into English. His poems had appeared in several renowned newspapers and magazines like the *New York Times*, *Poetry Review* (London), *Western Humanities Review*, among others-and been broadcast on BBC. In 1978, he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature (London).

Some of Shiv K. Kumar’s poetry collections are *Articulate Silences* (1970), *Cobwebs in the Sun* (1974), *Subterfuges* (1976), *Woodpeckers* (1979), *Trapfalls in the Sky* (1986), *Woolgathering* (1995), *Thus Spake the Buddha* (2001), *Losing My Way* (2008), *Voice of Buddha: A Poetic Transcreation of The Dhammapada* (2008), *Intezar* (A Collection of Poems in Urdu) (2009), *Tum Kaho Main Sunoon* (A Collection of Poems in Urdu) (2010), *Which of My Selves Do You Wish to Speak to? Selected Poems* (2011), *Mujasma-e-Husn* (A Collection of Poems in Urdu) and *Where Have the Dead Gone?* Some of his individual poems appeared in several journals and magazines such as, *The New York Times*, *Poetry Review*



(London), *Ariel*, *Southern Review*, *Hemisphere Meanjin*, *Western Humanities Review* and *Trafika* (Prague).

Shiv K. Kumar wrote a play in 1975, *The Last Wedding Anniversary* which was also translated into Urdu as *Shaadi Ki Akhri Saal Girah* (1977). Some of his novels include, *The Bone's Prayer* (1979), *Nude Before God* (1983), *A River with Three Banks* (1998), *Infatuation* (2000), *Two Mirrors at the Ashram* (2007) and *Rough Passage to the Bodhi Tree. Beyond Love & Other Stories* (1980), *To Nun with Love & Other Stories* (2001) and *Face Behind the Mirror & Other Stories* are some of his short story collections.

Several of Shiv K. Kumar's poems and short stories have been broadcast over the BBC—and published in Indian, British, American, Canadian and Australian journals and magazines. They were also translated into several Indian and foreign languages. He received the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1987 for his collection of poems *Trapfalls in the Sky*. In 2001, he was awarded the Padma Bhushan for his contribution to literature.

Shiv K. Kumar's writings can be classified under postcolonial literature as he has used postcolonial themes in his writings. The other themes in his writings include Indian myths, Indian culture and Indian history. East-West encounter, Indian landscape, national identity and contemporary reality are the other themes that are commonly found in his poetry. Superstition, injustice, hypocrisy, poverty, failure in married life and betrayal in life are some of the other themes seen in his poetry. He is against certain rituals which have strong consequences and that is also reflected in his writings. He also expresses his aversion towards religions because of its evil practices.

### **1.5.3 Analytical Summary: Indian Women**

The poem, "Indian Women" talks about the endless sufferings of women in Indian subcontinent. This poem indirectly points out how the women are caught in the patriarchal society. These women have no rights to raise their issues but to remain as a subordinate in the society. The long Indian history too insists that women in India have been suppressed and oppressed politically and have been exploited.

The 'triple-baked continent' refers to India where the Indian women are oppressed in three-folds; they work hard for their family welfare under the hot sun, then they have been exploited sexually and finally, after all these hard work, they suffer under poverty. That is the reason; India is referred to as the 'triple-baked' continent, where the Indian women were 'baked' by the sun, sexual exploitation and poverty, even after their intense hard work. For instance, the hot sun drains water and to fetch water for the family, they have to walk a long distance. While walking a long distance under the sun, the women are 'baked' like pitchers. The words "mud walls" represent poverty in the family; the poor situation in the family affects all the family members. The only difference is that the woman is subjugated; for instance, the man in the house can be angry by raising his anger and to express his anger, but the woman dare not do the same.

When it is concerned with family life, she is not given any space to express her wish or interest; whereas her husband uses her as a sexual object. The conjugal relationship exists in the family according to the priority and wish of the man and the woman are usually exploited; mostly the woman's interest/disinterest or any of her opinion is never bothered when the sexual relationship is concerned. Thus, she submissively allows the man to extort her love for him. Finally, these women suffer under poverty; they do not have sufficient food and yet they need to undergo all these turmoils in their life. As the women in India are not literally 'baked', this phrase 'triple-baked continent' indicates that the women become the victims of the patriarchal society.

The weather in India is usually hot and extracts women's hard work. When work is extracted from the Indian women, there is least consideration given for their health or comfort. The women have control over their emotions; even if they are angry they are supposed not to show their anger towards anyone. The poem funnily says that the women cannot even vent their anger out on the mud walls. This represents that these women are treated worse than any living thing. They cannot express their likings for love towards their male partners as well as they cannot express their emotions such as anger; they are restricted from expressing any form of emotions as they are not given any space in their huts. Their rights are denied and their freedom of expression is also denied. They are left with limited options to react or to show their expressions. Thus, the women work hard and toil under the hot sun

but are not allowed to speak or to express their minds; but to suppress her feelings even if she is right or wrong.

The poet describes the way these women wait patiently to fetch water for their household work. After walking a long distance to fetch water they have to wait near the mouth of the well to get their turn. Once, they get their turn they have to fill their pitchers with water and have to walk back with heavy loads of those pitchers on their heads. 'Patiently' the women sit down to wait for their turns; the word shows that the Indian women have been patient to tolerate the male dominance as well as poverty and to be 'patient'; 'being patience' becomes part of their life. These women are compared to the empty pitchers as they remain silent, for not reacting to anything, even if it is broken or used by someone to keep water inside. Like the pitcher, which does not react for anything and allows itself to be used by the others, the Indian women, silently and patiently allow their subjugation.

While waiting for their turn, the women with their empty pitchers sit on the mouth of the village well to get their pitchers filled with water. Though they never express anger or love at home, they have their emotions expressed on their pitiful eyes. They get their eyes wet, when they lead a life of misery and sorrow. When they think about their life of misery, their eyes get wet; they are capable of controlling their emotions and so they do not cry out loudly for the miseries which they encounter in their life. They are mentally strong; they do not cry for their worries; yet they are hopeful about their life.

The confidence in the women is seen in their moist eyes. They are worried about their distressed situations, but they have not given up hope. They try to observe their images that are getting reflected on the surface of the water when they wait near the well to fetch water. Though the eyes are wet and show their distress, the eyes shine with confidence and show their mental strength. With this mental strength they overcome all their sufferings and move forward in their life amidst life-long subjugation. The confidence of the women is described using the imagery, 'their Mississippi-long hair'.

Mississippi is a southern US state with the Mississippi River. The Mississippi River is one of the world's major river systems in size, habitat diversity and biological productivity. It is also one of the world's most important commercial

waterways and one of North America's great migration routes for both birds and fishes. The Mississippi River is the second-longest river and the Chief River of the second-largest drainage system on the North American continent. Mississippi is the world's leading producer of pond-raised catfish and is the nation's second leading producer of cotton. The Mississippi Gulf Coast, from Biloxi to Henderson Point, is the largest and longest man-made beach in the world. It is also one of the world's most important commercial waterways and one of North America's great migration routes for both birds and fishes. Native Americans lived along its banks and used the river for sustenance and transportation. Early European explorers used the Mississippi to explore the interior and the northern reaches of what was to become the United States. Fur traders plied their trade on the river and soldiers of several nations garrisoned troops at strategic points, at various times, along the river when the area was still on the frontier. Many distinguished writer have used this river in their writings for representing various themes.

In the poem, the river Mississippi is referred to show that the women have long hairs. Usually the river is used to symbolize journeying towards freedom and knowledge seeking. But here, the women have endless worries and hope to solve their miseries; these are symbolised through the river image. In each pleating of their braided hair, the women build upon hope to lead their life, but contrarily their problems do not get any solution but their eyes reflect their sorrow. When they look at the image on the surface of the water, they understand that nobody will understand their sufferings. The length of the river is used to show how stronger the women are to build confidence after every upheaval they face in their life.

Patience of women is also further developed in the poem. They patiently wait for the return of their husbands in the evening. They, mechanically, believe in their zodiac signs hoping for their better future. The zodiac is connected to astrology; it is an astrologer's chart which believes in a belt of the heavens including all apparent positions of the sun, moon, and most familiar planets. It is divided into twelve equal divisions or signs such as Aries, Taurus, Gemini, Cancer, Leo, Virgo, Libra, Scorpio, Sagittarius, Capricorn, Aquarius and Pisces. It is believed one's birth star and zodiac sign decide one's fate. So these women too believe in certain zodiac signs scribbled on the sands. The irony is that the woman can read those stars but cannot get out of

subjugation. No lucky star can help such woman to get away from the clutches of patriarchy.

Moreover, the chastity of the women, too, is controlled by the patriarchal society. After all their domestic chores they wait for their husbands to return home. They 'protect their thighs waiting for their men indicates that the women remain chaste and wait only for their husbands and so it is understood that the women become objects and the husband remains as the owners of those objects. The woman's chastity is controlled by the patriarchal system whereas the woman's assigned duty is to protect her chastity. No other man can be allowed to have relationship with the woman and she is supposed to take care of her chastity. Tattooed thighs are protected by the woman so that only her husband can make use of her for his sexual need. Moreover, the 'tattooed' thighs refer to the symbols inscribed on the skin of the woman, so that he becomes authoritative to own the body of the woman. The symbols inscribed as tattoos may be the names of their husbands. The poem then shows the evening time where the place is fully covered in darkness. The husbands have gone for work beyond the hills and these women patiently wait for those men to come back late in the evening.

The poem glorifies and sympathises the Indian women for their patience, chastity and for subjugation; it also describes the sufferings that are undergone by the Indian women.

#### **1.5.4 Themes:**

##### **1.5.4.1 Patriarchy:**

Patriarchy is a kind of social organization which believes male is the head of the family and the society; men is believed to be the best decision maker of the family and the conventional patriarchal ideas believed that the men are the breadwinners of the family. These concepts are very much present in the poem "Indian Women". The sufferings of the women portrayed in the poem prove that they are in the patriarchal society. They are silent victims of patriarchy as they never raise voice against any sort of oppression done by the society as well as by their own men. They are expected to be chaste, obedient, and sincere in doing household works; but they are not expected to have any desires of their own. All these attributes of patriarchal society

is found in the poem. Thus, the women are exploited by the male-chauvinistic society.

#### 1.5.4.2 Postcolonialism:

The poem, “Indian Women” can be counted as a postcolonial poem because the triple-baked continent indicates that the women are under control by their own men as well the British colonisers amidst their poverty. Postcolonialism is a diverse concept; here the poem can be read as a postcolonial one because the pathetic situation of the colonized are portrayed. The exploitations by the colonized and driving the natives into poverty-struck situation are one of the aspects of Postcolonialism, which is used in the poem too.

#### 1.5.5 Questions:

1. Why is India called as triple baked continent?
2. Why do women sit patiently?
3. Why the hair of the women is compared to the longest river?
4. Why the eyes of the women are wet?
5. Why do the women guard their thighs?
6. For whom do the the women wait for?
7. Describe how the poem portrays poverty in India.

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## UNIT – 2

### PROSE

#### 2.0. Objectives

The course enables the students to improve their analytical abilities and become more proficient in LSRW skills. It also enhances one's critical and thinking abilities and the vision of the readers is widened. It also improves one's comprehensive skills and ways to infer meaning among the minds of the readers.

#### 2.1. Work and its Secret – Swami Vivekananda

##### 2.1.1. Swami Vivekananda – Bio Note

Swami Vivekananda was born as Narendra Datta in 1863 in Kolkata, West Bengal, India (then Calcutta, Bengal Presidency, British India). He was an Indian Hindu monk and philosopher. He was one of the nine siblings in his family. He was a naughty child but he was interested in spirituality from his childhood age. He used to meditate before the images of deities such as Shiva, Rama, Sita, and Mahavir Hanuman. He was fascinated by wandering ascetics and monks.

At the young age of eighteen, he had great impacts on two incidents that happened in his life. He lost his father which left his family bankrupt. He met his spiritual guru Ramakrishna Paramahansa, a Hindu saint. He became the follower of Ramakrishna Paramahansa. His spiritual guru, Ramakrishna taught him to learn that all living beings were an embodiment of the divine self. He also learnt that service to God can be rendered by service to humankind. Swami Vivekananda was the founder of Ramakrishna Mission in 1897.

Swami Vivekananda was a genius of his period: he showed interest in various subjects and covered reading subjects such as philosophy, religion, history, social science, art and literature. He also studied Hindu scriptures and was trained in Indian classical music. He later studied Western logic, Western philosophy and European history at the General Assembly's Institution. In 1881, he passed the Fine Arts examination, and completed a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1884 at University of Calcutta. He also showed interest in studying the works of Western philosophers David Hume, Immanuel Kant, Johann Gottlieb Fichte, Baruch Spinoza, Georg W. F.



Hegel, Arthur Schopenhauer, Auguste Comte, John Stuart Mill and Charles Darwin. He also learned Sanskrit scriptures and Bengali literature.

Swami Vivekananda preached Modern Vedanta to his followers and the audience who admired him for his oration as well as for his philosophy. His literary works mostly focus on Raja Yoga, Karma Yoga, Bhakti Yoga and Jnana Yoga. He received the credits for rising inter faith awareness by bringing Hinduism to the status of a major world religion during the late nineteenth century. He delivered lectures all over the countries from Colombo to Almora and his speech inspired many. His speeches were not the inspiration of the past, but also of the present generation too. One of his inspirational quotes is “Arise, awake and stop not till the goal is reached”. He introduced Hinduism at the Parliament of the World’s Religions in Chicago in 1893. His speech which began with the words, “Sisters and brothers of America...” in Chicago won the hearts of all. Later his speeches were transcribed and published into books.

Swami Vivekananda played a major role in introducing the Indian darsanas of Vedanta and Yoga to the Western world. He was a major force in the contemporary Hindu reform movement in India and contributed to the concept of nationalism in colonial India. Swami Vivekananda developed throat cancer and died in 1888. He was regarded as a patriotic saint; so, in India, his birth anniversary is celebrated as National Youth Day.

Vivekananda’s lectures were published in different editions. *Lectures from Colombo to Almora* (1897) edition had all his lectures delivered during his journey. Another series of lecture is published as *Vedanta Philosophy: An Address before the Graduate Philosophical Society* in 1901 and *Vedanta Philosophy: Lectures on Jnana Yoga*. He wrote literary works too; he composed many songs and poems which were later published. “Bartaman Bharat” meaning "Present Day India" is a scholarly Bengali language essay written by him, which was first published in the March 1899 issue of *Udbodhan*, the only Bengali language magazine of Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission. The essay was reprinted as a book in 1905 and later compiled into the fourth volume of *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*. In this essay, his refrain to the readers was to honour and treat every Indian as a brother irrespective of caste and economic status.

Swami Vivekananda's other publications include a vast number of collections: *Sangeet Kalpataru*, *Karma Yoga*, *Raja Yoga*, *My Master*, *Jnana Yoga*, *Addresses on Bhakti Yoga*, *Bhakti Yoga*, *The East and the West*, *Inspired Talks*, *Narada Bhakti Sutras*, *Para Bhakti or Supreme Devotion*, *Practical Vedanta* and *Seeing Beyond the Circle* are some of his publications and some of his writings are published posthumously after his death. In his speeches as well as in his writings, Swami Vivekananda had proved himself as a scholar; his argument, in general, was logical and precise; and his style was athletic and forceful. He made apt use of story and parable and a noteworthy feature was his use of analogies drawn from science.

### **2.1.2 Work and its Secret – Short Summary**

Swami Vivekananda's essay, "Work and Its Secret" talks about the secret of leading a successful life. He explains the concepts of 'success' as well as 'way of life' and 'the means of work to achieve success in one's life' based on his understanding, which is both spiritual as well as philosophical, yet logical too.

Vivekananda becomes Swami Vivekananda as he becomes the first disciple of Ramakrishna Paramahansa, after adopting his principles and accepting him as his spiritual guru. He becomes the follower of Ramakrishna Paramahansa after impressed by his spiritual and philosophical preaching on his understanding of life. In the essay, Vivekananda recalls one of the greatest lessons that he has learnt in his life: the lesson he has taught him to pay as much attention to the means of work. He elaborately explains the essay that the means of work is important and to take both success and failure of work at same pace; it is the secret as well as the real success of life.

Vivekananda has learnt many principles and ideology from his guru Ramaikrishna; one of the lessons he has learnt is the secret of success. He points out that the humans commit a common error in life. An aim in one's life is an essential thing but running after one's aim and being affected by it and the consequences become a problem to the individual. He finds fault here, not because one runs after one's aim but because one is affected by the result; whether the aim is achieved or not. He has observed that Ramakrishna Paramaamsa has not been disturbed even if he has succumbed failure in his attempt to achieve his goal.

Swami Vivekananda understands that all the secret of success is not to be disturbed by success or failure; which means not to show interest in the result whether one arrives at the goal or not but to strive achieving it. He points out that one has to move forward towards the goal and one should not be affected even if the person achieves the goal or not. The person has to get mentally prepared that both success and failure is same and yet try to complete the task; this is the secret of life which is learnt from Ramakrishna Paramahansa by Swami Vivekananda.

Then, the next question emerges, what is the great fault among us in achieving the success of life. We have our great defect in life; we are completely attracted towards the goal because we are very much concerned about the ideal (the best performance or achievement). The goal which we aim at is very attractive and gives delight to one's mind, so we give more importance to get succeed in attaining the ideal; we give more space in our mind to think always about attaining the goal; when we are fully focussed on our aim and concerned about the ideal we fail to notice the other important details. We are fully focussed on achieving our ideal and we do not pay attention to the other details which are actually more important and Swami Vivekananda explains the drawback of our failure to notice those details which actually lead us into trouble at the end and which may cause failure in life too.

Swami Vivekananda finds out that the reason behind one's failure is one's inattentiveness towards the means. 'Means' here is a thing that acts to produce particular effect or achieve an end. If we fail in our attempt to achieve our desired goal, it must be our failure in not paying attention to the means. If the means is perfect, then the end or achievement of the goal is successful. Swami Vivekananda insists that one should not forget that cause produces the effect; if one strives to attain the goal, it is because of the cause (action or actions performed to arrive at the end), and the effect (end or result) is achieved; the effect cannot come by itself without the cause. Swami Vivekananda emphasises that the secret of life lies in paying attention to the means.

If there is the cause of an action then there is no difficulty about the effect so if one is sure about the means, then attaining the ideal is easy. The means and the cause is one and the same and if one gives attention to the means, achievement is definite and therefore paying attention to the means is the great secret of life. Swami

Vivekananda, thus, refers to the *Gita* which mentions that we have to work constantly with all our energy and have to work whole heartedly with full attention and should not bother about the importance of the work or the requirement of the work; but we have to work for it. Actually, it is a difficult task for a human mind because one can work with dedication, only if one gets attachment to the work, but he advises that one has to work with dedication but it has to be done with detachment.

Swami Vivekananda finds out the reason behind the greatest cause of one's sorrow. As well, he admits that it is difficult for anyone to give up the work so easily after one's failure. For instance, someone must have worked hard and that person might not be tired of the hard work, but if comes to know about his failure after his hard work, definitely he becomes tired and gets hurt. Swami Vivekananda emphasises the same that one can face a failure and yet we cannot give up the work so easily. The failure or the discontinuation of a work hurts the doer and it brings misery to the same because the person is attached to the work and it is difficult for the person to get away from it. Therefore, more than a failure, one's attachment to the work is dangerous.

Swami Vivekananda further explains this using an example. He compares the human being getting attached to one's work using a honey bee. Again and again, the honey bee tries to get away from the problem (the honey-pot) but it's getting stuck stronger. The same situation happens in our life, if we are worried about the failure and if we are attached to the problem. The honey bee is getting its feet stuck in the honey and it is the attachment we have on our work. One should not attach oneself to the work but to do the work; the honey bee has to drink the honey from the honey-pot without getting stuck there. Swami Vivekananda continues the same concept by linking the idea of our existence in this world. The whole secret of existence is that human beings are slipped into the trap and are getting stuck there like the honey bee.

Swami Vivekananda further develops the idea using a postcolonial setting by comparing the colonized as the honey bee. Though he generalises his opinions on the rulers; the rulers have been trying to rule the state but unfortunately they have been ruled by the others in turns. Any person's life may have this concept of getting stuck into the problem, though the person does not want to get stuck there but to complete the task. Instead of completing the task, one gets stuck there with worries

and miseries. Swami Vivekananda talks about colonization of one's mind too. He also talks about our relationship with Nature in this context. However, after a while we realise that nature is taking everything from us and we become the loser at the end point though the process happens after a long run; thus, nature depletes and destroys us as well as removes us and places separately from the world. Swami Vivekananda, thus, suggests that one's life can be like sunshine if there are no worries in one's mind. If one has no attachment in his work, then his life will be like sunshine. Therefore, success lies in one's detachment and if we are not caught into the work.

Swami Vivekananda assures that one of the causes of misery is, we getting attached to the work and trapped into it. One has to learn to detach oneself from everything in life and has to strictly follow this throughout the life; even if the thing that you have been attached with, is very near to your heart and even if your heart crazily wants it, even if you feel the most hurt sensation on the earth on leaving it, one has to be confident and stand by oneself to detach it away to get away from one's life-long misery. For this sake, one has to detach from the work or the thing which one has been attached too and Swami Vivekananda stresses that one needs to be stronger for the detachment. Then, he talks about the people who may feel difficult about detaching themselves from the work in which they are working hard. He accuses one's weakness because it will turn everyone into slaves and at the same time, it will lead one into all kinds of physical and mental agony among the human beings.

Swami Vivekananda substantiates how weakness becomes the reason for one's death using an interesting example. When the human body is weaker, the microbe makes its entry easier and affects the immune system by generating cells that produce disease on one's body. Using this example, Swami Vivekananda guides the human mind that one should not mind the million microbes that float around us; he means sorrows and miseries are the microbes of the human minds. If one's mind is strong and powerful to face them, these miseries and sorrows cannot disturb us or weaken our minds. This is the ultimate fact: one's mental strength gives one's life and one's mental weakness takes away one's life. Therefore, strength gives success and exists all the time whereas, weakness gives us death and one has to immune one's soul and mind with stronger ideas.

Swami Vivekananda again touches upon the term 'attachment' as it affects us the most. He insists that these attachments also have to be detached because only with these connections we are facing misery in our life. If one wants to enjoy one's life the most, then one has to detach from everything or everybody. To detach oneself from such relationship one needs stronger will power and if that detachment is done willingly, then there is no misery. He recommends that the man has to learn the art of both – the attachment and the detachment – if he has learnt the power of attaching himself to the thing with complete dedication, he also should possess the power of detaching himself with same energy and dedication. There are some men who are never attracted by anything and so they are never attached to anything in their life. These men do not face any problem as they are not attached to anything. They escape from the miseries of life. Though Swami Vivekananda seems to talk positively about these men, he compares them as walls. The man who never loves, whose heart is stony escapes the most miseries of life and so escapes the joys of life also. The walls have no emotions; they are not bound to anyone; they do not love anyone; they are not hurt by anything, so the walls will never face misery. Therefore, he compares the men without emotions or not attached to anything as the walls.

Consequently, Swami Vivekananda suggests that instead of being like a wall, one can get attached or caught into something. The reason is that the man who remains like a wall, who has no emotions, of course, escapes from the miseries of life, yet he misses his happiness too; he misses the joy of life too. He accuses that being stony hearted and not after emotions means the person is in a callous state, and he does not want that state. He explains that it is the weakness of a man and is equivalent to one's death. A man should not be like lifeless thing and to remain undisturbed by anything for any reason. A soul of such emotional free man cannot be awakened and it never feels weakness, it never feels misery too. He rejects such men because they symbolise cruelty and unsympathetic.

Contrarily, Swami Vivekananda mentions that the mighty power of love is needed; the mighty power of attachment is needed. He explains that the attachment should be stronger like one has to be more powerful to throw our whole soul upon a single object, then getting lost in the object and getting lost ourselves completely. He compares this as a divinely quality: to love something or someone and getting attached to something is the godly power. The men can be more powerful than the

gods once they learn to get their souls attached at one point of love and learn to get unattached from it. He also gives answer to the question of how getting attached to something and get detached from the same.

To establish the same idea, Swami Vivekananda cites another example using a beggar. He explains why the beggar never attains happiness or satisfaction in his life. He, then, compares the beggars with the human beings who are never satisfied at all; who are not happy at all. All of us are beggars, according to Swami Vivekananda. Like, the beggars and traders, we always expect something in return but we are not all satisfied with what we have received. Swami Vivekananda worries about the pathetic situation of human beings who fail to understand the value of emotions and they trade the emotions of others too. He also explains the term 'trade'. Life is like the reflection on the mirror if we are caught into the misery of life.

Swami Vivekananda sarcastically comments that we are caught in the trap. All these are expectations of our minds, which lead us easily into a destructive life, the life full of misery. Desire is the father of all misery; we cannot avoid this desire and that is why we are caught into the trap and suffer throughout our life. Need is the reason behind all our misery and this desire is bound by the laws of success and failure. It is not the result which brings misery into our life because both success and failure is one and the same, it is the end of the project or task; but misery is brought into our life because we have expectations on someone or something. This want and this desire in one's mind will definitely bring misery to one's life even if someone gets succeeded in the committed task.

Swami Vivekananda reveals the great secret of true success and the method to achieve it. The secret is, therefore, the man should not expect anything in return; who should remain as an unselfish man and he becomes the most successful man. He agrees that there is a paradox in the statement (a paradox is a statement that contradicts itself), because the unselfish man does not want or expect happiness or satisfaction in his life. Now, Swami Vivekananda explains the paradox; how an unselfish man can get hurt too, though he is unattached from the worldly pleasures. He says that the unselfish man in life too gets cheated and simultaneously gets hurt. He cites an example from Christianity: Jesus Christ is an unselfish man, yet he has been crucified and so is hurt by his own people. Yet, Swami Vivekananda justifies

that just because of unselfish nature of Jesus Christ; a great victory has been achieved for the common man.

Swami Vivekananda insists that we should not ask anything and at the same time we should not expect or receive anything in return for our deeds. We have all the rights to give away things and the action ends there; we should not wait for something to get in turn. He advises that the whole meaning in life is to give away something and so to learn the art of giving. In our life, we try to gather many things and to possess them with clenched hands. So Swami Vivekananda advises to give up things voluntarily for others. We need not wait for the pressure given by nature to give up our possessed things for others, but we can train our mind to leave those things for others and it can be done willingly.

Swami Vivekananda elaborates on how we suffer when we are not ready to give up things even when we get chance to give up. We are not ready to give up things easily because we do not understand the concept of nature and we do not understand how miserable it would be if we want to possess things. He explains the concept of giving and taking using another example too. We possess things and if it is forcibly taken away. We are disturbed. He further explains, with an example, how useful it is if we adopt the concept of giving and taking. He compares that the man has to be like the sun and so we have to take things just to give up. He again insists us not to ask anything in return for what we give and at the same time, he assures that we will get more than what we give. If someone empties the air out of a room quickly, then the external air is filled up immediately and in case, if the doors and the other openings of the room are closed, then there is no chance of getting anything from the outside world.

Swami Vivekananda compares this using a river: the river is continuously emptying itself into the ocean and is getting filled up again and again. Similarly, if we stop seizing the act of giving we are getting ready to face a terrible death. Thus, one should not be like a beggar taking things and not satisfied all the time; but one has to be attached as well as detached. This is the most terrible task of life, according to Swami Vivekananda. He explains this using an example: if we look at a park from a distance, we may get a general view of the park but we may not know anything specific about the park and we will know about the park only if we are literally inside



the park and have a closer look at everything inside the park. Therefore, even if all our attempts towards a goal fail, even when we are hurt and worry due to our failures, we have to make our mind steady; and we must proclaim our Almighty, the God in all our difficulties.

Next, Swami Vivekananda talks about the temptations made to commit a crime and he describes how a mature and calm mind can control them. He says that an ordinary man cannot control such temptations of revenge but an extraordinary man with a super-divine power will not revenge; he will not hit back, if he is attacked and he knows how to keep control and has learnt the tactics of remaining unattached. He calls the man with control of detachment as a divine person who actually has control over his mind. He accuses 'love' as the main offender of our misery. However, when time comes we repeat our mistakes and we are caught in the clutches of love relationship or attachment and we cannot escape from misery of life but to suffer throughout repeatedly.

Swami Vivekananda compares this using the critical situation of a bird, when the bird is caught in a net and is struggling and fluttering the wings to get freed. Similarly, we take oaths to get detached from our longing, desire and love, yet we are caught in the net again and again and we become the victims of sufferings. He philosophises that this is life, which always provides pathetic situations; and we are getting caught in the life struggle knowingly and unknowingly but cannot get away from our misery. Swami Vivekananda then points out how the human beings take it up, the failure and misery in their life. There are difficulties in handling the situation which means all of the men cannot be super-divine to take up everything in a controlled manner; all of us cannot keep quiet if we are hurt.

Swami Vivekananda says that ninety per cent of us become discouraged to keep control of the situation and so we lose our heart and we become pessimists and hopeless; and we do not believe in grand and noble acts of sincerity or love. He addresses the men who are complicating their minds with different failures. He suggests that they can at least speak out their aversion or hatred.

Swami Vivekananda again brings out the concept of super-divine power; man has to be godly by possessing certain features which will evade away the above mentioned qualities of certain men. The only solution to all these problems or human

misery is to be strengthened by super-divine power. All the complications that are encountered and the showers of human miseries remain undisturbing human can be achieved, only if they gain the power of the super-divine. We may face numerous problems; our mind may be disturbed with numerous worries; our heart is torn apart; yet we have to grow nobler all the time. This is the possibility one human soul turning into a super-divine; and this will reduce all our misery. At the same time, Swami Vivekananda points out the difficulty of gaining the power of a super-divine; yet he suggests that we can overcome all the difficulty by constant practice. He says that we should know the reason behind our misery and he insists that we have to analyse misery which we have faced and we have to find the reason behind every blow that we have received and we have to understand that it is, we, the reasons behind all the causes. We take up half of the responsibility for our misery and the other half of the responsibility is done by the external world and that is how we receive the blow and get hurt. Hence, Swami Vivekananda suggests that we can conclude it as a sign of hope based on our analysis.

We have to understand that we do not have any control over the external world, but we can control our internal mind which is responsible for half of our misery. We have to make an oath that if the two ingredients are required to make our failure, let's control our inner mind which is contributing one of the ingredients for our failure and with one ingredient of the outer world, the result i.e. the failure will not happen. We have to be stronger that we should not contribute the one from the outside world and to receive the blow or to attain misery. Therefore, Swami Vivekananda assures that we will never face failure, if we are stubborn to make any contributions from our side.

Swami Vivekananda seeks out another excuse that is commonly given by us from our childhood; we excuse ourselves from our mistakes by blaming upon somebody else or something outside us. If we are miserable, then we put the blame on the others for our misery without understanding that the prime reason for miserable situation is only us. We go on cursing the world that it is a devil one and it is the cause of our misery. We also find excuses saying that as we are being part of the devil's world, we need to be devils too and we indulge in things which are terrible.

Swami Vivekananda insists that we have to think about this situation, why we are being part of the same world which we call as devil's world and why we are being part of the community which we call as 'selfish' community. He delivers the answer that we get only what we deserve. Therefore, Swami Vivekananda teaches his first lesson that to be learnt by us and insists that we have to get hold of ourselves.

Swami Vivekananda questions whether we are hurt by a small thing from the external world and why do we feel ashamed about it. We talk about our manhood; we follow the traits of super-divine; we believe that we know everything; we believe that we should not be blamed for the errors; we believe that we do not err; we claim that we are the most unselfish people in the world, yet if we show our anger towards someone or something for a little mistake, then we should be ashamed of ourselves. If we react to that, we lose our nobility too; and simultaneously we cannot be a super-divine, but we remain as a common man like the others in the world.

Swami Vivekananda then questions which world can hurt us. The journey to the hell is through all the nine circles and the 'seventh hell' which is referred by Swami Vivekananda as the Hell of Violence, where the souls are given punishment according to the sin which they have committed. Swami Vivekananda, thus, explains if we have not hurt anyone we may not be harmed when we go through the other world, especially when we cross the seventh hell we may not be given any punishment. Therefore, we are responsible for offending ourselves and for doubling our misery; actually, we think that the eternal world hurts us and we cry out that we are in the devil's world, and we curse that some man hurts us, contrarily, it is we, who hurt the others and it is we to be blamed for the errors.

Therefore, Swami Vivekananda concludes his arguments that we have to take care of ourselves as much as possible and we should not spend our valid time by attending to others or finding fault with others. Let us put efforts and we should not be bothered about the end, even if it is going to be one's success or failure. We have to understand that the result or the effect stays in the external world and we are responsible only for the means; it is the secret of life and work which one has to conceive.

### 2.1.3 Work and its Secret – Analytical Summary

The essay entitled “Work and its Secret” is written by Swami Vivekananda. This was delivered as a lecture during his journey to deliver his series of lectures at several places in many countries. This lecture entitled “Work and its Secret” was delivered at Los Angeles in California in the United States on 4<sup>th</sup> January 1900. Later on, along with his other lectures, this lecture too is compiled and published as a prose piece. Reading the essay, even after hundred years, provides ever-contemporariness on reading. The essay has relevance even to the present context.

The essay is a philosophical one, in which Swami Vivekananda talks about the secret of leading a successful life. He explains the concepts of ‘success’ as well as ‘way of life’ and ‘the means of work to achieve success in one’s life’. The ideas are based on his understanding and experience, which is spiritual as well as philosophical, yet logical too. In the beginning of the essay, he is proud to admit that he has got the essence of these concepts from his guru Ramakrishna Paramahansa.

Ramakrishna Paramahansa is the nineteenth century Indian mystic and has experiences of spiritual ecstasies from a young age and drawn from several religious approaches. The followers of Ramakrishna Paramahansa have come to him as they believe him as an avatara of God or divine incarnation. Ramakrishna Paramahansa’s religious practice and worldview contains elements of Bhakti, Tantru and Vedanta. He emphasizes God-realisation, stating that “to realize God is the one goal in life”. He finds that all religions – Hinduism, Christianity and Islam – move towards the same God or divine power though these religions use different paths.

Narendra Nath Datta becomes Swami Vivekananda as he becomes the first disciple of Ramakrishna Paramahansa, and after adopting the principles of his spiritual guru. He becomes the follower of Ramakrishna Paramahansa after being impressed by his spiritual and philosophical preaching on his understanding of life. He is the founder of the Ramakrishna Math and the Ramakrishna Mission. As Ramakrishna Paramahansa has fed the basic thoughts of Vivekananda, he is always fond of his guru. This is the reason, in the beginning of the essay; he fondly remembers how he has grabbed the founding ideas from Ramakrishna Paramahansa.

In the essay, Vivekananda recalls one of the greatest lessons that he has learnt in his life: he mentions that he has learnt paying as much attention to the means of work as its end. He elaborately explains in the essay that the means of work is important and to take both success and failure of work at same pace is the secret as well as the real success of life. Vivekananda has learnt many principles and ideology from his guru Ramaikrishna, one of the lessons he has learnt is the secret of success. Ramakrishna has practiced this in his life as well; he has treated both success and failure in his life equally.

Vivekananda points out that the humans commit a common error in life. They are much attracted to the goal. An aim in one's life is an essential thing but running after one's aim and being affected by it becomes a problem to the individual; they are got affected by the consequences of an action which attempts to arrive at the goal. Swami Vivekananda finds fault here, not because if one runs after one's aim but because if one is affected by the result; whether the aim is achieved or not. This is learnt from the spiritual guru Ramakrishna Paramahansa by Swami Vivekananda. This is not theoretically learnt from Ramakrishna Paramahansa but as a practical session from him; the life lessons of Ramakrishna Paramahansa reflects the idea of not being attached to the consequences of one's success in attaining one's goal. Hence, Swami Vivekananda has observed that Ramakrishna Paramahansa has not been disturbed even if he has succumbed failure in his attempt to achieve his goal. Swami Vivekananda understands that all the secret of success is there; that is not to show interest in the result whether one arrives at the goal or not but to strive achieving it. Therefore, Swami Vivekananda points out that one has to move forward towards the goal and one should not be affected even if the person achieves the goal or not. The person has to get prepared mentally that both success and failure is same and yet he has to try to complete the task; this is the secret of life which is learnt from Ramakrishna Paramahansa by Swami Vivekananda.

Then the next question comes to his mind, what is the great fault among us in achieving the success of life. We have our great defect in life; we are completely attracted towards the goal because we are very much concerned about the ideal (the best performance or achievement). The goal which we aim at is very attractive and gives delight to one's mind, so we give more importance to get success in attaining the ideal; we give more space in our mind to think always about attaining the goal;

when we are fully focussed on our aim and concerned about the ideal we fail to notice the other important details. Swami Vivekananda means that we are fully focussed on achieving our ideal and we do not pay attention to the other details which are actually more important and he explains the drawback of our failure to notice those details which lead us in trouble at the end and which may cause failure in life too.

Swami Vivekananda finds out the reason behind one's failure; the reason is one's inattentiveness towards the means. 'Means' here refers to a thing that acts to produce particular effect or achieve an end. Thus, means is the ultimate thing for procuring result of an action. If we fail in our attempt to achieve our desired goal, it must be our failure in not paying attention to the means. Swami Vivekananda clearly mentions that ninety-nine per cent of cases of failure occur only when one fails to pay attention to the means. To avoid failure, he suggests that one has to focus more on finishing and strengthening the means. If the means is perfect, then the end or achievement of the goal is successful.

Swami Vivekananda insists that one should not forget that cause produces the effect; if one strives to attain the goal, it is because of the cause (action or actions performed to arrive at the end), and so the effect (end or result) is achieved; the effect cannot come on its own without the cause. Therefore, the cause is to be focused to get the perfect effect at the end and one has to ensure the exact, proper and powerful cause to produce the effect.

Swami Vivekananda emphasises that the secret of life lies in paying attention to the means. First, the ideal (goal) has to be chosen, and then the means have to be determined which may almost push one towards the ideal. If the means are perfect and everything becomes perfect to reach the ideal. If there is the cause of an action then there is no difficulty about the effect so if one is sure about the means, then attaining the ideal is easy. If one takes care of the cause, the effect (result/outcome) will be achieved inevitably. Hence, the realization of the ideal is the effect. The means and the cause is one and same and if one gives attention to the means, achievement is definite and therefore paying attention to the means is the great secret of life.

Swami Vivekananda provides the *Bagavad Gita* as a reference text to understand this secret of life. *The Bhagavad Gita* is otherwise called as *The Shrimad*

*Bhagavad Gita*, which means “The Song by God”. It is also shortly referred to as the *Gita*. It is a seven hundred verse of Hindu scripture and is widely accepted as one of the religious texts of the Hindus. This text is written by Vyasa in Sanskrit and it is part of the epic *Mahabharata* written by the same author. This scripture is believed to be written between 1000 BC and 1 BC. The epic *Mahabharata* has a dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna at the Kurukshetra Warfront, and the dialogue delivers an insightful thought that elaborates on a variety of philosophical concepts such as human ethical dilemmas, philosophical issues and life’s choices; so the text is sometimes considered as a philosophical one than the religious one. Many critics agree that the *Gita* is structured to apply to all situations in our life which actually helps one to find one’s self-identity. The main topics discussed in the *Gita* are Isvara (God), Jiva (living entity), Prakriti (Material Nature), Kala (Time) and Karma (Action). The *Gita* says that a person with free mind with no attachment or desire attains the supreme perfection of freedom from Karma through renunciation. Based on this concept, Swami Vivekananda connects his ideas using the *Gita* as a reference text.

Swami Vivekananda, thus, refers to the *Gita* that we have to work constantly with all our energy and have to work whole heartedly with full concentration and without bothering the importance of the work or the requirement of the work; but we have to work for it. Even if one is doing it fully focused, one should not personally get connected to the work; one has to detach oneself from the work. This statement appears to be contrary; yet he further explains that one must work with dedication, yet if the work is stopped at any time, one should not be disturbed by that. Actually, it is a difficult task for a human mind because one does the work with dedication, only if one gets attached to the work, but he advises that one has to work with dedication but it has to be done with detachment. If the work is disturbed or failed at the end, the person has to take it lightly and the consequence of the work should not affect the person.

Swami Vivekananda finds out the reason behind the greatest cause of one’s sorrow. As well, he admits that it is difficult for anyone to give up the work so easily after one’s failure. This can be found if anyone’s life is examined carefully. For instance, someone must have worked hard and that person might not be tired of the hard work, but if one comes to know about his failure after his hard work, definitely

he becomes tired and gets hurt. Swami Vivekananda also emphasises the same that one can face failure and yet we cannot give up the work so easily. The failure or the discontinuation of a work hurts the doer and it brings misery to the same only because the person is attached to the work and it is difficult for the person to get away from it. Therefore, one's attachment to the work is dangerous than a failure.

Swami Vivekananda further explains this using an example. He compares the human being getting attached to one's work using a honey bee. The bee goes to sip the honey from a honey-pot and when its feet get stuck with the honey-pot it cannot get away. Again and again, the honey bee tries to get away from the problem (the honey-pot) but it's getting stuck stronger. The same situation happens in our life, if we are worried about the failure and if we are attached to the problem. The honey bee is getting its feet stuck in the honey; it is this attachment we have on our work. We should not stick our feet like the honey bee. One has to be careful to drink the honey without being one's feet gets stuck. One should not attach oneself to the work but to do the work; the honey bee has to drink the honey from the honey-pot without getting stuck there.

Swami Vivekananda continues the same by linking the idea of our existence in this world. Repeatedly, the human beings are stuck in certain situation and become the victims of all the sufferings after hard work. The whole secret of existence is that the human beings are slipped into the trap and getting stuck there like the honey bee. They have come to taste honey but they are caught in it; similarly, the human beings have come to take up something but are trapped. They have planned to enjoy something but they are being enjoyed because they are caught in the trap.

Swami Vivekananda, further, develops the idea using a postcolonial setting by comparing the colonized as the honey bee. The colonized were the rulers of the past, but they were caught into the trap and were being ruled by the colonizers. They had come to work but they were being worked by the rulers. Here, Swami Vivekananda generalises his comments about the rulers, that in all the periods the rulers have been trying to rule the state but unfortunately have been ruled by the others in turns. This huge concept is commonly found in all minute details of work of a common individual too. Any person's life may have this concept of getting stuck into the problem, though the person does not want to get stuck there but to complete



the task. Instead of completing the task, one gets stuck there with added worries and miseries.

Swami Vivekananda talks about colonization of one's mind too. The ruler as well as the ruled play the mind game. The person is being worked upon by the other minds; it can be a ruler or a colonizer or anybody. Therefore, the person is always struggling to work on the other minds. The aim of the person is to enjoy the pleasure of life but he becomes the loser because his energy is fully drained by the other person.

Swami Vivekananda also talks about our relationship with Nature in this context. We want to get everything from nature by draining the resources of our environment. However, after a while we realise that nature is taking everything from us and we become the loser at the end point though the process happens after a long run; thus, nature depletes and destroys us as well as remove us and places separately from the world. We want to enjoy the pleasure of life, yet, contrarily, we lose the vitals of life and so get into the miseries of life. Swami Vivekananda thus suggests that one's life can be like sunshine if there are no worries in one's mind. If one has no attachment in his work, then his life will be like sunshine. He advises us not to bother about the result even if it is a failure one or a success one. If we are not trapped into the cause of the action then we are successful. Therefore, success lies in one's detachment and if we are not caught into the work.

Swami Vivekananda assures that one of the causes of misery is that we are getting attached to the work and trapped into it. He again sights from the *Gita* that "one has to work, but one should not be attached to it or should not be caught. One has to learn to detach oneself from everything in life and has to strictly follow this throughout one's life; even if the thing that you have been attached with is very near to your heart and even if your heart crazily wants it, even if you feel the most hurt sensation on the earth on leaving it, one has to be confident and stand by oneself to detach it away and to get away from one's life-long misery. He does not encourage everyone to stop any work, but he says that if the work is discontinued in the middle no one should feel hurt about it. For this sake, one has to detach from the work or the thing which one has been attached to and Swami Vivekananda stresses that one needs to be stronger for the detachment.

Then, Swami Vivekananda talks about people who may feel difficult about detaching themselves from the work in which they are working hard. He calls them as weak and he rejects them saying that the weak have no place on the world, let it be in this life or in the other world. He accuses weakness because it will turn everyone into slaves and at the same time, it will lead to all kinds of physical and mental agony. Weakness also kills us; a slow death is attained by such weakness.

Swami Vivekananda substantiates how weakness becomes the reason for one's death using an interesting example. He picks up a lively simple example for better understanding of the concept. Usually, there exists hundreds and thousands of microbes around us and these microbes always try to attack the immune system of the organisms living on the earth. These microbes, thus, try to attack the humans to generate many diseases and simultaneously it tries to destroy the physical body. Even though they try to attack our body, these microbes cannot succeed in its attempt all the time; only some microbes are harmful to our body. The reason behind this miracle is that the body which is weaker readily accepts the function of the microbe and is affected by the disease. Once the human body becomes weaker, the microbe makes its entry easier and affects the immune system by generating cells that produce disease on one's body. Therefore, if the body is ready to receive the disease with weaker immunity, then the body is inviting the disease too; and so the weak body is the reason for the disease but not the microbes which are always present around us.

Using this example, Swami Vivekananda guides the human mind that one should not mind the million microbes that float around us; he means sorrows and miseries are the microbes of human minds. If one's mind is strong and powerful to face it, these miseries and sorrows cannot disturb us or weaken our minds. This is the ultimate fact: one's mental strength gives one's life and one's mental weakness takes away one's life. Therefore, strength gives success and exists all the time whereas, weakness gives us death and one has to immune one's soul and mind with stronger ideas.

Swami Vivekananda, again, touches upon the term 'attachment' as it affects us the most. He claims that attachments become the source of all our pleasures. For instance, we are attached to our friends and relatives; and we are also attached to our intellectual and spiritual works; and we are also attached to external objects, which

give pleasure to us. He insists that these attachments also have to be detached because only with these connections we are facing misery in our life. If one wants to enjoy one's life the most, then one has to detach from everything or everybody. It is not so easy to go for any detachment. For instance, if one loves a person, let it be a parent or partner, it is not so easy to detach the relationship and walk out of it. It is a relationship of emotionally and mentally connected one. To detach oneself from such relationship one needs stronger will power and if that detachment is done willingly, then there is no misery.

Swami Vivekananda recommends that the man has to learn the art of both – the attachment and the detachment – if he has learnt the power of attaching himself to a thing with complete dedication, he also should possess the power of detaching himself with same energy and dedication. The difficulty lies in balancing both the acts, power of attachment should be equal to that of power of detachment.

There are some men who are never attracted by anything and so they are never attached to anything in their life. These men can never love anyone because they are stony hearted and have no feelings for anyone. These men do not face any problem as they are not attached to anything. They escape from the miseries of life. Though Swami Vivekananda seems to talk positively about these men, yet he compares them as walls. The man who never loves, whose heart is stony escapes the most miseries of life and so escapes the joys of life too. The walls have no emotions; they are not bound to anyone; they do not love anyone; they are not hurt by anything, so the walls will never face misery. Therefore, he compares the men without emotions or not attached to anything as the walls.

Consequently, Swami Vivekananda suggests that instead of being like a wall, one can get attached or caught into something. The reason is the man who remains like a wall, who has no emotions, of course, escapes from the miseries of life, yet he misses his happiness too; he misses the joy of life too. Swami Vivekananda accuses that being stony hearted and not after emotions means the person is in a callous state, and he does not want that state. He explains that it is the weakness of a man and is equivalent to one's death. A man should not be like lifeless thing and to remain undisturbed by anything for any reason. A soul of such emotional free man cannot

be awakened and it never feels weakness, it never feels misery too. Swami Vivekananda rejects such men because they symbolise cruelty and unsympathetic.

Contrarily, Swami Vivekananda mentions that the mighty power of love is needed; the mighty power of attachment is needed. He explains that the attachment should be like one has to be more powerful to throw our whole soul upon a single object, then getting lost in the object and getting lost ourselves completely. He compares this as a divinely quality: to love something or someone and getting attached to something is the godly power. The men are greedy that they want to be more powerful than the gods. Their greediness can be achieved; the men can be more powerful than the gods once they learn to get their souls attached at one point of love and learn to get unattached from it. He also gives answer to the question of how getting attached to something and get detached from the same. He explains it as a secret to be learned.

To establish the same idea, Swami Vivekananda cites another example using a beggar. He explains why the beggar never attains happiness or satisfaction in his life. The beggar gets his alms or food out of someone's pity and at times, he gets someone's scorn; or at least those who offer food or alms to him may think that the beggar is a low object, a subordinate person. In that case, the beggar may not be really happy to get the alms that he has been begging. Swami Vivekananda, then, compares the beggars with the human beings who are never satisfied at all; who are not happy at all. We are all beggars according to Swami Vivekananda. We expect something in return: we expect something after we offer something to someone. We behave like traders and so we all are traders, who are selling deeds to buy deeds. Like, the beggars and traders, we always expect something in return but we are not all satisfied with what we have received. In life, we behave as traders with our expectations and dissatisfaction and we are traders in virtue and in religion too. In addition, unfortunately, we behave as traders in love relationship too; we lose the value of human emotions and empathy for others and we remain as traders in love. Swami Vivekananda worries about the pathetic situation of human beings who fail to understand the value of emotions and they trade the emotions of others too.

Swami Vivekananda, also, explains the term 'trade'. The action of giving and taking with commercial purpose is linked to trading and here, he explains the term

in the same context but the term is not used as a commercial one. He explains that trading is all about buying and selling products and certain regulations are adapted to perform trading. For the traders, there is a bad time as well as good time; the bad time makes one to lose in the business and the good time brings someone fortune or profit in trading. There exists the revision of prices for the product of trading and it may rise and fall frequently and these changes are unexpected and so the loss to a trader can be a sudden blow to him.

Life is like the reflection on the mirror if we are caught into the misery of life. If we look at our face, it is reflected on the mirror. If our face shows grimace then we get the same reflection on the mirror. If you laugh at it, it will laugh at back and if you are sad, the mirror too will remain sad. The reflection on the mirror is compared to the trade; i.e. buying and selling is similar to giving and taking, like the mirror receives the image and gives back the same through its reflection.

Swami Vivekananda sarcastically comments that we are caught in the trap. The trap is made not just because we give but because we expect something in return; we expect the mirror to show a reflection that would satisfy us, we expect only the profits in trading. All these are expectations of our minds, which lead us easily into destructive life, the life which is full of misery. We love someone, we express our love to someone and the misery is due to our expectation that we have to be loved. This expectation is the culprit of our happiness. If we do not expect anything in return, then we do not suffer. Desire is the father of all misery; we cannot avoid this desire and that is why we are caught into the trap and suffer throughout our life. Need is the reason behind all our misery and this desire is bound by the laws of success and failure. It is not the result which brings misery into our life because both success and failure is one and same, it is the end of the project or task; but misery is brought into our life because we have expectations on someone or something. This want and this desire in one's mind will definitely bring misery to one's life even if someone gets succeeded in the committed task.

Swami Vivekananda reveals the great secret of true success and the method to achieve it. Once you achieve true success, it will give you true happiness. The secret is, therefore, the man who does not expect anything in return, who remains as an unselfish man becomes the most successful man. He agrees that there is a paradox

in the statement (a paradox is a statement that contradicts itself), because the unselfish man does not want or expect happiness or satisfaction in his life.

Now, Swami Vivekananda explains the paradox; how an unselfish man can get hurt too, though he is unattached from the worldly pleasures. He says that the unselfish man in life too gets cheated and simultaneously gets hurt. He cites an example from Christianity: Jesus Christ is an unselfish man, yet he has been crucified and so he is hurt by his own people. Yet Swami Vivekananda justifies that just because of unselfish nature of Jesus Christ, a great victory has been achieved. Christ's victory is that the millions and millions of lives received the blessings for true success because Christ has remained unselfish. Therefore the paradox is that if an unselfish man gets hurt it is not because of his attachment for his desire sake but for the welfare of the others and so even if he is hurt in his attempts, the benefit goes to the others; therefore, the man becomes really a successful one and so Christ also can be considered as a successful man even if he has been hurt.

Swami Vivekananda insists that we should not ask anything in favour and at the same time, we should not expect or receive anything in return for our deeds. We can give others whatever we can give; in return, we may get back the same, but we should not wait for it or expect it. If we have given something, we will get the same multiplied a thousand-fold but we should not be keen on that. We have all the rights to give away things and the action ends there; we should not wait for something to get in turn. He advises that the whole meaning in life is to give away something and so to learn the art of giving. Moreover, nature will force us to give and so giving can be done voluntarily and whole heartedly.

The thing which we possess may not belong to us after sometime or then; in that case, it is better to give it to someone willingly. In our life, we try to gather many things and to possess them with clenched hands. This means we are greedy to get as many things as possible to keep under our possession and we think that we may carry those things ever. We forget that nature may compel us to leave our possession one day and violently takes away all our possessions even if you do not want to give. On that occasion, unwillingly we may give up things and those things may be taken up by the others. So, Swami Vivekananda advises it is good if we give up things voluntarily for others, instead of, losing things once we become out of control. We

need not wait for the pressure given by nature or to give up our possessed things for others, but we can train our mind to leave those things for the others and it can be done willingly.

Swami Vivekananda elaborates how we suffer when we are not ready to give up things even when we get chance to give up. If we express our unwillingness to give up things, then the blow comes from nature and we get hurt by the blow. In the long run of our life, we are forced to give up everything. No one is specific to compel us to give up our things, but we have to give up at the end compulsively. If we give up voluntarily, we do not get hurt; if we give up our possession out of compulsion, then we get hurt; if we give up things forcibly after a long struggle of defence, then we are in the more miserable situation. Therefore, it is always better to give up things happily. We are not ready to give up things easily because we do not understand the concept of nature and we do not understand how miserable it would be if we want to possess things.

Swami Vivekananda explains the concept of giving and taking using another example. He says if the forest is gone, we suffer because we get heat in return. We possess things and when it is forcibly taken away by the cut-down trees, we are in misery like the heat radiation of the tree-fell forest. He further explains, with an example, how useful it is if we adopt the concept of giving and taking. He explains the water cycle in our environment: the sun is taking up water from the ocean and in turn, it returns the same as rains. He compares that the man has to be like the sun and so we have to take things just to give up. We are machines and we are here for taking and the action taking has to happen only for giving; so our role is to take and give. Therefore, Swami Vivekananda, again, insists us not to ask anything in return for what we give and at the same time, he assures that we will get more than what we give.

If someone empties the air out of a room quickly, then the external air is filled up immediately and in case if the doors and the other openings of the room are closed, then there is no chance of getting anything from the outside world. The thing inside the room will stagnate; it gets degenerated and turns out to be poisonous. Swami Vivekananda compares this using a river: the river is continuously emptying itself into the ocean and is getting filled up again and again. So the river is always giving

and consequently, is always getting. Suppose, if the exit point to the ocean of the river is closed, it gets stagnate and turns out to be more dangerous. Similarly, if we stop seizing the act of giving we are getting ready to face a terrible death.

Thus, one should not be like a beggar, taking things and not satisfied all the time; but one has to be attached as well as detached. This is the most terrible task of life according to Swami Vivekananda. He further suggests that one should not count the dangers on the path. If someone is intellectual and recognise the difficulties of the path, one should not conclude about the difficulties, until he faces it literally because things may vary once we get into the situation. Swami Vivekananda explains this using an example: if we look at a park from a distance, we may get a general view of the park but we may not know anything in particular about the park and we will know about the park only if we are literally inside the park and have a closer look at everything inside the park. Therefore, even if all our attempts towards a goal fail, even when we are hurt and worry due to our failures, we have to make our mind steady; and we must proclaim our Almighty, the God in all our difficulties.

Next, Swami Vivekananda talks about the temptations made to commit a crime and he describes how a mature and calm mind can control them. He says nature wants us to react: if we are hurt, we try to hurt back and if we are cheated, we try to cheat someone and if we are told a lie, we try to be liars and if we are hit we too try to hit someone back and this revenge upon someone is done with all our collective strength. He says that an ordinary man cannot control such temptations of revenge but an extraordinary man with a super-divine power will not revenge; he will not hit back, if he is attacked and he knows how to keep control and has learnt the tactics of remaining unattached. Therefore, Swami Vivekananda calls the man with control of detachment as a divine person who actually has control over his mind.

We, daily, regain our strength to get detached from everything. We look back and look at the past objects of our love and attachment, and then realise that those objects made us miserable. Swami Vivekananda accuses 'love' as the main offender of our misery. This love relationship with a person or an object makes our condition worse because it makes us into slaves in the hands of others and we are dragged down to the death end. After we realise the culprit, we make a fresh determination that we will remain as our own master and will have control over ourselves.



However, when time comes we repeat our mistakes and we are caught in the clutches of relationship or attachment and we cannot escape from misery of life but to suffer throughout repeatedly. Thus, our soul gets arrested and we cannot get out of it. Swami Vivekananda compares this critical situation to that of a bird which is caught in a net and is struggling and fluttering the wings to get freed itself. Similarly, we take oaths to get detached from our longing, desire and love, yet we are caught in the net again and again and we become the victims of sufferings. He philosophises that this is life, which always provides pathetic situations; and we are getting caught in the life struggle knowingly and unknowingly but cannot get away from our misery.

Swami Vivekananda then points out how the human beings take it up, the failure and misery in their life. There are difficulties in handling the situation which means all of the men cannot be super-divine to take up everything in a controlled manner; all of us cannot keep quiet if we are hurt. Swami Vivekananda says that ninety per cent of us become discouraged to keep control of the situation and so we lose our heart and we become pessimists and hopeless; and we do not believe in grand and noble acts of sincerity or love. Hence, we find the men who experience the freshness of their lives have been controlling their minds by forgiving the mistakes, being kind towards others, being simple and straightforward.

Swami Vivekananda addresses the men who are complicating their minds with different failures. Their minds are filled with a mass of complexity and that may be due to their acceptance of external policy. These men are not quarrelsome and do not speak at all. Swami Vivekananda suggests that they can at least speak out their aversion or hatred. These men are hot-headed; they cannot be easily provoked and so they do not speak. He blames them that they are dead because their hearts are dead and so they do not speak. They do not become angry and they do not curse; but he prefers them to become angry and to curse because it is thousand times better than being an introvert. They cannot suddenly become an extrovert because they are heartless and their hearts are seized upon for cold hands and so they cannot use harsh words or curse others. Yet, Swami Vivekananda advises them to speak and it is better for them to speak out.

Swami Vivekananda again brings out the concept of super-divine power; man has to be godly by possessing certain features which will evade away the above

mentioned qualities of certain men. He, further, establishes that superhuman power is not sufficient, when compared with super-divine power. The only solution to all these problems or human misery is to be strengthened by super-divine power. All the complications that are encountered and the showers of human miseries that remain disturbing humans can be avoided, only if they gain the power of super-divine. We may face numerous problems; our mind may be disturbed with numerous worries, our heart is torn apart, yet we have to grow nobler all the time. This is the only possibility i.e. one human soul turning into a super-divine; and this will reduce all the misery.

At the same time, Swami Vivekananda points out the difficulty of gaining the power of a super-divine; yet he suggests that we can overcome all the difficulties by constant practice. If something happens to us, we are responsible for the same. So we have to learn that nothing happens to us unless we give ourselves way to it. Then, he again refers to the previous example: the immune body does not get affected by any disease. The reason for not contracting the disease is not only because the germs are not powerful but because the sustainable immune power that the body has generated to defend the powerful germs. If our body is fit physically, then we may not get the germs activated in our body. Therefore, he instructs us to give up our pride and understand this, that misery is justified. Everyone deserves to face misery in life and the blow is deserved to us; it is our responsibility that we face misery because we deserve it. He says that we should know the reason behind our misery and he insists that we have to analyse misery which we have faced and we have to find the reason behind every blow that we have received and we have to understand that it is, we, the reasons behind all the causes. We take up half of the responsibility for our misery and the other half of the responsibility is done by the external world and that is how we receive the blow and get hurt.

Hence, Swami Vivekananda suggests that we can conclude as a sign of hope based on our analysis. We have to understand that we do not have any control over the external world, but we can control our internal mind which is responsible for half of our misery. The conflicts caused by our internal mind can be controlled and reduced. We can claim that our internal world is in our control. We have to make an oath that if the two ingredients are required to make our failure, let's control our inner mind which is contributing one of the ingredients for our failure and with one

ingredient of the outer world, the result, the failure will not happen. We have to be strong that we should not contribute the one from outside to receive the blow or to attain misery. Therefore, Swami Vivekananda assures that we will never face failure, if we are stubborn to make any contributions from our side.

Swami Vivekananda seeks out another excuse that is commonly given by us from our childhood; we excuse ourselves from the mistakes by blaming upon somebody else or something outside ourselves. We are ready to find fault with other people and never accept our mistakes. If we are miserable, then we put the blame on the other for our misery without understanding that the prime reason for our miserable situation is not the others but only we, ourselves. We go on cursing the world that it is a devil one which is the cause of our misery. We, further, curse the others and call them as fools instead of accepting the fact that we are the actual fools. We also find excuses saying that being part of the devil's world, we need to be devils too and we indulge in things which are terrible. We also blame that the people around us are selfish instead of realising that we too are selfish like those people. Even if we are right that the other people are selfish, why are we found among them and if we are better than those 'selfish' people why do we mingle with them. Swami Vivekananda insists that we have to think about this situation, why we are being part of the same world which we call as devil's world and why we are being part of the community which we call as 'selfish' community.

Swami Vivekananda delivers the answer that we get only what we deserve. When we blame the world as a devil's one, it is a lie; if we call the world as a bad one and only we are good, then it is again a lie. It is not possible if we are one among the liars and be a truthful person and we are telling terrible lies to ourselves.

Therefore, Swami Vivekananda teaches his first lesson to be learned by us. We have to be mentally strong not to blame others or curse anyone outside. We have behaved like a man and we have to be confident and strong so that we can stand up and lay the blame on ourselves. He strongly emphasises that it is actually the truth which we will arrive at the end. Thus, Swami Vivekananda insists that we have to get hold of ourselves.

Swami Vivekananda questions if we are hurt by a small thing from the external world, why do we feel shame about it. We talk about our manhood; we

follow the traits of super-divine; we believe that we know everything; we believe that we should not be blamed for the errors; we believe that we do not err; we claim that we are the most unselfish people in the world, yet if we show our anger towards someone or something for a little mistake, then we should be ashamed of ourselves. Once, we attain nobility by following certain principles, we should not lose our nobility on someone's mistake. We need to be stronger if someone tries to hurt us. If we react to that, we lose our nobility too; and simultaneously we cannot be a super-divine, but a common man like the others in the world. No common man on the streets can trigger the noble person within us. We cannot blame the world yet. He also questions whether God, who is the purest and the noblest of souls, can be made miserable by such small tricks of the outer world. If we are triggered and if we react to it, then we lose divinity and so we cannot be noble too. We become God, only if we are unselfish even if a problem is made to hurt us.

Swami Vivekananda then questions which world can hurt us. He then refers to the 'seventh hell' in his text, which is actually a reference taken from the text *Inferno*, written by an Italian poet, writer and philosopher, Dante. Dante's *Divine Comedy* is considered as an important text during the Middle Ages. *Inferno* is the first part of his major poetical work *Divine Comedy*. In *Inferno*, Dante talks about his journey through the hell, who is guided by the Roman poet Virgil. In the poem, the Hell is located within the Earth with nine concentric circles of torment. Actually it represents the journey of the soul towards God, where describing the recognition and rejection of sin happens. The journey is through all the nine circles and the 'seventh hell' which is referred by Swami Vivekananda is the Hell of Violence, where the souls are given punishment according to the sin which they have committed. On the seventh hell, those who have committed violence against the neighbours, violence against the self and violence against the God are punished. Swami Vivekananda, thus, explains if we have not hurt anyone we may not be harmed when we go through the other world, especially when we cross the seventh hell we may not be given any punishment.

Otherwise, if we blame the external world for the mistakes that we have done then it reflects that we are not noble and we have to be blamed for everything and on the other world we may face punishment for our sins. Therefore, we are responsible for offending ourselves and adding our misery; actually, we think that the eternal

world hurts us and cries out that we are in the devil's world, and we curse that some man hurts us, contrarily, it is we who hurt the others and it is we to be blamed for the errors. Already, we have misery added to our account and by putting blame on the others, we are adding our own misery; we are not trying to solve or to get away from our misery but are aggravating it through our lies.

Therefore, Swami Vivekananda concludes his arguments that we have to take care of ourselves as much as possible and we should not spend our valid time by attending to others or finding fault with others. He assures again that the means is important for the cause so we need to focus more on the means, so that the action can end on its own. Let us put efforts and we should not be bothered about the end, even if it is going to be a success or a failure. The external world can be pure and noble only if we are good and pure. The result or the effect stays in the external world and we are responsible only for the means. Hence we have to purify our thoughts and souls to make the world upright and for this we need to make ourselves perfect in every way.

#### **2.1.4 Questions:**

1. What is the secret learnt by Vivekananda from his guru?
2. What are the defects of human beings according to Swami Vivekananda?
3. What is attachment and detachment which Vivekananda talks about?
4. Why is honey bee compared to human being?
5. Why Vivekananda is unhappy with those who remain like a wall?
6. What is the cause of misery?
7. What is 'mighty power' according to Vivekananda?
8. Why human beings are compared to machines?
9. What does Swami Vivekananda explain using 'water cycle'?

#### **2.1.5 References:**

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## **2.2. My Vision for India - A.P.J. Abdul Kalam**

### **2.2.1 A.P.J. Abdul Kalam – Bio-Note**

Abdul Kalam (Avul Pakir Jainulabdeen Abdul Kalam) was an aerospace scientist who was born in 1931 in Ramaswaram, the then Madras Presidency in British India. Abdul Kalam studied in a primary school upto fifth standard in Rameshwaram; then he joined Schwartz Higher Secondary School in Ramanathapuram. Later, he joined Under Graduation in Physics at St. Joseph's College, Trichy and he completed his M.Tech. in Aerospace Engineering at Madras Institute of Technology.

Abdul Kalam joined the Aeronautical Development Establishment of the Defence Research and Development Organisation (by Press Information Bureau, Government of India) as a scientist after becoming a member of the Defence Research & Development Service (DRDS). He started his career by designing a small hovercraft, but remained unconvinced by his choice of job at DRDO.

Kalam was also part of the INCOSPAR committee working under Vikram Sarabhai, the renowned space scientist. In 1969, Kalam was transferred to the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) where he was the project director of India's first Satellite Launch Vehicle (SLV-III) which successfully deployed the Rohini satellite in near-earth orbit in July 1980; Kalam had first started work on an expandable rocket project independently at DRDO in 1965. In 1969, Kalam received the government's approval and expanded the programme to include more engineers. He was involved in India's civilian space programme and military missile development efforts. He was thus fondly called as the Missile Man of India for his work on the development of ballistic missile and launch vehicle technology. He played a major role both technically and politically in India's Pokhran-II nuclear tests in 1998. Kalam played a major part in developing many missiles under the mission including Agni, an intermediate range ballistic missile and Prithvi, the tactical surface-to-surface missile.

Abdul Kalam was the eleventh President of India during 2002 – 2007. Atal Bihari Vajpayee, the then Prime Minister of India nominated Abdul Kalam for the President post. He was called as the "People's President" and he was one of the

Presidents who was elected both by the ruling party as well as the opposition party. He returned to his civilian life of education, writing and public service during and after his tenure as the President of India. He was honoured with several prestigious awards, including the Bharat Ratna, India's highest civilian honour in 1997. The Government of India honoured him with the Padma Bhushan in 1981 and the Padma Vibhushan in 1990 for his work with ISRO and DRDO and for his role as a scientific advisor to the Government.

After his tenure as the President of India, he became a visiting Professor at the Indian Institute of Management, Shillong, the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad, and the Indian Institute of Management, Indore. Apart from that he served different roles at various academic institutions such as an honorary fellow of Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, a chancellor of the Indian Institute of Space Science and Technology Thiruvananthapuram, a Professor of Aerospace Engineering at Anna University and an adjunct at many other academic and research institutions across India. He taught Information Technology at the International Institute of Information Technology, Hyderabad, and Technology at Banaras Hindu University and Anna University.

Abdul Kalam wrote many books related to science and technology as well as motivational books to inspire the youth of India. His books and speeches were powerful to inspire the youngsters to boost them for constructing a developed Indian nation. Some of his books are: *Developments in Fluid Mechanics and Space Technology*, *India 2020: A Vision for the New Millennium*, *Wings of Fire: An Autobiography*, *Ignited Minds: Unleashing the Power Within India*, *The Luminous Sparks*, *Mission India*, *Inspiring Thoughts*, *Indomitable Spirit*, *Envisioning an Empowered Nation*, *You Are Born To Blossom: Take My Journey Beyond*, *Turning Points: A Journey through Challenges*, *Target 3 Billion*, *My Journey: Transforming Dreams into Actions*, *A Manifesto for Change: A Sequel to India 2020*, *Forge your Future: Candid, Forthright, Inspiring*, *Reignited: Scientific Pathways to a Brighter Future*, *Transcendence: My Spiritual Experiences with Pramukh Swamiji* and *Advantage India: From Challenge to Opportunity*.

Abdul Kalam died in 2015 at the age of eighty-three, when he was addressing a group of academicians in Shillong, Meghalaya, India; while delivering the lecture,



he collapsed and died from an apparent cardiac arrest. After his death, his body was buried in his birthplace Rameshwaram as it was his last wish.

Abdul Kalam was a great human being, committed leader and unparalleled statesman. His message for the youth of India filled them with new confidence. He appealed to all Indians to adopt the following words: “I can do it”.

### **2.2.2 My Vision for India – Short Summary**

In the essay “My Vision for India”, Abdul Kalam envisages his dream that India will become a developed nation and he lists out that the three visions for India that he had in his mind. This essay is the transcription of his lecture addressed to the academicians of IIT Hyderabad on 25th May 2011.

Before talking about the three visions, the essay discusses the historical background of India too. This is discussed to understand the position of India back to ages. India was invaded by various country people such as the Greeks, the Turks, the Moguls, the Portuguese, the British, the French and the Dutch; in fact the Great Alexander too had his role to conquer parts of India. All these people captured the lands of India and conquered the minds of the Indians. With this historical background, Abdul Kalam suggests three visions to push India into a developed nation.

The three visions of Abdul Kalam are Freedom, Development and Stand Up. Abdul Kalam praised the Indians that the Indians did not do the entire above mentioned colonizer’s activities on the other nations. He indirectly pointed out that the Indians were colonized by the British and the other invaders of India.

The invaders of India colonized the natives, the Indians; they captured parts of India and ruled over the Indians, they snatched the lands of the Indians. They changed the culture and history of India with their respective influences. The invaders enforced their way of life on the Indians; especially, the British who ruled India the latest of the invaders had created a great impact on the lives of the Indians. They enforced their way of life on the Indians and even now the Indians can be found following some traits of the invaders in every aspect of their life. This fringed freedom of the Indians and so Abdul Kalam wanted to have “free” India and had considered Freedom as the first vision for the development of India.

Without freedom, a nation cannot achieve anything, and to push the nation towards its developing path Abdul Kalam wanted 'freedom' as one of the vision. He also mentioned that the Indians never invaded others because the Indians respected freedom of the others. He, thus, insulted the invaders of India that they did not concern about the welfare of the Indians but were selfish to occupy India and ruled over the Indians just to take away the wealth of India and to enslave the Indians. Instead of blaming the invaders, Abdul Kalam was gently pointing out that the Indians were good that they respected freedom of the others and so did not colonize the other countries.

These are the reasons that Abdul Kalam wanted to include FREEDOM as his first vision of his three visions. He recalled that India had got its first vision of Freedom in 1857, the year in which the first war of Independence was fought against the British. The Indian Rebellion of 1857 was a major uprising in India against the British rule, which functioned as the British East India Company as an autonomous authority on behalf of the British Kingdom. Abdul Kalam referred to the rebellion which began on 10th May 1857 in the label of a Mutiny of Sepoys of the Company's army in the garrison town of Meerut (near Delhi). Actually the First War of Independence triggered the Indians to fight for their freedom and the series of wars and protests at various places in India became one of the reasons for the Indian Independence in 1947. Abdul Kalam had his first vision as Freedom because he believed that no Indian would be respected without freedom.

Abdul Kalam's second vision for India is to make India a developed nation and so he stresses upon DEVELOPMENT of India. After India's Independence and the World Wars, India had been a developing nation for fifty years. Kalam is disappointed to see the status of India, being a developing nation instead of a developed nation. Though, more than fifty years had been spent, at least now, the Indians must think about making India, a Developed Nation.

Then, Abdul Kalam compares the GDP rating of India with the other countries. Germany is in the fourth place and India is in the fifth place. Since India is one among the top five nations in GDP rating, it shows that the economy of India is excellent. Using this statistics, Abdul Kalam assured that India would become a developed nation. While mentioning that India stood fifth place in GDP rating across

the world, he pointed out that we had ten per cent growth rate in most areas. He also noticed that the poverty levels of India were falling as there was steady progress in economy. Abdul Kalam found the reason behind India not being recognised as a developed nation; the Indians lacked self-confidence to see themselves as a citizen of an economically developed nation. According to Abdul Kalam, the Indians were already part of an economically developed nation, but they failed to accept it because they did not believe in themselves. So, he blamed the Indians for lacking self-confidence to accept that they were part of the economically developed nation, self-reliant and self-assured nation. But he implied that growth in economy was a good sign of development and it can be used to progress further and to make India the developed nation soon.

The next vision of Abdul Kalam was that India must stand up to the world. This was the last vision of his three visions to view India as a developed nation in the new millennium. He believed that no one would respect the Indians, unless India stood up to the world. If the Indians were free and stood stronger among the other developed nations of the world, definitely, the stronger nations would respect India too. Abdul Kalam believed that strength must be built upon the economy of the nation. However, Abdul Kalam pointed out that an economic power was the real strength of the nation. Therefore, he wanted India to stand stronger along with the other nations.

Abdul Kalam felt that the years he worked in ISRO played a very important role in his life as a scientist. After his service in ISRO, as a scientist, Abdul Kalam joined DRDO (Defence Research and Development Organisation) and he got a chance to be the part of India's guided missile program. Abdul Kalam was working on a new mission and he considered it was his second bliss when he launched the mission Agni in 1994. Abdul Kalam was thrilled to work with his team when the Department of Atomic Energy and Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) together attempted the nuclear tests in partnership. He also added that it was the joy of participating with his team in those nuclear tests and it made him proud too because that proved the world that India too can make it. Earlier, India had no such powerful weapons during the attack; it depended on the other nations and those nuclear tests proved that India too can make their own missiles for defence purpose during war crisis. This made Abdul Kalam very proud for being an

Indian. He had then developed for Agni missile a new structure of material which was very light and the light material was called carbon-carbon.

The same material, carbon-carbon was used for another purpose and Abdul Kalam was delighted that his lightweight material was used for a noble cause. When he lifted the new material carbon-carbon, a surgeon and the friend of Abdul Kalam found it so light and he took Abdul Kalam to his hospital and showed his patients to Abdul Kalam. Abdul Kalam met the little children with heavy metallic callipers (a metal support used for weak or injured legs) which weighed over three kilogram.

The surgeon requested Abdul Kalam to lessen the pain of his little patients. Abdul Kalam took three week and made the Floor reaction Orthosis 300-gram callipers and took them to the orthopaedic centre. This meant Abdul Kalam had reduced the weight of the calliper ten times lesser. Abdul Kalam observed the children were happy and did not believe their eyes. The parents of those children became emotional and Abdul Kalam considered that was his fourth bliss.

Then, Abdul Kalam mentioned about the importance of media in conveying and circulating messages to the public. Actually, Abdul Kalam was a little disappointed when he realised that the media had failed to perform its role. He questioned the media why the news stories were so negative about India. He also questioned why India was always portrayed in bad light in media when there were many strengths and achievements from our side. India was such a great nation and there were many amazing success stories but many Indians refused to acknowledge them. Abdul Kalam was surprised when these positive aspects of Indians were not registered by media, which was prime mediator between the administration and public. India had the highest level of milk production and consumption of all countries. Abdul Kalam was proud to mention that our advanced earth observation satellites like Cartosat-3 had the 'sharpest eye' (wider spatial range or view) of civil remote sensing satellites in the world. Abdul Kalam mentioned that India was the second largest producer of wheat. Similarly, India was the second largest producer of rice next to China. India was the world's largest export in rice. That was a great achievement of India which showed India's stance of food production. Therefore, Abdul Kalam requested the media to report such positive news on India. Abdul Kalam requested the Indian media to take this story as an inspirational one.

Abdul Kalam compared the representation done by media in Israel and in India. The media in Israel focused on inspirational news on the front pages and the sensational news were published towards the last pages. Abdul Kalam, as a pan-Indian, questioned why the Indians were very much passionate towards foreign things. The Indians were madly after foreign products such as TVs and dresses; he could not tolerate that the Indians were fond of imported things than the products made in India. He showed his disagreement for the Indians showing interest in foreign products because he blamed that the Indians did not realize that self-respect was gained with self-reliance. Abdul Kalam meant that, as Indians, we should not depend on the others and if we need any respect from the others we should make and use our own products.

When Abdul Kalam was in Hyderabad, while he was giving the lecture, a 14 year old girl asked him for his autograph. When Abdul Kalam asked the girl about her goal in life, he was surprised to get a unique response from her. The young girl replied that she wanted to live in a developed India. Abdul Kalam, therefore, motivated everyone to build a developed nation, Developed India, for the girl's sake at least. Anyhow, he justified that India was not an under-developed nation, but a highly developed nation.

Abdul Kalam challenged the audience, whether they could spare ten minutes. He was not compelling anyone to work for the development of the nation, but he tried his level best to motivate everyone as a responsible citizen of India and to work for the nation with involvement.

Abdul Kalam, then, pointed out how the media projected India and its administrative system in bad light. The media and the people in India focused on the government's inefficiency in a negative manner. The next accusation against India was that the servants of India failed to perform their duties. There were sarcastic comments that the phones in India did not work properly. All these accusations were made just to prove that India was the worst country with worst administration and without any responsibility. There was another charge that India had been fed to dogs and was the absolute pits. Abdul Kalam was obsessed with these accusations and he was irritated when these accusations were kept going on and on without an end. Actually, Abdul Kalam was against such accusations as he rightly pointed out that

there were many positive aspects that we can pick up from the Indians, instead of blaming on the mistakes of a few Indians. He meant that a group of Indians cannot represent the Indians altogether, so we must stop accusing on someone, even if they did not perform their duties.

Abdul Kalam questioned these people who were accusing India and its governing system: he asked them what their contributions to India were. To those, Abdul Kalam put forward a real challenge. The challenge was that if the person travel led to Singapore, how he reacted in Singapore airport and in India. Suppose, if a man travelled from India to Singapore, while leaving the airport of Singapore he might feel that he walked out of the best airport in the world. The citizen should take up the responsibility.

Abdul Kalam questioned the person who always blamed India as a worst nation, whether he would disobey the rules in Singapore. He cannot because, he had to obey the rules in Singapore and the same person neglect the rules in India. So he cannot blame India, but himself for not following rules and regulations properly in India. Abdul Kalam challenged whether anybody can eat in public during Ramadan, in Dubai. Then he blamed corruption in India; he says that the person who tempted the others to get their bribes needed to be blamed.

Abdul Kalam further challenged whether anybody would dare to speed beyond 55 mph (88 km/h) in Washington and then he mockingly mentioned that one cannot threaten the traffic police saying that he was an influential person or a person connected with politically powerful person. In India, some Indians failed to do their duties when someone did not follow traffic rules. In India, if someone with political influence or by paying bribe can easily overrule the traffic rules. If we Indians were not ready to be responsible like the men of other countries, then only we can be blamed for poor administrative system and political system in India.

Abdul Kalam added that some Indians were irresponsible in polluting the nation and blaming the governing system for not maintaining hygiene in India. Otherwise, in India, we can see people throw garbage anywhere on the streets and in public places without even regretting for their mistakes; The Indians cannot spit paan on the streets of Tokyo and the same Indians casually spit the same on the streets of India without any thought. We, the Indians, were after the fake certificates for job

and higher studies and the Indians appointed fake persons to write their own exams; yet we compared the foreign countries like Boston which never allowed any discrepancies in education system. We blamed the Indian system and yet we were responsible for the misused and mishandled administrative system in India. Abdul Kalam questioned why the Indians easily adopt and accept a foreign system in the other countries and they can respect the regulations followed in a foreign country. He irritably accused why the same Indian cannot adopt certain rules when implied in India. In India, they threw papers and cigarettes on the road as soon as they landed Indian ground. If the same person can be very much involved and remain as an appreciative citizen in a foreign country, how did he change all of a sudden; he changed into a normal Indian citizen when he came back to India. The one who maintained cleanliness in a foreign country was the same person who was willingly polluting India. It was taken for granted by them that nobody can question them in India; but Abdul Kalam was talking about an individual's responsibility. If everybody turned out to be a responsible person, the system would change. Therefore, Abdul Kalam insisted that the change should happen from our side and nobody can be blamed for it.

To explain the concept, Abdul Kalam cited an example, taken from an interview of the famous Ex-municipal Commissioner of Bombay, Sadashiv S. In the interview, Tinaikar angrily accused the rich Indians for polluting the public streets. These rich people were least bothered when the public places were polluted by them, but he became furious when the same people turned around and criticize the system and blame the authorities for not maintaining clean pavements. He ferociously questioned whether these rich people expected the officers to clean the shit of their dogs whenever the dogs polluted the public places. He rightly cited from the American system, how the dog owners cleaned up after their pets had polluted the public places. He asked whether the Indian dog owners cleaned the public places when their dogs polluted. Therefore, the Indians should take up the responsibility of not polluting the public places, so that the rest would be taken care of by the officials.

Abdul Kalam agreed with what Tinaikar said. Abdul Kalam added that we should not be hypocrites to criticise the government. We cannot sit back comfortably and expect the government to do everything for us when we were spoiling the system simultaneously. When we expected the government to clean up the garbage, we

should stop dumping the garbage thinking that the government would take care of. Therefore, it was our responsibility for the developed India.

Abdul Kalam, yet, gave another instance that we wanted Indian Airlines and Air India to provide the best of food and toiletries, but we were not going to stop pilfering at the least opportunity by enjoying the freebies and using the available facilities utmost even if they were not required.

Abdul Kalam was concerned about the other social issues especially those related to women, dowry, girl child and others. He realised that if the Indians were irresponsible, it would affect the society with the burning issues. In the public, the Indians might protest loudly for certain social causes and contrarily, at home, they might not be responsible. We might blame the system without us being adopting the new norms to change the society. According to Abdul Kalam, every individual should bring revolution in the society. Instead, unfortunately, we Indians were providing lame excuses and blaming the government and were not ready to change.

The next question arose in Abdul Kalam's mind: who was going to change the system and what did a system consist of. The system, he meant, the society which comprised of our neighbours, other households, other cities, other communities and the government. When the responsibility needed to be shouldered by us, we stood away from the system and we wanted to be safer with our families, we tried to cite examples from the other foreign countries and expected somebody else to clean our country. We expected that some Mr. Clean (an unknown person) to clean the nation but we were readily polluting the nation.

Abdul Kalam addressed such Indians as lazy cowards who were occupied with fear and were ready to run to America and then to relax in their glory and praise their system. He accused them readily for being cowards and irresponsible nationals of India. When another crisis of unemployment emerged in England, then the same Indians would take the next flight to the Gulf countries for job opportunities. When the Gulf countries had attacks and the same Indians then would demand the Indian government to rescue them and to land them in India safely.

Abdul Kalam blamed such Indians as traitors to the nation and called every one of them as abuser and rapist of the country. Finally, Abdul Kalam addressed the



dear Indians that it was a call for a great deal of self-examination and self-analysis on an individual and one had to respond based on one's conscience. He believed that if every Indian had conscience definitely he would make India a developed nation. He further hoped for doing something that India really wanted us to do. Abdul Kalam used these words to inspire his own countrymen, the Indians, "ASK WHAT WE CAN DO FOR INDIA AND DO WHAT HAS TO BE DONE TO MAKE INDIA WHAT AMERICA AND OTHER WESTERN COUNTRIES ARE TODAY".

In this essay, Abdul Kalam elaborately discussed the steps and methods the Indians need to adopt and to change the developing India into a developed India. Further, he insisted that every Indian should shoulder the responsibility to see India as a developed nation. He also assured that the role of the government must be less and the individual's responsibility would bring the nation to shine one among the best countries in the world.

### **2.2.3 My Vision for India – Textual Analysis**

In the essay "My Vision for India", the author Abdul Kalam envisaged his dream that India would become a developed nation and he listed out that the three visions for India that he had in his mind. He believed that his three visions would bring his dream come true. This essay was the transcription of his lecture addressed to the academicians of IIT Hyderabad on 25<sup>th</sup> May 2011.

Before talking about the three visions, the essay discussed the historical background of India too. This was discussed to understand the position of India back to ages. He traced back 3000 years of Indian history and observed that the Indians were invaded by people from all over the world. India was invaded by various country people such as the Greeks, the Turks, the Moguls, the Portuguese, the British, the French and the Dutch; in fact, the Great Alexander too had his role to conquer some parts of India. All these people captured the lands of India and conquered the minds of the Indians. They ruled for many centuries which had great impact in the history and lifestyles of the Indians badly. These rulers forcibly took away all the richest possessions of the Indians; which was a great injustice to the Indians.

The three visions of Abdul Kalam are Freedom, Development and Stand Up. Firstly, he talked about Freedom in his essay. He fondly praised the Indians for not taking revenge upon those bad rulers. The Indians had no intention to capture or rule the other nation. They never thought occupying the lands of the others. They did not take away the property that belonged to the others. They did not conquer anyone; they did not snatch away anyone's land, culture and history; they did not try to enforce their way of life on the natives. Abdul Kalam praised the Indians that the Indians did not do the entire above mentioned colonizer's activities on the other nations. He indirectly pointed out that the Indians were colonized by the British and the other invaders of India.

The invaders of India colonized the natives, the Indians; they captured parts of India and ruled over the Indians; they snatched the lands of the Indians. They changed culture and history of India with their respective influences. The invaders enforced their way of life on the Indians, especially, the British, the latest among the invaders who ruled India and had created a great impact on the lives of the Indians. They enforced their way of life on the Indians and even now the Indians can be found following the traits of the invaders in every aspect of their life. The Indians had adopted blended culture of the natives and so had new history, forgetting the ancient past. This change had enslaved the Indians by adopting and accepting the invaders' life patterns. This fringed the freedom of the Indians and so Abdul Kalam wanted to have "free" India and had considered Freedom as the first vision for the development of India.

Without freedom, a nation cannot achieve anything, and to push the nation towards its developing path Abdul Kalam wanted 'freedom' as one of the vision. He also mentioned that the Indians never invaded the others because the Indians respected the freedom of the others. He, thus, insulted the invaders of India that they did not concern about the welfare of the Indians but were selfish to occupy India and ruled over the Indians just to take away the wealth of India and to enslave the Indians. Instead of blaming the invaders, Abdul Kalam was gently pointing out that the Indians were gentle that they respected the freedom of others and so did not colonize the other countries.

These are the reasons that Abdul Kalam wanted to include FREEDOM as his first vision of his three visions. He recalled that India had got its first vision of Freedom in 1857, the year in which the first war of Independence was fought against the British. The Indian Rebellion of 1857 was a major uprising in India against the British rule, which functioned as the British East India Company as a autonomous authority on behalf of the British Kingdom. Abdul Kalam referred to the rebellion which began on 10<sup>th</sup> May 1857 in the label of a Mutiny of Sepoys of the Company's army in the garrison town of Meerut (near Delhi). This rebellion was variously titled as the Sepoy Mutiny, the Indian Mutiny, the Great Rebellion, the Revolt of 1857, the Indian insurrection and the First War of Independence. Actually, the First War of Independence triggered the Indians to fight for their freedom and the series of wars and protests at various places in India became one of the reasons for the Indian Independence in 1947.

Abdul Kalam had his first vision as Freedom because he believed that no Indian would be respected without freedom. So he insisted that we must protect and nurture and build on the same. The hard earned freedom had to be sustained to preserve our dignity. Without freedom no one will respect us, so we have to protect our freedom.

Abdul Kalam's second vision for India was to make India a developed nation and so he stresses upon DEVELOPMENT of India. After India's Independence and the World Wars, India had been remaining as a developing nation for fifty years. Kalam was disappointed to see the status of India, being a developing nation instead of a developed nation. Though, more than fifty years had been spent, at least now, the Indians must think about making India a Developed Nation.

Then, Abdul Kalam compared the GDP rating of India with the other countries. GDP can be expanded as Gross Domestic Product; it is the standard measure of the value added created through the production of goods and services in a country during a certain period. It also measures the income earned from the production, or the total amount spent on final goods and services. GDP is important because it gives information about the size of the economy and how an economy is performing. The growth rate of GDP indicates the health of the economy. The United States has the highest GDP. China is in the second place; Japan is in the third place;

Germany is in the fourth place and India is in the fifth place. Since India is one among the top five nations in GDP rating, it shows that the economy of India is excellent.

Using this statistics, Abdul Kalam assured that India would become a developed nation. While mentioning that India stood fifth place in GDP rating across the world, he pointed out that we had ten per cent growth rate in most areas; this reflected the progress in economy. He also noticed that the poverty levels of India were falling as there was steady progress in economy. He proudly stated that our achievements were being globally identified and recognized then. Abdul Kalam found the reason behind, India not being recognised as a developed nation; the Indians lacked self-confidence to see themselves as a citizen of an economically developed nation. According to Abdul Kalam, the Indians were already part of an economically developed nation, but they failed to accept it because they did not believe in themselves. So, he blamed the Indians for lacking the self-confidence to accept that they were part of the economically developed nation, self-reliant and self-assured nation. He assured that it was the mistake of the Indians to accept their status at the world level. He talked about development of Indian economy which did not mean that only economic growth was sufficient for promoting a nation. But he implied that the growth in economy was a good sign of development and it can be used to progress further and to make India the developed nation soon.

The next vision of Abdul Kalam was that India must stand up to the world. This was the last vision of his three visions to view India as a developed nation in the new millennium. He believed that no one would respect the Indians, unless India stood up to the world. If the Indians were strong, the stronger nations would respect them. If the Indians were free and stood stronger among the other developed nations of the world, definitely, the stronger nations would respect India too. According to Abdul Kalam, strength must be built upon economy. Of course, strength of a nation was referred to the military power of the nation; which was usually required to protect the citizens and the nation. However Abdul Kalam pointed out that an economic power was the real strength of the nation. Therefore, he wanted India to stand stronger along with the other nations; he insisted that military power was important to strengthen the nation and economic power was also important to strengthen the nation. He advised that a developed nation should be powerful both in military as well as in economy.

Abdul Kalam himself had contributed abundantly for strengthening military power of the nation. He recalled his past experience when he was in association with the other great scientists of the nation. He relished the moments he worked with Dr. Vikram Sarabhai, Professor Satish Dhawan and Dr. Brahm Prakash.

Vikram Sarabhai was an Indian physicist and astronomer who initiated space research and helped to develop nuclear power in India. He was internationally regarded as the Father of the Indian Space Program (ISRO). He was a great institution builder and established and helped to establish a large number of institutions in diverse fields. He was responsible for the India's first rocket launch through ISRO (Indian Space Research Organisation). Actually, he started a project for the fabrication and launch of an Indian satellite. As a result, the first Indian satellite, Aryabhata, was put in orbit in 1975 from a Russian cosmodrome. He interconnected two seemingly random thoughts: the idea of building India's Satellite Launch Vehicle and at the same time creating a Rocket-Assisted Take-Off System (RATO); these ideas were new to India then. Really, Abdul Kalam was recruited along with the other scientists by Vikram Sarabhai for the Indian Space programme. Abdul Kalam met Vikram Sarabhai at the National Aeronautics Space Agency (NASA). They together along with other scientists were sent to be trained in Space Technology. This crew, later returned to India, attempted to build India's first indigenous Satellite Launch Vehicle (SLV). Abdul Kalam was proud that he worked along with Vikram Sarabhai in the Department of Space.

Satish Dhawan was also appreciated by Abdul Kalam. Satish Dhawan was an Indian mathematician and aerospace engineer, widely regarded as the father of experimental fluid dynamics research in India. He was a popular professor at the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) in Bangalore. He was credited for setting up the first supersonic wind tunnel in India at IISc. He was called as the father of Indian Aerospace. After Vikram Sarabhai, Satish Dhawan became the chairman of the Indian Space Research Organisation and Secretary to the Government of India at the Department of Space in 1972. Abdul Kalam admired Satish Dhawan's leadership; when Abdul Kalam was the director of a Satellite Launch Vehicle, the launching of the satellite failed and as a leader of the team Satish Dhawan took up the responsibility and blamed himself for the failure; whereas when the team succeeded next time, Satish Dhawan, as a humble leader, pushed his team forward and recorded

that the success was because of the team. Abdul Kalam, thus, felt proud to work along with legends like Satish Dhawan.

Brahm Prakash was a metallurgist known for his work with nuclear materials in India. He was also called as the father of nuclear material in India. He worked with the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) from 1972 to 1979. He joined as the first Director of the Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC) which was part of the Indian Space Research Organisation. He provided harmonious leadership and contributed to success of satellite and launch vehicle programmes. Abdul Kalam and Brahm Prakash worked together for ten years. Brahm Prakash was responsible for many achievements of ISRO in the launch vehicle programme. Abdul Kalam felt proud to work with Brahm Prakash, a man of great nobility.

Thus, Abdul Kalam realised that he was lucky to have worked with all three of them closely. He considered working with them as the great opportunity in his life.

Abdul Kalam, then, continued his lecture by sharing the four milestones that he had seen in his career. He spent twenty years in ISRO. He was the project director for India's first satellite launch vehicle, SLV-3. The SLV is the Satellite Launch Vehicle which was a small-lift launch vehicle project started in the early 1970s by the Indian Space Research Organisation to develop the technology needed to launch satellites. This satellite launched Rohini. SLV-3 was India's first experimental satellite launch vehicle, which was an all solid, four stage vehicle. Actually, we were dependent on other nations for launching the satellites for us and for the first time, ISRO attempted to launch its own vehicle for launching satellites. Launching several satellites using one launcher by the Indians had many advantages. The rapid deployment of a whole series of satellites was done. The lower cost to orbit per satellite was possible. Using SLV-3, many satellites were launched by ISRO and Rohini was one among the satellites. Rohini is a series of satellites launched by the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO). The Rohini series consisted of four satellites, each of which was launched by the Satellite Launch Vehicle and three of them made it successfully to orbit. The series were mostly experimental satellites. These satellites played prominent role in the development of Science and Technology in India.

Thus, Abdul Kalam felt that the years he worked in ISRO played a very important role in his life as a Scientist. After his service in ISRO, as a scientist, Abdul Kalam joined DRDO (Defence Research and Development Organisation) and he got a chance to be the part of India's guided missile program. Abdul Kalam was working on a new mission and he considered it was his second bliss when he launched the mission Agni in 1994.

The Agni missile was a family of medium intercontinental range ballistic missiles developed by India, which was named after one of the five elements of nature. Agni missiles were long range, nuclear weapons capable, surface to surface ballistic missiles. It was believed that the solid-fuelled Agni-V was more adequate to meet current threat perceptions and security concerns. Even with a range of 5,000 km, the Agni-V could hit any target in China, including Beijing. The missile will allow India to strike targets across Asia and into Europe. Launch of Agni missiles proved that India was no more than equivalent to the other developed nations in protecting the nation during war crisis. This was considered as the best missile launched by India. It stood one among the top ten missiles of the world.

Abdul Kalam was thrilled to work with his team when the Department of Atomic Energy and Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) together attempted the nuclear tests in partnership. He considered it was the third bliss to work along with that team. He also added that it was the joy of participating with his team in those nuclear tests which made him proud because that proved the world that India too can make it. Earlier India had no such powerful weapons during the war attacks; it depended on the other nations and those nuclear tests proved that India too can make their own missiles for defence purpose during war crisis. This made Abdul Kalam very proud for being an Indian.

There was another thing to be noted when this Agni missile was launched. Abdul Kalam had developed a new structure of material for Agni missile which was very light and the light material was called carbon-carbon. This was actually developed for the lightweight materials to be used for the missile for some technical reasons. The same was used for another purpose and Abdul Kalam was delighted that his lightweight material was used for a noble cause. This happened when an orthopaedic surgeon from Nizam Institute of Medical Sciences visited Abdul

Kalam's laboratory. When he lifted the new material carbon-carbon the surgeon found it so light and he took Abdul Kalam to his hospital and showed his patients to Abdul Kalam. Abdul Kalam met the little children with heavy metallic callipers (a metal support used for weak or injured legs) which weighed over three kilogram. Actually, those physically challenging children were dependent on those heavy metallic callipers for their mobility. Those small children struggled to carry those heavy metallic callipers for their movements. The idea of the surgeon was to lessen the weight of the callipers, so that the children might be more comfortable to use the callipers during their mobility.

The surgeon requested Abdul Kalam to lessen the pain of his little patients. Abdul Kalam took three weeks and made the Floor reaction Orthosis 300-gram callipers and took them to the orthopaedic centre. This meant Abdul Kalam had reduced the weight of the calliper ten times lesser; 3 kilogram of heavy callipers was turned into 300 gram of lightweight callipers. Abdul Kalam observed the children were happy and they did not believe their eyes out of joy. When they were dragging around a three kilogram load on their legs and they could now easily move around. The parents of those children became emotional and Abdul Kalam considered that was his fourth bliss.

Then, Abdul Kalam mentioned about the importance of media in conveying and circulating messages to the public. He felt the media needed to take up the responsibility of building a nation's psychology. Actually, Abdul Kalam was a little disappointed when he realised that the media had failed to perform its role. He questioned the media why the news stories were so negative about India. He also questioned why India was always portrayed in bad light in the media when there were many strengths and achievements from our side. India was such a great nation and there were many amazing success stories but many Indians refused to acknowledge them. Abdul Kalam was surprised when these positive aspects of Indians were not registered by the media, which was prime mediator between the administration and the public.

Abdul Kalam, then, justified his reasons for claiming Indian achievements by listing out them. The Indians were the first in milk production. India had the highest level of milk production and consumption of all countries. The annual



production was 186 million tonnes as of 2018. As of 2020, approximately 4.2% of India's gross domestic product was due to dairy production. In 2019, the Indian dairy sector was reported to be growing at 4.9% yearly.

The Indians were number one in Remote Sensing Satellites. The first Remote Sensing Satellite was launched by the then Soviet Union and after 31 years, on March 17, 1988, India launched its first remote sensing satellite IRS-1A into space for earth observations which was considered essential across the world. After twenty five years, India has the largest civilian constellation of such satellites in space providing imageries in a variety of spatial resolutions, spectral bands and swaths. ISRO was responsible for this constellation of satellites. India's remote sensing program was developed with the idea of applying space technologies for the benefit of humankind and the development of the country. These satellites were used to integrate understanding and interpretation of the data which in turn was used for several applications in India; these applications cover agriculture, water resources, urban development, mineral prospecting, environment, forestry, drought, and flood forecasting, ocean resources and disaster management. Definitely, these Remote Sensing Satellites were helpful for the development of India in all grounds. Abdul Kalam was proud to mention that our advanced earth observation satellites like Cartosat-3 had the 'sharpest eye' (wider spatial range or view) of civil Remote Sensing Satellites in the world.

Food production was essential for humankind and so it was important for the development of a nation as well. Abdul Kalam mentioned that India was the second largest producer of wheat. China had the largest land area for the production of wheat and next to China – India the Russian Federation and the United shared the next positions in the production of wheat. The import of wheat in India had reduced since 1971, as the production of wheat was plenty now. Similarly, India was the second largest producer of rice next to China. India was the world's largest export in rice. That was a great achievement of India which showed India's stance on food production.

Abdul Kalam, then, mentioned about Dr. Hanumappa Sudarshan who had transferred the tribal village into a self-sustaining, self-driving unit. Sundarshan was an Indian social worker and tribal rights activist. He was known for his contributions

to the upliftment of the forest dwelling tribes in the Chamarajanagar district of Karnataka. He was also the recipient of the Right Livelihood Award and the Padma Shri. Sundarshan was a doctor by profession, yet his contribution to the tribal society was appreciable; he can be seen as a model citizen for the young Indians. Abdul Kalam felt proud of Sudarshan for the contributions provided to the Indian tribal community.

Therefore, Abdul Kalam requested the media to report such positive news on India. He quoted that there were millions of such achievements but media was only exaggerating the bad news and failures and disasters.

Abdul Kalam recalled his visit to Israel; when he stayed in Tel Aviv, a city on Israel's Mediterranean coast, he was reading the Israeli newspaper. He was reading the paper on the next day of several attacks in Israel. The day after a lot of attacks and bombardments and deaths had taken place. The Hamas (An Islamic Palestinian fundamentalist political organization; seeks to create an Islamic state in place of Israel) had struck during the attack. Surprisingly, the newspaper on the front page did not show anything related to the attack; but contrarily the picture of a Jewish gentleman appeared on the front page of the newspaper. The Jewish gentleman had actually transformed his desert land into an orchid and a granary in five years. Abdul Kalam requested the Indian media to take this story as an inspirational one.

The picture of the Jewish man on the front page of the newspaper was inspiring to everyone. The horrible details of killings, bombardments, deaths were of course mentioned in the newspaper but they were on the other pages inside the newspaper. That news on attack was one among the other news, so the prominence given to terrorism (which was usually given importance in Indian newspapers) was reduced but the other important things were highlighted in the newspaper.

Abdul Kalam compared the representation done by media in Israel and in India. He questioned why the Indian media were keen to focus only on death, sickness, terrorism and crime. He also questioned why the Indian media was particular about the NEGATIVE news than the available plenty of positive news which can be inspirational to the Indians.

Abdul Kalam, as a pan-Indian, questioned why the Indians were very much passionate towards the foreign things. The Indians were madly after the foreign products such as TVs and dresses; they were after foreign technology too. He could not tolerate that the Indians were fond of imported things than the products made in India. He showed his disagreement for the Indians showing interest in the foreign products because he blamed that the Indians did not realize that self-respect was gained with self-reliance. Abdul Kalam meant that as Indians we should not depend on the others and if we need any respect from the others we should make and use our own products.

When Abdul Kalam was in Hyderabad, while he was giving a lecture, a 14 year old girl asked him for his autograph. When Abdul Kalam asked the girl about her goal in life, he was surprised to get a unique response from her. The young girl replied that she wanted to live in a developed India. Abdul Kalam, therefore, motivated everyone to build a developed nation, Developed India, for the girl. He urged everyone for declaration; we would work for a developed nation. India was not an under-developed nation, but a highly developed nation.

Abdul Kalam challenged the audience, whether they could spare ten minutes. He believed that if he was listened to for minutes, it would inspire everyone. He pleaded that we would come back with a vengeance if ten minutes were spared. He confronted if anybody can spend ten minutes for the country, and then proceed with his words. He was not compelling anyone to work for the development of the nation, but he tried his level best to motivate everyone as a responsible citizen of India and to work for the nation with involvement. Anyway, he left the choice to the audience, but he made that every audience choose the same choice; everyone had to proclaim for the developed nation.

Abdul Kalam, then, pointed out how the media projected India and its administrative system in bad light. The media and the people in India focused on the government's inefficiency in a negative manner; instead, the reasons for such inefficiency can be justified while projecting the negative aspects of the government. The next accusation from the Indians was that our constitution was very old; actually, the laws were modified then and there by the government and all on a sudden everything cannot be changed when the constitution was concerned. Such negative

portrayals may affect the public and they might doubt Indian Constitution. The next accusation against India was that the servants of India failed to perform their duties; for instance, the municipality was blamed for not picking up the garbage. There were sarcastic comments that the phones in India did not work properly; the railways were not functioning properly and the Indian Airlines was the worst in the world; yet another comment was that the mails did not reach the destination or did not reach on time. All these accusations were made just to prove that India was the worst country with worst administration and without any responsibility. There was another charge that India had been fed to dogs and was the absolute pits. Abdul Kalam was obsessed with these accusations and he was irritated when these accusations were kept going on and on without an end. Actually, Abdul Kalam was against such accusations as he rightly pointed out that there were many positive aspects that we can pick up from the Indians, instead of blaming on the mistakes of a few Indians. He meant that a group of Indians cannot represent the Indians altogether, so we must stop accusing on someone, even if they did not perform their duties.

Abdul Kalam questioned these people who were accusing India and its governing system: he asked them what their contributions to India were. To those Indians, Abdul Kalam put forward a real challenge. The challenge was that if the person travelled to Singapore, how he reacted in Singapore airport and in India. Suppose if a man travelled from India to Singapore, while leaving the airport of Singapore he might feel that he walked out of the best airport in the world. He cannot throw cigarette butts on the roads or eat in the stores. For using the underground links (transport) he had to pay \$5 (approximately 60 rupees) to drive through Orchard Road which was the equivalent of Mahim Causeway or Pedder Road between 5 pm and 8 pm. Even if his status was good, or if he was a famous, person he cannot neglect but should come back to the parking lot to punch his parking ticket if he had over stayed in a restaurant or a shopping mall. He cannot restrict anything but to be submissive to the moral code of conduct followed in Singapore. He cannot deny any duties or responsibilities and cannot be excused for any reasons.

Abdul Kalam questioned the person who always blamed India as a worst nation, whether he would disobey the rules in Singapore. He cannot because, he had to obey the rules in Singapore and the same person want to neglect the rules in India. So he cannot blame India, but the particular individual to be blamed for not following

rules and regulations promptly in India. Abdul Kalam challenged whether anybody can eat in public during Ramadan, in Dubai; or anybody would dare to go out without their heads covered in Jeddah (a Saudi-Arabian port city). He also pointed out that we cannot bribe an employee of the telephone exchange in London at 10 pounds (Rs.650) per month and he cannot request that his STD and ISD calls would be billed to someone else. The person who tempted the others to get their bribes needed to be blamed.

Abdul Kalam further challenged whether anybody would dare to speed beyond 55 mph (88 kilometre per hour) in Washington and then he mockingly mentioned that one cannot threaten the traffic police saying that he was an influential person or a person connected with politically powerful person. One needed to pay fine in cities like Washington if the speed limit was crossed. In India, some Indians failed to do their duties when someone did not follow traffic rules. In India, if someone with political influence or by paying bribe can easily disobey the traffic rules. Some traffic police may be threatened by the political power or may be tempted by the bribed money. If we Indians were not ready to take up the responsibility like the men of other countries, then only we can be blamed for poor administrative system and political system in India.

Abdul Kalam added that some Indians were irresponsible in polluting the nation and blaming the governing system for not maintaining hygiene in India. For instance, one cannot throw an empty coconut shell anywhere in Australia and New Zealand; but can throw only in the garbage container. Otherwise, in India, we can see people throw garbage anywhere on the streets and in public places without even regretting their mistakes; and at the same time, blaming the system for not maintaining cleanliness. The Indians cannot spit paan on the streets of Tokyo and the same Indians casually spit the paan on the streets of India without any thought. We, the Indians, were after the fake certificates for job and higher studies and the Indians appointed proxy to write their own exams; yet we compared the foreign countries like Boston which never allowed any discrepancies in education system. We blamed the Indian system and yet we were responsible for the misused and mishandled administrative system in India.

Abdul Kalam questioned why the Indians easily adopt and accept a foreign system in the other countries and they can respect the regulations followed in a foreign country. He irritably accused why the same Indians cannot adopt certain rules when implied in India. In India, they threw papers and cigarettes on the road as soon as they landed Indian ground. If the same person can be very much involved and appreciative citizen in a foreign country; all of a sudden, he changed into a normal Indian citizen when he came back to India. The one who maintained cleanliness in a foreign country was the same person who was willingly polluting India. It was taken for granted by them that nobody can question them in India; but Abdul Kalam was talking about an individual's responsibility. An Indian citizen should be a real Indian and needed to take care of his nation. He should not blame the others for corruption or pollution in his nation. He should avoid such corruption from his side to load upon the existing erred system. If everybody turned out to be a responsible person, the system would change. Therefore, Abdul Kalam insisted that the change should happen from our side and nobody can be blamed for it; if we change, then, the country would change. If we want the nation to be a developed one, nobody can stop it.

Abdul Kalam cited an example, taken from an interview of the famous Ex-municipal Commissioner of Bombay, Sadashiv S. Tinaikar. Tinaikar was the Municipal Commissioner of Bombay during 1986-90. He was a 1956 batch IAS officer and was known as a firebrand officer during his tenure. He was an extremely sincere and upright officer during his tenure and even after his retirement, he was bold enough to raise issues for the betterment of the administrative system. In the interview, Tinaikar angrily accused the rich Indians for polluting the streets. He referred to the regular incidents of some rich people bringing their dogs for walking on the streets and allowing them to shit on the road. These rich people were least bothered when the public places were polluted by them, but he became furious when the same people turned around and criticize the system and blame the authorities for not maintaining clean pavements. He ferociously questioned whether these rich people expected the officers to clean the shit of their dogs whenever the dogs polluted the public places. He rightly cited from the American system, how the dog owners cleaned up after their pets had polluted the public places. Even in Japan, the dog owners had to clean if their dogs polluted the public place. He asked whether the

Indian dog owners cleaned the public places when their dogs polluted. Therefore, the Indians should take up the responsibility of not polluting the public places, so that the rest would be taken care of by the officials. If the citizens became irresponsible, the whole system got dysfunctional.

Abdul Kalam agreed with what Tinaikar said. His words were powerful and strong when he talked about the government. He mentioned that we elected the government and we went to the polls to choose a government, and so if there was any problem with the governance, ultimately we had to take up the responsibility. It was not the government that had a problem; the problem was with the citizens who had chosen the wrong government. In whatever way, we cannot blame anybody else, but we were responsible for everything.

Abdul Kalam added that we should not be hypocrites to criticise the government. We cannot sit back comfortably and expect the government to do everything for us when we were spoiling the system simultaneously. When we expected the government to clean up the garbage, we should stop dumping the garbage thinking that the government would take care of; instead, we had to stop throwing garbage everywhere around us, or at least let us use the garbage bin to throw a dirty piece of paper. We were not ready to learn to use the bathrooms in a proper way and our expectation was that the railways had to provide clean bathrooms. If we did not use it properly, how we can expect the railway officials to be blamed for that. Therefore, it was our responsibility to call India a developed one or a developing one; if we were responsible and if we wanted the change it would occur; so we should change our thoughts first.

Abdul Kalam, yet, gave another instance that we wanted Indian Airlines and Air India to provide the best of food and toiletries, but we were not going to stop pilfering at the least opportunity. We were tempted to steal small things on the board which could be avoided. He was not only blaming the passengers but also the staff members, which meant everyone was hunting for an opportunity to use or misuse somebody else's money. This cheap mentality should be erased from our minds. He was not talking ill of using the facilities but he was talking about when people overusing certain facilities when they really did not require them.

Abdul Kalam was concerned about the other social issues especially those related to women, dowry, girl child and others. He realised that if the Indians were irresponsible, it would affect the society with the burning issues. In the public, the Indians might protest loudly for certain social causes and contrarily, at home, they might not be responsible. We might blame the system without us adopting the new norms to change the society. We failed to realise that the change should happen within us. That was a sheepish excuse if someone claimed that an individual's change cannot change the society. For instance, if an Indian was ready to get dowry for his son, he cannot deny that only if he avoided dowry for his son's marriage it would not stop the social evil, dowry. According to Abdul Kalam, every individual should bring revolution in the society. They should bring change individually and it would change the whole society; instead, unfortunately, we Indians were providing lame excuses and blaming the government and were not ready to change.

The next question arose in Abdul Kalam's mind: who was going to change the system and what did a system consist of. The system, he meant, the society which comprised of our neighbours, other households, other cities, other communities and the government. An important thing neglected by us was the individual; it was me and you (we, the Indians). When the responsibility needed to be shouldered by us, we stood away from the system and we wanted to be safe with our families, we tried to cite examples from the other foreign countries and expected somebody else to clean our country. We expected that some Mr. Clean (an unknown person) to clean the nation but we were readily polluting the nation; we never came forward to clean the nation or to stop polluting the nation. Otherwise, we waited for some miracle to happen and in case, if we felt the country was disgusting with dirty and unhygiene, we ran away and moved to another clean country. We became selfish and always expected someone to serve the nation and us.

Abdul Kalam addressed such Indians as lazy cowards who were occupied with fear and were ready to run to America and then to relax in their glory and praise their system. He accused them readily for being cowards and irresponsible nationals of India. When the same Indians realised that New York became insecure then they ran to England. When another crisis of unemployment emerged in England, then the same Indians would take the next flight to the Gulf countries for job opportunities. When the Gulf countries had attacks and the same Indians then would demand the



Indian government to rescue them and to land them in India. He questioned them what was their contribution to their mother country and for its upliftment.

Abdul Kalam blamed such Indians as traitors to the nation and called every one of them as an abuser and a rapist of the country. Nobody was ready to repair the errors of the system but was ready to make money out of everything; they were ready to make money out of other's expenses.

Finally, Abdul Kalam addressed the dear Indians that it was a call for a great deal of self-examination and self-analysis on an individual and one had to respond based on one's conscience. He believed that if every Indian had conscience, definitely, he would make India, a developed nation. He further hoped for doing something that India really wanted us to do. He reflected the ideas of J.F. Kennedy's words which inspired the Americans. J.F. Kennedy was the President of America and he spoke his famous words during the inaugural address, "ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country." Abdul Kalam used these words to inspire his own countrymen, the Indians; whereas Kennedy used these words for his countrymen, the Americans. "ASK WHAT WE CAN DO FOR INDIA AND DO WHAT HAS TO BE DONE TO MAKE INDIA WHAT AMERICA AND OTHER WESTERN COUNTRIES ARE TODAY".

In this essay, Abdul Kalam elaborately discussed the steps and methods the Indians need to adopt and to change the developing India into a developed India. For this, he had three visions in his mind – freedom, development and to stand up. Further, he insisted that every Indian should shoulder the responsibility to see India as a developed nation. He also assured that the role of the government must be less and the individual's responsibility would bring the nation to shine one among the best countries in the world.

#### **2.2.4 Questions:**

1. How did Kalam's writings become inspirational to today's youth?
2. Kalam is a man of power and strength. Justify.
3. Elaborate on Abdul Kalam's love towards India.
4. Write about the dreams of Abdul Kalam.
5. How did Abdul Kalam want to build the Indian nation?

6. What are the three visions of Abdul Kalam?
7. Whom did Abdul Kalam admire at?
8. Why did Abdul Kalam become unhappy with the Indian media?
9. What are the responsibilities Abdul Kalam expect from the Indians?
10. Why did Abdul Kalam want to fulfil the dream of the girl, whom he met in Hyderabad?

#### **2.2.5 References:**

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## UNIT-3

### DRAMA

#### **3.1. Harvest - Manjula Padmanabhan**

#### **3.0. Objectives:**

Students are able to explore intellectual, social, emotional and moral domains through learning which involves thought, feeling and action. Reading the classics of literature fosters self-discipline, confidence and team work and develops skills in interpreting, researching, negotiating, problem solving and decision making. Performances in the classroom enhance the abilities of students to cooperate, coordinate, manage and organize.

#### **3.1. Introduction:**

Manjula Padnabhan's *Harvest* tells the story of an impoverished family and the Faustian contract that they enter into with a shadowy international corporation with regard to organ sale. As the family was in dire poverty, they were ready to sell the organs blindly without knowing the consequences. They were helpless when they wanted to get out of the dire situation and almost all the family members were lost in the process of organ donation. The word 'donation' cannot be used in connection to the play because the characters sell the organs for a fair price. This drama is a satire on organ donation and the title of the play also reflects this; the organs are harvested for money. The donation of organs means the sale of organs by the poor to the rich. The dramatist Manjula Padmanabhan got the idea for a play when she was inspired by news stories about the illegal trade in human organs. In the 1990s, these stories were centred in the most poverty-struck rural districts of Tamil Nadu.

Staging of the play needs some technical support as it's based on a science fiction/play. The play describes the organ transplant as a corporate trade, but it has no surgical procedures in any part of the play. The play does not provide a standard resolution or support on any familiar ideologies. The challenge was that the playwright Manjula Padmanabhan had written this play when Skype, Facebook and Whatsapp did not exist. She has imagined the upcoming technical advancements in

the modern world of communication and wrote the play. The small confined room is the setting of the play which might bring boredom to the audience. There was a simple device used which was designed to communicate virtually and to control over the inmates of the house.

### **3.2. Manjula Padmanabhan – Bio Note**

She is an Indian journalist, dramatist, comic strip artist and children book author. Born in Delhi to a diplomat family in 1953, she went to boarding school in her teenage years. After her college, she was determined to make her own way in life; this led her to work in publishing and media-related fields. She is known for her two plays, *Lights Out* (1983) and *Harvest* (1997). *Harvest* is adapted into a movie by Govind Nihalani named *Deham* in 2001. In 2017, Govind Nihalani went on to adapt *Lights Out* into a Marathi movie by the name, *Ti Ani Itar*. A writer and artist living in New Dehli, Manjula Padmanabhan has illustrated 21 books for children and, for six years, drew a daily comic strip called SUKI. She has published a collection of short stories entitled *Hot Death, Cold Snap*. Her two recent books are *Getting There*, a fictionalised memoir, and *This is SUKI!*, an album of her comic strip. *Harvest*, her fifth play, has been produced in Greece, the UK and in the USA.

She won the Greek Onassis Award for her play *Harvest*. An award-winning film *Deham* was made by Govind Nihalani based on the play. She has written one more powerful play, *Lights Out!* (1984), *Hidden Fires* is a series of monologues. *The Artist's Model* (1995) and *Sextet* are her other works. She also authored a collection of short stories, called *Kleptomania*. Her most recent book, published in 2008, is *Escape*. Apart from writing newspaper columns she created comic strips. She created Suki, an Indian comic character, which was serialized as a strip in the *Sunday Observer*. Before 1997 (the year her play *Harvest* was staged) she was better known as a cartoonist and had a daily cartoon strip in *The Pioneer* newspaper.

### **3.3 CHARACTER LIST**

#### **DONORS:**

**Om Prakash:**

He is twenty years old; he has been laid off from his job as a clerk and is the breadwinner of his small family. He is of medium height, nervy and thin. He would be reasonably good-looking if not for his anxious expression.

**Jaya:**

She is the wife of Om. She is thin and haggard (looks tired); she looks older than her age, nineteen years. Her bright cotton sari has faded with repeated washing, to a meek pink. Like the others, she is barefoot at the outset. She wears glass bangles, a tiny nose-ring, ear-studs, and a slender chain around her neck. No make-up aside from the kohl around her eyes and the red bindi on her forehead (the colour indicates that she is married).

**Ma:**

She is Om's mother. She is sixty years old, stooped, scrawny and crabby, wears a widow's threadbare white-on-white sari. Her hair is a straggly (not neatly done) white.

**Jeetu Kumar:**

He is Om's younger brother, seventeen years old and looks handsome. The same height of Om, he is wiry and conscious of his body. He works as a male prostitute and has a dashing, easy-going, likeable personality.

**Bidyut-Bai:**

She is an elderly neighbour, is very similar in appearance to Ma but timid and self-effacing.

**Crowd:**

This refers to the street urchins (boys) and the crowd outside the door. The crowd is audible rather than visible.

**GUARDS AND AGENTS:**

**The Guards:**

The guards are a group of three commando-like characters who bear the same relationship to each other whenever they appear.

### **Guard 1**

He is the leader of the team, a man in his mid-forties, of military bearing. Only this guard interacts with the donors.

### **Guard 2**

She is a young and attractive woman, unsmiling and efficient.

### **Guard 3**

He is a male clone of Guard 2.

### **The Agents:**

They are space-age delivery-persons and their uniforms are fantastical verging on ludicrous (looks funny) like the costumes of waiters in exotic restaurants. Their roles are interchangeable with the guards, though it must be clear that they do not belong to the same agency.

### **RECEIVERS:**

#### **Ginni:**

The audience can only see her face and hear her voice. She is the blonde and white-skinned epitome of an American-style youth goddess. Her voice is sweet and sexy.

#### **Virgil:**

He is never seen. He has an American cigarette-commercial accent-rich and smoky, attractive and rugged. He claims that his spirit is in Jeetu's body.

### **3.4 Harvest – Short Summary**

The play *Harvest* by Manjula Padmanabhan is set in 2010 Mumbai, which is first staged in 1990s. It is a science fiction play – a dystopian drama which describes an imagined world of organ donation where great suffering of the poor and injustice

to the poor are done. Like every dystopian literature, this play too hints at an imaginary scientifically advanced future just to point out the disadvantages and failures in the system. There are many issues focused in the play and the main focus lies on the business of organ donation by the poor, whose body is easily bought by the rich.

The setting of the drama is the contemporary society; which has the financial crisis and the high-tech world at the global market which has pulled down the middle-class and poor employees penniless and jobless. Hunting for job becomes part of their life style and; the play *Harvest*, describes how one such family falls victim to the market of organ selling which is controlled by the First World Nations (here Americans).

There are four main characters in the play - Om the twenty year old, who has lost his job and is married to Jaya; his 19-year-old wife Jaya, the protagonist of the play; his 17-year-old brother Jeetu who has chosen prostitution as his profession; and his 60-year-old widow mother, Indumati Prakash, who wants to enjoy a comfy life at any cost. There are three other guards of the transplantation agency, two characters, Ginni and Virgil, who always appear as images and a neighbour Bidyut-Bai.

The story, centers on Om who has recently become jobless. Om, a just-laid-off breadwinner for a struggling Indian family living in a cramped Bombay tenement, decides to sell his organs to a mysterious company called Interplanta Services in hopes of reversing his financial plight. Om, is signing up as an organ donor for money, but his wife Jaya is against the idea of organ donation. The receiver of the organ/s, Ginni, the American foreigner, pays the family to lead a healthy and happy life. Though it appears at the lateral level that the family is happy about the organ donation but when they face the consequences they find letting themselves in trouble. Jaya does not encourage this project organ donation because there is a troubled relationship between the couple and also there is a secret relationship between Jaya and Jeetu. Ma's mother favours Om than the others in the family but later she is not bothered about anyone in the family and is completely addicted to the imaginary world of watching videos.

Ginni offers every comfort to the family let it be food or accessories or technical devices or entertainment devices. As the family's life becomes more comfortable, their relationships become more strained than they ever has been in their poverty, and eventually the whole family is at risk of losing not only body parts but their souls and identities as well. The corporation, personified as three anonymous, masked guards dressed all in white, gradually takes over every aspect of their lives.

The Guards from InterPlanta Services arrive to make Om's home into a germ-free zone. Om's family is monitored around the clock, receiving frequent video phone-type inquiries and directives from the supposed organ recipient, named Ginni. Ginni pays him to lead a "clean" and "healthy" life so that she can harvest healthy organs whenever she needs them. Ginni begins to control every aspect of Om's life, from when and what he eats to whom he sees and how he uses the bathroom. In fact, Ginni comes to control the entire family until the end of the play.

Jeetu, who prefers for freedom and pride, does not want to enter the family as part of Organ donors. Unfortunately, his sickness brings him home and the circumstances have unflavoured Jeetu to lose his organ first. Then Jeetu is mesmerised to donate his whole body as a donor; Om too wants to donate his body and to enjoy the privilege of being a donor and leaves the house towards the end; Ma is very much addicted to watching many channels in the TV and so has folded herself in a coffin like box which displays hundreds of TV channels.

There occurs a radical change to their dingy room and it acquires an air of sophistication. The most important installation however, is the contact module placed at the centre of the room to facilitate communication between the receiver and the donor. The contact module and the apparent order brought in by Inter Planta seem to create turmoil in personal relationships. The donor and his family is kept under the constant supervision of the receiver as the module can rotate round to face each corner and can flicker to life at any moment. Ginny compares Om's flat to a "human goldfish bowl" which she can observe and amuse herself with.

Jeetu, Om's brother is taken as the donor. Om cannot accept this. He too leaves to get back his position as the donor. Jaya, his wife, is left alone. She is seduced into selling her body parts, for being used by the rich westerners. Jaya, the



sensitive young wife seems to have somehow managed to retain her not-for-sale soul and body despite the predominant gloom. In the end, it is evident that the body serves as the major theme. The play uses characters of contrastive nature – the colonisers and the colonised; the people of developing nations and developed countries.

### **3.5 ACT-WISE SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS**

There are three acts in the play and most of the scenes in the play are set in a single, confined room in a house where the protagonist and her family members stay. Jaya is the protagonist of the play. Ma is her mother-in-law, Om is her husband and Jeetu is her brother-in-law. The story is about how the impoverished condition of the family wretches the whole family as they sell their organs in the name of organ donation.

#### **ACT - I**

##### **Act I Scene I**

The scene is set in a single-room accommodation in a tenement building. It has hardly any furniture and things but everything is kept neat. The sound of inner-city traffic is heard in the room. There is a broad-bed across the tops of three steel trunks. Jaya is nineteen years old and her mother-in-law is 60 years old. They are shown on the stage where Jaya is staring out the window and Ma is sitting on the bed. Jaya is waiting for her husband Om Prakash who is aged twenty, because he has said that he will be back home in time for lunch. She is eagerly waiting for her husband and so is staring out the window. Om has gone out to get a job and he has not got one even after several attempts. As the family is in impoverished state, getting a job at the moment is the need of the hour.

Ma is a typical mother-in-law who wants to take control over her daughter-in-law. The way she addresses Jaya and the way she speaks reveals her as a dominant mother-in-law. Ma asks Jaya what is she staring out and Jaya, in turn, responds carelessly to her mother-in-law. Ma responds that it is unnecessary to stare out the window. Jaya replies saying that she will stare if she wants. This also reflects that Jaya cannot give-up easily to the dominance of Ma. This boldness is usually understood by Ma that she has neither reverence nor respect for the elders. So Ma

tells that Jaya is wasting her time by staring out the window but Jaya insists that it is her wish and she will do what she wants to do. This conversation is not merely about staring something, but Ma's control over her daughter-in-law's privacy and Jaya's denial to obey her mother-in-law, when it is not necessary.

Ma, then, demands Jaya to press her legs, instead of wasting time. If Jaya wants to spend her leisure hours, she may spend it as she wants instead of pressing the legs of Ma. Pressing the legs when required is not a problem, but the intention of the mother-in-law to control over Jaya irritates her much. Ma mocks at Jaya saying that just because Jaya keeps on staring out at the window will not bring Om back home and also it will not help him to get a job. This also shows how snobbish Ma is to question Jaya unnecessarily. Jaya, in turn, responds that she does not want her husband to get a job now. As it is revealed towards the middle of the play, Jaya does not show interest in the job, which her husband plans to commit into because she understands that the job will ruin all their life. Jaya may be obsessed with the way Ma treats her or talks to her. Jaya gives curt replies to avoid Ma or just to express her protest to Ma. When Jaya opines that she does not want her husband to get a job, the irritated Ma teasingly tells that Jaya does not want her husband to get a job because, she is rich, she also accuses that no reasonable and respectable woman will think like Jaya. She indirectly abuses Jaya as a woman who is not suitable for family life. She is trying to degrade Jaya's character and disappoints her throughout the play.

According to Ma, Jaya does not understand her husband, but as a mother she understands her son well. There is an exchange of words between the two, Jaya and Ma who try to prove each other upon, who has understood Om. According to Ma, as a mother she has understood her son very much; even when she feels the steps of her son, she can guess whether he is happy or sad. This may not be right but she wants to irritate Jaya because she believes that Jaya does not know anything about her husband Om. When Jaya becomes furious for such comments, Ma claims that Jaya is jealous because Ma loves Om than his wife Jaya loves him. Ma is actually unhappy because Jaya cannot predict what runs in the mind of Om, on looking at his face. Jaya has looked at him downstairs through the window, when he is four storeys down. This irritates Jaya so she questions her Ma how she can see the facial expression of Om when he is far down.

Ma mocks at Jaya that she is unfit to be his wife, because she cannot read her husband's mind. Jaya is more practical here but the attitude of Ma shows that she makes use of every chance to pull Jaya down. She is always cynical in tone while she addresses her daughter-in-law Jaya. Ma believes that Jaya cannot read his face even if she is closer. Jaya is actually irritated and so pleads Ma to stop such talks. Ma is happy because she believes that Jaya is jealous of her because she loves Om than Jaya loves him. When Jaya requests to stop it, she accuses that Jaya is inhumane and does not have any emotion. Jaya is obsessed and requests to leave her alone. It can be understood that the ever-presence of Ma and the words she uses to hurt her weakens Jaya. Though she is resistant to the dominance of Ma, at one point of time, she is unable to bare the words that she uses. She feels that she is tortured by the strong words used by Ma.

When Jaya wants to be alone, Ma again accuses that Jaya does not even know her neighbours and she stays only in the room. She points out the neighbours are crowded with ten in a room. Actually, Jaya has no children and so Ma indirectly points out that their room is empty. According to Ma, there are none in the house, yet Jaya feels that the room is crowded. Even if many are there the space can be shared, but the full focus on Ma falls on Jaya as there is none. As well, if the sons of Ma return, even then she takes it for granted to humiliate Jaya, but not her son Om.

Ma feels that the neighbours are harmonious, but harmony is missing in their house because Jaya does not know how to live happily in the crowd. Jaya accuses that Ma and her husband Om never give any space to Jaya and Jeetu, Ma's younger son. It is clear from Jaya's words that Ma and Om dominate the other two in the house. Ma treats his elder son Om as her dear one and hates Jeetu, her younger son because he has chosen prostitution as his profession. Jaya accuses that the existence of Jeetu and Jaya is never felt in the house and things happen in the house, as if there are only the two, Ma and Om ever exist in the house.

Ma does not want to talk about her younger son Jeetu. She believes that she does not bear a child (Jeetu) but a jackal. She also compares that Jaya and Jeetu are one and the same because they both are rude, insolent and ungrateful. Ma has aversion towards her son Jeetu because Jeetu has chosen his profession as prostitution. As a mother of conventional habitat,, she cannot accept this. Jeetu has

chosen the profession because there is no job and no food and that is the least option he can choose to escape from hunger and poverty. Anyhow, Ma cannot accept this excuse, so she shows her aversion towards him all the time. Though Om is jobless, she likes him very much.

Jaya says that, only she takes care of Jeetu in the house by feeding him and checking upon his welfare. As a mother, Ma is very partial towards her sons. Ma does not take this as an accusation, instead, hints at a special secret relationship between the two, Jaya and Jeetu. Ma is disgusted the way Jaya treats her brother-in-law, Jeetu in the house, because it can be obviously noted, that there exists an intimate relationship between the two. Ma is very upset with this and curses Jaya that she will suffer in her next life. Also Ma shows her aversion towards Jaya by saying that in the next birth she will be born as a cockroach and Ma will smash it by stamping it under her feet. The way Ma stamps her feet emphasises her hatred towards Jaya.

Jaya senses that Om is near the door and she runs to open the door. Ma accuses that she pretends that she loves him but she can read what is in Jaya's mind. According to Ma, Jaya has no love for Om but loves Jeetu and pretends that she is affectionate toward Om. Om enters the house, carrying a bulky parcel and he looks confused. Nobody can guess anything about the parcel. They are anxious to know whether he has got a job or not. Ma understands that he has not got a job. She abuses the employers for not giving a chance to her son Om and she believes that it is their loss, if they do not appoint him. As a responsible mother, she speaks in a convincing tone that it is alright if he has not got any job. She is also worried what can be done next without a job. The family is in poverty and if there is no job yet, the survival of the family becomes a terrible challenge.

Jaya understands that there is something going on in Om's mind and asks what it is. He responds that he has got a job. Jaya becomes emotional on hearing the news and she cannot believe it. Ma also does not believe her ears and asks him to assure whether he has got the job. Ma is surprised and happy and she says Om deserves to get a job. She insists him to repeat the good news "I-have-got-the-job!" all these emotional reactions are due to the sufferings that they have undergone without any job for many days after several attempts of job-search. The irony lies

when the type of job is not defined clearly by Om. He just mentions that he has got a job but does not explain the nature of the job. Yet he claims that getting a job is quite easy, and actually he has not got any job and he has sold his organs for money in the name of organ donation.

Organ donation is not terrible, until it is made into a corporate marketing. Selling an organ for money is not the same as one is paid for his work. There is an inhumane attitude in this type of organ selling and the misfortunate situations of the poor are used against by the rich who just never cares about the welfare of the other. Ma insists Jaya to bring two glasses of milk and she is proud of her son that he has got a job. Om describes how he has got the job without revealing the nature of the job.

Om along with six thousand men has stood in the queue inside building which looks like a big machine. The building is filled with guards and they have been moving around the building everywhere. When Ma asks whether they look like police, instead of giving direct reply to her, Om says that they are coming home and she herself can see how the guards look like. The guards have to check and set the house all up for the procedure. Now, Ma and Jaya are confused about the nature of the job and they ask whether he has got the job. Om is clever to delay in describing the procedure and the reason behind it, but says that they are checking the building. It's quite confusing because, the employer usually checks the profile of the candidate who has applied for the job and in some cases the physical fitness of the candidate may be checked. On the contrary, here, Om informs that the building will be checked which confuses both Ma and Jaya.

Jaya asks Om to shut Ma for a while when the visit happens and this irritates Ma. Anyhow Om gives instructions that when the guards visit their plan, Ma must keep quiet and if she is asked anything she has to pretend that she does not understand anything but to keep quiet. Now Ma is worried about Om, when she has to keep quiet and she doubts whether Om has done something wrong. Om keeps everyone in suspense and tells that everything will be known to them when the guards visit the house.

When Jaya asks for how long he has to undertake the job, Om is not sure about it. When Ma asks about the payment, he says he will be paid a lot. Ma is

irritated by the phrase 'a lot' and insists him to tell in numbers like a rich man's language. Om responds they are going to be paid 'a lot' which can be numbered and counted by all of them. Om means that a huge amount of money will be paid for the job. Ma and Jaya are shocked and it is unbelievable to them. Ma is reasonable now and asks whether Om has met the higher officer and has got assurance about the job. Om denies her idea and Ma thinks that he has not got any job then. Then, Om continues the procedure of how he has got the job.

The long queue in the building has kept moving continuously in many floors of the building. They have sealed and controlled the queue using iron bars and grills to prevent push ups or any overtaking in the crowd. The structure appears as if the candidates are being let in a cage shaped tunnel and everywhere the guards are seen. Om can see only men and they have kept moving slowly in the queue. The atmosphere reveals a kind of dominant nature of the employer as well as the guards because they are even monitoring the movements of the candidates. The grills and the bars and even the cage-like structured tunnels imply the controlled position of the candidates by restricting their free movements. All these imply that the nature of the job is not quite a normal one, but gives a horrific feel in one's mind.

Jaya is now curious to know why the men have been moving in the queue and what do they have to do. Om explains he has not understood the slow-moving queue. That has been a long queue and as Om has expected, no forms have been filled-in and question papers to answer their responses are not found anywhere but the queue has kept on moving forward. Once, when a man is fainted, nobody has bothered, but the queue is not disturbed too, the men in the queue just push the man along with the others. This indicates the mechanical and systematic movement of the queue. For urination, a sort of basin has been kept in the sideways so that the queue will not be disturbed. The men are expected to move while urinating; otherwise the other men may squeeze and move, so at times while urinating also the queue has to move. The disgusting description is shown to give a clear picture of how orderly the queue is maintained by the guards and even the nature's call is forbidden to the men and again assures about their inhumane nature in treating the poor jobless men.

Om remembers the stench smell and heat and then how the men have moved along. Then Om has found a door and when he enters inside through it, it looks as if

a heaven but in dark. The place is fresh and cool and he has fainted like the others have done. Om remembers that he has felt that something is under his feet. Actually the men have not been warned about the conveyer belt where the men are led in and so they have got the feel of fainting. When they wonder about the movement of the floor they come across a sign board which reads as, “Remove Clothing”. The men have removed the clothing and put them in a bag which is provided.

Ma and Jaya cannot believe and they are confused but instead of telling directly about organ donation, Om continues his narration. First of all, he himself is not sure about the procedure that he has underwent, and also he has been treated like a machine or as an inanimate object. Then, there has been a sort of rain burst with hot and scented water. Then the cold water is splashed, and then followed by the hot air to dry them up. The second water is sprayed on them stings like some medicine then they pass through the passage of air to dry them and then, they are moved to another place. This experience shows the men are treated like objects to cleanse them. For example, the fruits in the pickle factories are washed, peeled and cleaned by passing the fruits on a conveyer belt. Similarly the men are treated here as objects for washing and cleansing them to prepare for medical check-up and to prepare their body for selling organs to transplant the organs to the rich patients. The conveniences and comfort of the men are not felt as they are treated as inanimate objects which usually have no feelings. The dignity of the men are least bothered here and nobody is expected to ask anything or react anything but to follow what the other men in front of them do in the queue though they like it or not, but to do mechanically what the others do.

The men are then shifted in separate little cages and a man screams and cries and the others ahead heard. The other men do not really know what happens. At one place, their eyes are covered by a machine. Nobody is allowed to think and has to obey just as instructed. The men are treated as tamed animals or slaves. They are injected with some medicine and are instructed to sit and stand and to look at the light. They might have scanned the men or photographed them, but the men are not clear about what is going on to them. Finally, the men enter through a tunnel which has pretty pictures and music. There appears a sign, “Resume Clothing” and they wear the dress. The ground stops moving and they are on their feet and the steps are seen and the men come out of the building through exit point. The guards are seen

there too and instruct them to get away from the place. That is how the men are selected in the interview and the purpose behind the selection is not yet revealed to the other characters of the play.

Ma and Jaya are confused and do not have any idea of the nature of the job. Om himself has no vivid picture about the nature of his job. He says the other men too look “blank” when they are informed that they have been selected. The names and addresses of the men are noted down. The details are noted and the packet which Om has brought home is handed over to them. They are instructed that they are not supposed to open the packets, but they have to wait for the guards to visit their homes and the final instructions will be provided by the guards.

Ma is getting questions such as what is the work, how much he will be paid and the number of working hours. Om responds that the work will be in the house. There exists confusion in Ma’s mind how the worker can be paid by sitting at home and what kind of job to make a man sit at home and to pay him. Om says that they are given a pamphlet to read. It instructs them to relax and follow the instructions. The pamphlet has also mentioned that if a man is selected, then another set of special instructions will be given. The selected candidates will be closely monitored whether they follow the instructions or not. They do not monitor what the men do but the whole lives will be monitored and Om says being an employed is a privileged thing, so he is ready to obey the orders as they instruct them. When Jaya is worried, who gives such instructions and is confused about following the instructions, a tapping sound on the door is heard.

A child standing nearby the door of their house announces that the police are coming to the house. Jaya shoos away the child and the guards footsteps are heard. Om instructs Jaya to open the door as the guards are waiting. Guard-1 queries near the door as “Inter Planta Services wishes to confirm that this is the residence of Om Prakash?” Throughout the play, this mechanical attitude of the guards is seen. They appear to be unemotional and also do not give any response to anyone’s feel or emotion. For instance, if they are questioned, they will not respond. They behave like human robots and act accordingly. They do not have any names and all look similar in their uniforms. They are rigid in performing their roles like machines.



Guard-1 appears to be the in-charge of the other two guards. The guards 2 and 3 are carrying equipment which is set down and immediately they begin the installation work. Guard-3 has begun to set-up using things from the three cardboard boxes, which they have brought in. Guard-2 installs a power generating device and then she sets up the Contact Module. As part of science fiction play, these devices are created based on the imagination of the playwright. Usually, the science fiction or movies are based on the creative skills of the writer, who fuses the advancement of technology in the story. Here, Manjula Padmanabhan, the playwright has used the Contact Module, which is actually a device, which carries a light with camera which can move around and monitor any corner of the house. Also the device can show someone in light, when the controller of the device wants to appear. The Contact Module also speaks to the housemates as well as hears what the other speaks and does. The housemates cannot see all the time what happens the other side and what they speak. The drawback is that Om cannot choose the timing to talk to the Contact Module, but it decides to choose the time according to the operator's will. The current generation is used to video calls and live camera telecast; but when the writer has written the play in 1997; these inventions have not been introduced to the world. That is one of the features of science fiction play. In a science fiction, a device or technology which is not invented yet is used by the writer and it becomes part of his creative innovation. Therefore, the Contact Module is used as a device of science fiction play.

Thus, the private space of the house is controlled by the Contact Module once it has been installed. After installation, Guard-1 is giving instructions to Om, deliberately avoiding answering the queries of Jaya. Moreover, they are not ready to respond to any queries but they are delivered instructions from the guard. Guard-1 addresses Om as saying, "Just listen. Congratulations! Inter Planta Services is proud and honoured to welcome Mr. Om Prakash to its program!" Though the words such as "proud" and "honoured" are used but there is no warmth when they speak. Their words do not have any kindness but rigid in performing their duties. Guard-1 confirms Om whether he has received the starter kit; Om has the kit in the parcel which is handed over in the office where he has been selected. The instructions by Guard-1 is clear and the guards are not keen on explaining details of operating the module and they have not mentioned how the starter kit to be used to operate the

module. The attitude expresses their dominance over the subordinated ones. When setting up the device, Guard-3 has removed everything from the kitchen into the cardboard box and moves further to remove everything from the kitchen. Jaya becomes panicked and asks him to stop, but Guard-3, as usual, does not seem to hear the voice of Jaya, busily removes all the things from the kitchen.

Meanwhile, when Om is disturbed with this, Guard-1 instructs him to concentrate on his instructions and not to pay attention (to his wife Jaya). Om is instructed that the Contact Module will function after two hours and the instructions are found in the starter kit. Jaya abuses and shouts at the Guards for a while, as they have started dismantling the kitchen and has kept quiet after realising it is useless to shout at them. After cleaning all the corners of the kitchen, Guard-3 places a cooking device in the kitchen and places some bottles full of multi-coloured pellets (tablets).

Guard-1 instructs Om that during the first contact (virtual meet) Om (the donor) and Ginni (the receiver) will exchange personal information. The physical data has already been sent for matching. Then, Guard-1 asks whether Om has any questions to be asked, but before Om asks any questions, Guard-1 deliberately avoids the question and interrupts without any courteous manner. Guard-1 appears to be a commander and Om looks as if a meek and frightened person, so Om says he has no questions. Guard-1 never allows anyone to ask questions, but asks several times whether any questions are there. The Guards are rude towards the people in the house. When Om says no questions, he continues speaking, but when Om begins asking him, Guard-1 immediately interrupts him by repeating “any questions”. It is very clear that they are not ready to answer the questions.

Guard-1 refers to the members of the family as members of the domestic unit, which indicates that they do not treat them as human being but inanimate things. The pellets that are kept in the bottle which is meant for their food are referred to as fuel. They are strictly prohibited to share or sell the fuel (food-pellets) provided by the InterPlanta Services and the fuel supply will be provided sufficient for the domestic units (family members). Then, Guard-1 wants an interview with the family members. Before, he begins, Jaya has a question but he deliberately avoids the question saying, he would like to begin with the oldest member of the family, Ma. Jaya bursts out saying the Guards have broken the stove and thrown into the bag and who is going

to replace that. Om insists her to be patient and Jaya says how she can be patient when her house is broken up.

When Guard-1 interviews Ma, all the questions are answered by Om, because Om does not want Ma to speak and she may make his plan a nuisance. He says, she cannot understand, so he will respond for her questions. The name Mrs. Indumati is asked and his relationship with the donor is verified; and for the first time in the play, there is an indication that something is going to be donated by Om. Ma is the mother of the donor Om is noted by the Guards. Then Ma is asked, whether she has understood everything said so far. Ironically, Ma does not say anything from the beginning and she does not understand anything too, but Om responds for her saying that she has understood everything. Guard-1 insists Om, to explain everything to her.

Guard-1, next checks the next relative in the record that is Jaya. She is addressed as Mrs. Kumar, and asks her relationship with the donor Om; Jaya instantly responds as 'sister' instead of saying 'wife'. Ma is shocked to hear that because Jaya is the wife of Om and not the sister. From this, it is clear that Jaya knows something about the organ donation which Om is planning to do and that is why she does not show any interest in the job, when Ma is scolded her for not being a respectable wife, who does not want her husband to get a job. Jaya does not show interest towards Om getting the job but she does not like the job which he is getting committed.

When Jaya is asked about her husband, she responds that he is at work and his name is Jeetu – Jeetan Kumar. Guard-1 instructs that Jeetu, the only absent member of the family, has to register the details at the nearest registration centre within twenty-four hours; otherwise they cannot avail the facilities that are provided by the InterPlanta Services. It is understood that even if Jeetu is part of the family he may not be allowed inside the house, if he does not register his name. This expresses the cruel inhumane nature of the organ-transplant corporation which decides everything for the family members. And before leaving the house, Guard-1 asks whether they have any questions and before getting any question from the donors and also not waiting for any response from them, the Guards depart after ensuring that the installation is complete and the Contact Module is in operational mode. They have also checked that the Contact Module works by operating with a remote and

the module responds by some musical notes and clicks; the polygon in the module stirs and lights up and there appears a screen-saver pattern. The Contact Module has moved and raised and lowered a couple of times and then gets switched off. The Guards also have assured that the delivery of six months fuel supplies (pellets) for the family of four is provided. Before they leave, the Guards thank the family for cooperation and the irony is that the family has been made to cooperate even when Jaya's protest to touch her things in the kitchen has been neglected by the Guards. While leaving, the Guards say that they deeply appreciate the contribution that are about to make towards creating "a healthier, happier and longer lived world"! There is sarcasm in the tone which implies that the family is going to lose healthier, happier and longer-lived life in the world after the entry of the Inter Planta Services.

After the Guards leave, Jaya shuts the door and Ma is furious for the role change and questions what kind of job Om is caught into to convert his wife (Jaya) into his sister. Ma is worried how to consider her son Jeetu as her son-in-law. Om insists that the records on the papers are just papers and it cannot change the actual relationship, whereas Ma is worried about the neighbours and relatives. Jaya takes it up easily as she has been mentally prepared by Om for this role change and now she is actually worried about the food as there is no stove to cook and moreover she is less interested on the food (pellets) provided by the agency.

### **Act I, Scene II**

The setting is in the same room, the house of Ma and her family. They are eating the coloured pellets, their new food. The package which is brought by Om is kept opened. It has brightly coloured instruction leaflets, elaborately devised containers for pills and powders and a number of small gadgets of same size and shape and a slide-viewing device.

Now, Ma is doubtful that they are having a healthy life by simply sitting at home without doing any work. Ma does not believe when Om says that he is paid for not doing any work but to stay at home all the time. Jaya insists him to tell the truth as she is aware of organ donation agreement between InterPlanta Services and the donor, Om. Ma controls Jaya when she speaks louder that Jaya is not supposed to talk to her husband loudly. Om feels that the neighbours should not overhear them. Jaya sarcastically comments that everybody in the neighbourhood knows everything.

She also explains that the visit of the guards to the apartment itself is enough for everyone in the apartment to understand that the agency has visited with regard to organ donation by the family.

Another unfortunate thing to be noted is, even the donor, Om does not know completely about organ donation as a donor. Even the donor is not informed clearly which part of the organ is going to be transplanted. Ma is shocked to know that Om is going to donate his organ/s and he is highly paid for that. Ma gets information from Om that a foreigner is spending so much money on his family in exchange with one of his organs. Jaya gives a passing comment that Om's entire body is not getting sold but a few parts of him. Om is irritated because he does not want to disclose everything to Ma, but intentionally, out of frustration, he wants to speak out everything to Ma.

Jaya questions Om for the intrusion of the Guards, because, he has mentioned the family will not be disturbed, but now she is obsessed with the entry of the outsiders into their private life and the food provided to them, she calls the pellets which they eat as "goat-shit". Ma criticises Jaya's cooking that the pellets are tastier than the food cooked by Jaya. The patriarchal dominance is sensed when Ma reacts and degrades Jaya in the house. Jaya, actually, does not like the role change in the house, even if the role change appears only in papers (records). Ma has been controlling the voice of Jaya saying that she shouts like a "street woman", which means 'uncontrollable woman who has no discipline.'

Om justifies saying, if he just calls Jaya as sister, they will become rich. He describes the discomfort in their life in the tenement and he assures that the sophisticated life style in future is important that the change in relationship is only on a piece of paper. For Jaya, the change in relationship is intolerable.

When Om seeks explanation about Om's employer, the foreigner, she says he does not know much about him and he has not met him so far. The only thing he understands is the foreigner is old and rich and is suffering from some illness. When Ma does not understand why an ill, old-rich foreigner provides comfort to their family. Jaya opens up that Om has sold the rights to his organs. She is very furious with her husband and continues as he has sold everything; "his skin, his eyes, his arse". Jaya does not want this terrible thing to happen, his husband's body getting

chopped for his organs and the family to get money and enjoy the rest of the life. She becomes emotional and asks him how she can feel his body and touches his hand or face when any of it is parcelled to another part of the world. She says that she prefers to be a widow of a dead person which is easily acceptable than this slow degrees of torture to become a widow in phases. She questions him whether she has to mourn for every piece of the body that he is going to loose soon.

When Jaya is so emotional and sensitive, Om insists her to read the manual that mentions about respecting the donor. Nobody cares to respect Jaya's feel in the house and Om becomes mechanical as the Guards of InterPlanta Services. Jaya satirically uses the proverb that Om is praised a lot just to be chopped like a chicken at the end. Jaya is more practical and lively than the other family members.

Om reads information from a pamphlet which reads as one-third of all donors are left absolutely intact. It is understood that out of three, one of the donors is left free without being used by the Inter Planta Services. Om has a least ray of hope that he may escape from being a donor to give up his organ/s. Ma questions, why do not the foreigners choose their own people, instead of picking up the poor Indians. Om says that they do not have people to spare and Jaya is furious and says angrily that the men here are grown on trees and in the bushes. Anger in Jaya's voice is sensible because they buy men here for money because they have money and the donors are poor and helpless and unfortunate. The rich cannot choose the role of the donors because they do not choose to be donors. Jaya's question on the respect given to a donor is sensible too. If the rich really respect the donors, they need to choose themselves as the donors for their own men.

Ma is worried and says as long as they do not hurt Om, it will be alright. When the whole family is anxious about their new odd situation, a loud tone sounds and the three look immediately at the globe. Ma is about to wash her hands, wondering at the sound. The Contact Module becomes alive and it displays a young woman's face, beautiful in a youthful and glamorous way and appears to be someone from the First World nation (she may belong to a developed nation or a nation of colonizer). Ma looks at the image and wonders she is an angel. They hear the sound of an international phone call about to commence.

The image of the girl on the Contact Module is Ginni and throughout the play her presence is felt only through her image and voice. She does not appear personally in the play and she always meets the other characters through the Contact Module. Ginni says hello to everyone and is excited to meet the family members, especially Om. She addresses Om as Auum because her accent is not perfect in pronouncing the Indian names. There are colonial elements present in all the conversations, as the persons speak through the Contact Module, it stands for the colonizer and the family members as the colonized. She introduces herself as Virginia Ginni and formally asks about their reception. Om says that everything is perfect in the house, but that is quite contradictory because nothing is normal in the house after the entry of InterPlanta Services. Ma is confused because she does not understand the conversation and to be more specific she does not understand anything that Ginni speaks because she is very fast.

Jaya helps Ma to understand the conversation that Ginni feels happy about the meet and she is satisfied with the help that Om is going to offer soon. Ginni then switches screens on her side and gets the view of the whole room where the family members of Om resides. It is like a magic to her and she cannot believe that she can see people of India from her home country. She, then, asks everyone to be introduced. When she has questioned about Jaya, Om by mistake, mentions Jaya as his wife. Later, Jaya corrects the mistake by saying, Jaya is his sister. Though Om wants to live a fake life for the sake of money, he cannot completely let himself into the new life.

Ginni is a little worried and refers to the form given by Om which reads that he is not married. Om clarifies Ginni that Jaya is his sister. Ginni explains the seriousness of information is important and there should be mutual trust to one another. Again there is an element of contrariness; Ginni claims and demands that nobody has to tell lie, Om has lied that Jaya is his sister. Moreover, Ginni is also not trustworthy which may be revealed towards the end of the play. Jaya, then questions, what if Om is married. Actually, Ginni evades this question and asks about two more members of the family. So she checks the list and asks where Om's mother and his brother-in-law are. (Actually Ginni refers Jeetu as brother-in-law, because Om has mentioned in the form that Jeetu is the husband of Jaya so his brother Jeetu becomes brother-in-law).

Ginni expresses happiness to meet Jaya and addresses her as Zhaya. She apologizes that she cannot talk to everyone together because she can view only one person at a time. She can move the scanner and can focus only on one person. When Om reminds Ginni about his mother (Ma), Ginni runs the scanner around to locate Ma. She scans the whole room and detects Ma. She addresses Ma as Mrs Praycash and asks whether she can hear her. Ma shields her eyes to avoid the bright light and she is really irritated when both Jaya and Om insists her to look at the light from the Contact Module. When she tries to look at the light, she cannot identify whether the image looks like a man or a woman. She is greeted by Ginni but Ma counters that she cannot even understand a single word that Ginni utters. When she manages to look at the image, Ma again utters that she can see an angel. Ginni feels happy when Ma praises.

Ma is interrupted by Ginni when Ma is in an urge to go to toilet. Ma is irritated and asks angrily why she needs to get anyone's permission to go to toilet. Even then, Ginni is adamant to say that Ma has to wait for a minute to talk with Ginni. Ma opens the door and gets outside the house to use the common toilet. Om asks excuses for Ma, saying that she has some problem and she has to go to toilet. However Ginni is convinced and accuses that Ma is "some character" and she is afraid whether she "can handle it". Ginni treats the family members as objects and never treats them as human beings.

Om again asks excuse saying that she is old and she has to go down two floors to use the common toilet. Ginni is shocked to know that they do not have a toilet in their house and forty families are sharing the only toilet of the building. Ginni cannot tolerate the idea of it and she feels that it is unsanitary and so wants to change that. She says she will install one toilet in Om's house. Jaya says there is no space to install a toilet and Ginni says that the space in the room can be used for the toilet. She wonders how the people are not dead of any disease by using a single toilet for all these years. Actually she is worried about the hygiene of the donor, who will donate one of the organs to her. She wants an organ without any defect and if the donor is going to survive in an unhygienic place that would affect the organ to be donated to her.



Ginni then humiliates Jaya by asking whether she bathes daily and do the family members if the forty families are using the same toilet. Jaya is humiliated and starts crying. Om convinces Jaya and Ginni asks Jaya her favourite things such as perfume or jewellery and she promises she will send those gifts to Jaya. The colonisers had the idea of buying the colonized as inanimate things. They never respected the feelings of the colonized. Here, when Jaya is humiliated her feelings are given price by the gifts of Ginni. Actually, Jaya does not want any gifts but she does not like any intrusion of a foreigner in her private space/life.

Ginni, before leaving the virtual meeting, asks excuse from Om for the miserable situation which she has created and then she assures that a new toilet will be installed soon. She says bye and disconnects the communication without getting any consent from Om, which shows her bad courtesy. The light in the Conduct Module fades away. Om convinces Jaya and they are surprised to know that they are not donating organ/s to an old sick man but to a young lady. Jaya says that lady (Ginni) appears healthy and she is a vampire who sucks the life out of a young man like Om. Jaya feels it is rubbish that Om has decided to donate his organ to such a rich young lady who never has concern over human beings. Om compromises Jaya that he is donating his organ for the sake of the family. They forget that their relationship is changed in the record and when they remember it suddenly they sit apart as brother and sister. This is what Jaya is against; the intrusion of a foreign element into her private life is unacceptable to her.

### **Act I, Scene III**

It is night and the scene is set on the roof of the tenement building. City skyline is in the backdrop. Clotheslines, water tanks, TV antennas and water pipes snaking in all directions. The two shadowy figures – Jaya and Jeetu – are shown. Jaya appears holding a small torch to her face. Jeetu warns Jaya that it is not the right time to meet him. He also mentions that he has heard about everything that happens in the house. He has not visited the house for some time. Jeetu says he knows about the organ donation of his brother to a foreigner and also about Jaya's role change as Jeetu's wife. The conversation reveals that Jeetu and Jaya have a secret affair and so he is not shocked by the role change in the papers.

Jaya insists that Jeetu has to come to the house, because the guards who have come to install the toilet in their single-room house have asked about Jeetu. Jaya says they have fixed a bath-shower too and now there is no place in the house and she funnily says that there is no space to sneeze too. Jaya and Jeetu are worried that Ma will not go downstairs for the toilet thereafter. They have used the house as their private space in the absence of the other family members. If Ma is not going away these two may not get any private space thereafter.

Jeetu playfully teases that Jaya becomes his wife officially and nobody can stop them even if they are together in the public. It is also understood through Jaya's conversation that Om is always frightened to treat Jaya as his wife; earlier he is frightened of his mother and now he is frightened of his new job. He is not courageous to make decisions in his personal life too. Jaya is guilty about this secret affair but Jeetu is not. Through the conversation it is understood, Jeetu knows Jaya well than her husband knows her.

Jeetu is professionally a prostitute and he has more men as clients than women. He is not ashamed of his job and he says his every service has some price. Jaya advises him to leave his profession and to come back home, because there is sufficient money at home. Jeetu is clear that he will not go back to his house; he says he can be bought but he cannot be owned. He means that he can be bought for a while in his profession, but he does not want to be completely sold by being in the house. He understands that he will lose his freedom when he goes back to his home but he can go for choices when he sticks to his profession.

While leaving, Jaya apologizes that she has no food to offer Jeetu. He comes to know that the food is not cooked in the kitchen, but the pellets are consumed as food. Jaya describes the food looks like plastic beads and is tasty. Jeetu says that he has heard that the food is healthy and filling the stomach. But Jaya feels that it is not a natural food and so it does not give the satisfaction of eating at all. Jaya says it is a "false" food, like her "false" marriage and "false" life. Jaya expresses that she is not happy with her married life as Jaya thinks that Om is not the right partner for her.

Jaya again invites Jeetu to come home, but Jeetu resists that the employers of Om may not encourage Jeetu for his profession. They may think it is unhygienic to have a family member who chooses prostitution as a profession; because they want

virgin bodies and that is the reason Om has to tell a lie that he is unmarried. Jeetu is very strong that he does not want to go back home and also explains Jaya that organ donation is worse than his profession because he knows when he sells his body to whom; but the donors do not know which part they are selling and to whom they are selling. Jeetu feels pity for his brother who lets himself in a precarious situation.

## **ACT II**

### **Act II, Scene I**

After two months, the scene is set in the same room, the house of the donors. There is some change in the room with gleaming surfaces, chrome, steel and glass. There is furniture too such as bed-cum-sofa and there are the gadgets – TV set, computer terminal, mini-gym, and an air-conditioner. There are two cubicles containing the bathroom and toilet. There is a Japanese-style dining table too. The room shows the sophisticated and comfy life-style provided to the donor's family. The clothing and attire of the family members too indicate that a lot of changes have occurred. Jaya is better dressed and is in Hawaiian sandals, Ma is wearing a quilted dressing gown and is in cuddly-toy bedroom slippers and Om is wearing a florescent Harlequin track-suit and is in inflatable (tight-fit) track. The room is shown with blinking rear lights. Jaya is completely lost in her thoughts as if she is not interested in anything; Ma is watching TV and Om is sitting at the computer terminal.

Om is getting tensed as they are running late for their meals. Both Jaya and Ma compete to avoid serving the meals and Om is running to get it ready for them. It is understood that it is the time for Ginni to meet them virtually and she insists on punctuality in maintaining health. Ma, nowadays, is busy watching the programmes on TV and she does not give up anything for interesting programmes. Now, Ma is worried about the virtual meet because Bidyut-bai, their neighbour is using their toilet in the house. Ginni may not like it because it is unhygienic if the others use their toilet. She wants the organ donation in a healthy way, to get an organ without being infected. Om is getting tensed when he knows about Bidyut-bai using their toilet. Ma asks excuse for her saying that she is getting cramps if she waits in the long queue to use the common toilet. Om is irritated and says he is not bothered about it and tells his mom to send her out of the house. Om also says if they have

their own toilet, he might have allowed and already they are in a congested place, he does not want to encourage this. When Bidyut-Bai comes out of the toilet, Om strictly tells her not to use their toilet thereafter. She pretends that she has not used their toilet. Ma is not ready to open the door to let Bidyut-bai out of the house as Ma is busy watching an interesting program.

Jaya opens and then shuts the door after Bidyut-bai leaves and the warning tone sounds from the Contact Module. As soon as Jaya closes the door, in a hurry, Om sets the table for food. Om sits down and Jaya brings a few things from the kitchen. Om reminds that Ginni hates it when they are late to eat. After the third warning tone, Ma rushes to the dining table. Meanwhile, Ginni appears and greets them. She is upset when she comes to know that they are late for their lunch. When Ma responds that they are late only by ten minutes, Ginni is not ready to accept the response but complains that they have already done the same mistake earlier too.

Om asks excuse by saying they have got some visitor to their house, Ginni blames that it is another mistake by them to allow any visitor into the house. She tells to them to give up their cultural practices and learn to control themselves and to follow the instructions. She is interfering into every aspect of their personal life let it be the way they dress, or spend their leisure hours, or the food they eat, or the relationship with the outside world. She even wants to control over the emotions of the donors. She asks Jaya why her face has no smile. When Jaya says she is fine, Ginni insists that those who smile longer lives longer and compels her to smile. She also insists that if Jaya is not happy she cannot smile the whole day and it will affect the mood of Om, so Ginni insists her to smile the whole day. She is angry that she has mentioned this hundred times to them. She wants best smiling organs: if Om is smiling, his body is smiling and his organs are smiling which is best for transplantation. Actually, she is not sure whether she needs a transplant, and if it is required, she needs the best one. No one can force upon one's happiness and it is ironical that she compels everyone to be happy for a selfish reason.

While the meeting is going on, there is a knock on the door. Jaya looks around and Ginni senses it and asks what it is. Everyone tries to hide the sound from their door, so Jaya pretends as if she is sneezing. This adds something worse to Ginni's mood. Ginni becomes worried that Jaya has caught cold and it might affect Om's

health too. The way Ginni questions and has control over them really irritates the family members and once Jaya confesses to Om that she treats them like school children. When the knocking sound is repeated, the family members talk among themselves, which Ginni does not like at all because she cannot catch all their comments together. She insists everyone to speak one by one instead of speaking in a group. This also shows how dominant she is to control over the donors. The whole family is begging and pleading to make Ginni believe that they are not telling any lie to her as well they are not concealing anything from her. Ginni also warns that if Om catches cold, he will be quarantined and the whole program will go waste. Om pleads that he will never risk her life (he means the organs of his body will become hers one day). This is the irony where Om is worried to take care of his health for someone else and that is not out of love but of a corporal commitment.

Om assures that he looks at Ginni as his own sister, so he can be trusted. Ginni gets assurance from Jaya, whether Om can be trusted, because Jaya is his sister and he is trustworthy to Jaya, his words can be believed. Jaya too assures that Om never tells lies. Now Ginni is convinced and tells that she has enjoyed the conversation with the whole family. She compares it as a nicely spent leisure hours, as is she has enjoyed watching goldfish in the bowls during her leisure hours. According to Ginni, the humans are like gold fish that are kept in the confined space and are monitored all the time. The human gold fish cannot be free and have to live only in the provided confined space with limited food. Furthermore, at her age, nobody likes to talk to her or spend time with her, so Ginni enjoys spending time with the donor's family. She also says that she will provide them what they have not enjoyed in their lifetime and in turn, she expects them to pay their life for her. She is tired of speaking and she is in a mood to disconnect the call. Jaya senses that her tiredness is due to her sickness and before she cuts the call a loud knocking sound from the door is heard, but Om ignores the sound and says bye to Ginni and Ginni cuts the call after saying bye.

Jaya goes towards the door without any interest to welcome anybody but finds Jeetu who unsteadily walks through the door. His condition is terrible, his clothes are in tatters, and his hair is unruly and dirty. Ma is curious to know who it is and Jeetu says it is her beloved son Jeetu. Ma does not like him and may not like his entry into the house. Om is shocked to receive Jeetu because he shall not allow

anybody inside the house as the agreement with InterPlanta Services reads. Jeetu has not registered his name within the given period, so he cannot be allowed into the house, though he belongs to the family. Jeetu, sarcastically, points out how Om is disinterested to welcome his younger brother back home. Only Jaya is concerned towards Jeetu's health and she asks him whether he has got hurt.

Jeetu wants to sit on the soft sofa, because he has been sleeping on the pavements for many nights and it hurts him. Jeetu is deliberately addressing Jaya as his wife to create tussle in the house and to show his aversion towards the other family members. Om demands an explanation from Jeetu about his whereabouts for the past two months. Jeetu is careless to respond to his elder brother. Om asks him, whether he has come to stay with them and Jaya replies where else Jeetu will go as it is his house too. Ma also accepts that he has no other place to go and he has to stay with them. Jeetu is teasing his mother for being kind towards him. Om informs Jeetu that Jeetu's permit to live with them is surrendered under the control of the agency and he cannot stay in the house.

Om justifies that Jeetu has been given a chance to stay with them, but he has chosen to leave. Om has made excuses to the guards for Jeetu's absence in the house and it is too late to take back Jeetu. Moreover, Om says that the presence of Jeetu in the house may bring health hazard to the family members and so the procedure of organ donation may get affected. Jeetu mockingly says that he is not the health hazard but a "walking, talking, health catastrophe". Jeetu confesses that his health is worsened. He questions Ma how can she prefer the toilet flush than his son Jeetu and Ma responds that at the age of sixty, toilet flush is important to everyone. Jeetu says that he will not live rich at the older age and he admits that he will die very soon. He has taken the overdose of drugs and that worsens Jeetu's health. He calls the dose of drug as "Freedom". He calls it as freedom to a care-free life; which allows him to roam freely on the streets, to lie in the filth of the open road and to drink from the open sewer, to eat filthy food. Though he says he has enjoyed freedom by being a poor but he has lost his health by being a poor and free man.

While speaking, Jeetu vomits and Jaya uses the loose end of her sari to wipe his face. Jaya places Jeetu's head on her lap. Ma is worried about the carpet and Om is worried about disinfecting his house. Ma is worried that the lice from Jeetu's body

will spread everywhere and it is difficult to clean the whole house. Om prefers that Jeetu should not have come back home. Om is worried how he will manage the guards. Only Jaya supports Jeetu saying that he has no other place to go and so he has to stay there. Ma says there is no place for Jeetu and Om says that Ginni may not like his presence. Om insists that they have suffered a lot and if Ginni becomes angry it will be worse. Ma is worried about the food that to be fed for Jeetu and Jeetu says that only water is enough for him. Both Ma and Om become inhumane and unconcerned about Jeetu. Jaya wets one of the disposable towels, soaks it in water and dribbles water into his mouth.

Om is again worried about Ginni's fury because she will definitely forbid Jeetu. Jaya suggests that Jeetu can be wrapped up in a sheet and kept in one side till he is better. Once Jeetu becomes alright, he can be introduced to Ginni that he has come back from his business trip. Ma is sarcastically pointing out how Jaya is treating her brother-in-law as if he is her husband. Jaya is determined to keep Jeetu in the house and she believes that clean clothes, clean hair and clean water and strong food will cure him and make him presentable before Ginni. The other two are doubtful whether Jeetu will recover from his illness.

### **Act II, Scene II**

The setting of the scene is the same as the earlier one but happens after a few hours. Jeetu is washed and cleaned by Jaya. She has nursed his wounds too. Jeetu is lying down in the centre and is groaning occasionally. Jaya is attending Jeetu, Ma is sitting to one side and Om is strolling around. Jaya and Om have changed their clothes. They are restlessly waiting for a call from Ginni. Ma has no idea how they are going to hide Jeetu during the meet and Om warns Jaya not to touch him with bare hand because she may be infected. Ma indirectly mocks at Jaya that she is treating her brother-in-law (Jeetu) as if her husband. Om insists Jaya to wear rubber gloves while attending him.

Jaya defends that the whole family has abandoned him on the streets and the least they can do is to take risk and to cure him. Ma is sure that Ginni will throw him out. Om cites Ginni's words, "the curse of the Donor World is sentimentality". According to Ginni, once the donors are after emotions, they spoil their health and so the organs to be donated too. As usual, this too adds unkind and inhumane nature

of the receiver's world. Om justifies that he has sacrificed his whole body through organ donation for the welfare of the family and Jeetu is spoiling the whole project. Jaya blames Om for switched roles in the house and for turning the family inside out.

Om then advises that Jeetu can be handed over to the guards and they will do what they have to do. Jaya contradicts that the guards never treat him a human. Om trusts Ginni very much and believes she helps the whole family whereas Jaya thinks that Ginni and her team are least bothered about the welfare of the family. Jaya compares themselves as chickens and mocks that Ginni cares them as chickens which has to be cooked to be eaten for dinner. Jaya's perception on Ginni is right than what Om and Ma think about Ginni. Om has the colonized view on the Westerners that they are great and not mean people. The colonized are never taken care of by the colonizers and so Om's trust on the colonizers goes wrong.

Ma, on the other hand, irritates Jaya that Jaya is jealous of Ginni and that is why Jaya keeps on blaming Ginni. She also dreams that Ginni may want Om for a husband some-day. If Ginni is interested in Om's body for organs, she may be interested in getting Om's children too. Ma further adds that she will get grandchildren finally and an angel (Ginni) will become her daughter-in-law. Jaya replies that Om is her chicken to be used for dinner. Om asks in that case why Ginni has to spend huge amount of money on them. Jaya funnily says that their cattle live in air-conditioned rooms with music and special attenders to take care of their health. Ginni enjoys the meat when it is fresh, free of disease, and hygiene. Om cannot accept the reality and is furious against Jaya.

There is a knocking at the door. Ma guesses it must be neighbours who may want to borrow some water. Om insists his mother not to offer any water; but Ma says that they remind their past cordial relationship with them to get connected with her, and moreover, they are ready to pay money too for water. Om is obsessed with this and agrees Ginni's idea that they are so little without shame or pride. Om is readily adopting the colonizer's idea through Ginni and forgets to accept the reality that he is one among the colonized. The knocking is louder and repeated. Sensing the pattern of the knocking sound, Ma can guess which neighbour is knocking the door. But the knocking has no pattern with loud thumping and so they are worried that it must be the guards.



Jaya believes that it is the time for taking away the fattened broilers (donors) after two months of feed. She believes that they have come to collect the donors. Ma asks Jaya to open and check. Om is worried about Jeetu and helpless to hide Jeetu. Jaya says if they have come in search of Om, they do not care about the other's presence. Om is anxious that Ginni is quite normal during the lunch and how can she suddenly send the guards to grab him for organ donation. He expects that he will be informed before he is taken for donation. On the contrary, nothing is informed to the donors, from the beginning; the donors are merely expected to follow instructions.

Om also senses that the loud knocking must be the guards to take away Om. Om has lost his confidence and asks Jaya to open the door. He is not mentally prepared for the procedure of organ donation and he has no courage to face the situation. The continuous loud thumping sound from the door irritates the nerves of Ma. Om wants to postpone the procedure and he has never expected that it will happen like this all on a sudden. Jaya advises Om to be ready for the procedure; because the real end of the procedure is to give up his body as a donor; and he has to cooperate with the procedure as he has initiated it. Jaya actually delays to open the door, because she does not want Om to be taken away. Om curses himself as a fool for getting involved in the procedure.

As Ma cannot tolerate the thumping sound, she herself is ready to open the door. Om threatens Ma that he will kill her if she opens the door. He says if someone opens the door, it must be his assassin. Om is sure that he will be killed in the name of organ donation and tries to avoid opening the door. When Jaya goes near the door, Om pleads her not to open the door. Jaya says if they are the guards, they will definitely break through the door. Om wants to run away from his death; he has no place to hide too. As a mad man Om says that he chooses the fridge as a hiding place and he cannot move at ease and so he prefers crawling along there. Om lies down on the floor while Jaya opens the door.

Jaya converses with the person outside and comes inside and says that the call is for Ma. Actually, Ma has ordered some product after watching some advertisement on the TV channel. They have come to get signature from Ma and to assure that the ordered product will be delivered the next day. Ma is now used to the advancement of technology and Jaya wonders how she has ordered using her remote

buttons. Ma keeps it as suspense by not revealing the name of the product which she has ordered.

### **Act II, Scene III**

In the house, Om is lying in a foetal position on the floor. Jeetu is sitting at the table. His head is shaved and he is wearing Om's track suit. Jaya and Ma are sitting beside Om. Om becomes weaker and feeble and he cannot even walk and he moves by crawling like a baby. Om does not even respond when Ma and Jaya converse. Jaya is worried that his health is deteriorating daily. It seems that he does not even hear anything. Jaya anticipates that Ginni knows the condition of Om and Ma interprets that Ginni is quite good and she will understand. Then, Ma compares Jaya with Ginni and criticises that Jaya is not good, kind, generous and loving person as Ginni. Both Ma and Jaya are trying to wake Om up and Ma insists him to watch TV so that he will learn so much. Jaya insists that he cannot even look at anything.

Ma insists that Om has to watch the programme "Happy Families" which has the same story line as theirs. Even while comparing the story of her own family and the one in the TV programme, Ma deliberately denies Jeetu as her son. Jaya is worried about the guards now because they may come any moment to take Om with them. She also warns Ma that if they find Om is unfit for the job they will take back everything they have given. Ma believes that she will be rich ever as Om has said in the beginning. Jaya is worried how she will cook without a stove and if all the things installed by the agency is taken back. Jaya says that Om has been reduced to a cabbage – a vegetable – that does nothing and talks nothing.

Jeetu interprets that Jaya has lost all her smiles. This irritates Jaya and scolds him in turn saying that Jeetu is a waster who has ruined his life and has been least bothered about the other family members in the house. She also points out that when Jeetu is at the verge of dying he has come back to the family. Ma insists that she should not talk to her husband in that harsh voice. Ma, actually, wants to irritate Jaya by saying Jeetu as her husband but when the conversation reveals that they are the secret lovers, she starts abusing Jaya. In the due conversation, Jaya blames Jeetu for being selfish and for causing harm to others.

In due conversation, Jeetu confesses the reason for his homecoming. Jeetu has wanted to meet Jaya at least once before he dies. He has been lying on the pavement, covered in shit and dirt and about to die, then suddenly he has thought of Jaya and that is why he has come to see her. Jeetu's love has attracted him to come back to his family; otherwise he would have died on the pavement. Jeetu says he has learnt a life lesson: life is a strange thing. If one has enough money he spends it for rich and delicacy and if he has no money he begs for food as a beggar. He reminds when he is at the verge of dying and begging for a cup of tea, he has thought of Jaya and he has hoped that Jaya will revive him.

Jaya rejects his words saying that they are not supposed to be couple now and Ma reminds that she is already married to her elder brother. Only now, after a long time, Om responds that Jaya is married to a cabbage; he accepts himself as a cabbage, a vegetable which has no sense. Jeetu continues saying that both Jeetu and Jaya do not need the prison (their house) anymore. Meanwhile, Ma is worried about Ginni's anger when she observes changes in the house.

They hear the sound of booted steps from the corridor. Om, as soon as he has sensed the footsteps, he begins to crawl towards the toilet cubicle. Jaya is brave to face the guards, because she believes that they cannot take Om, so they will take whatever they have installed in the house. Guard-1 is standing outside the door and asks them to open the door saying they are from "InterPlanta Services". It is understood that usually the donors open the door at the time of donation. They do not believe when Jaya says that she will open the door and it takes a while to unlock the door. The Guards say that they know that the housemates are inside the house and if they do not open the door, the guards have the rights to break open the door and he starts counting down to break the door. Anyhow, Jaya opens the door before the countdown ends.

The guards appear forcibly at their entry, Guard-1 pushes Jaya aside and Guard-2 and Guard-3 take up defensive positions at the door, holding a fold-up stretcher between them. Guard-1 demands where the donor is; and he moves towards Jeetu mistaking that Jeetu is the donor. Guard-1 also warns there is a penalty if the donor refuses to come with them. Jeetu is panicked at the idea and runs around and Ma readily says that Jeetu is the donor and to catch him before he runs. Guard-1

chases him around the room, while the other two Guards stand like goal-keepers at the door to catch the donor.

Jaya and Jeetu defend by saying Jeetu is not the donor, whom they have come for. Ma deliberately allows Jeetu to be taken as a donor, when Jaya wants to show her husband, Om, as the donor, she does not find him anywhere. Om has hidden inside the cubicle. Guard-1 warns that there is no chance of resistance and Jaya pleads that Jeetu is not the right person. Guard-1 tells that it is the usual story of every donor when they need to pay their due and so he just does not bother what Jeetu or Jaya says.

After they catch Jeetu, Guard-1 instructs the other Guards to “administer hypo” (to inject drugs). Jaya starts shouting that they are killing Jeetu and she becomes helpless. Guard-2 “administers hypo” – she holds down Jeetu’s shoulder with her knee and delivers a punch with the muzzle of the hypo. Jeetu cries out of pain and his body arcs up in a convulsion (seizure). Jaya screams and she could not tolerate when Jeetu is hurt. Jeetu is unconscious when he is laid on the stretcher. The three Guards get to their feet, returning as quickly as possible to their professional composure and gets ready to depart as instructed by Guard-1. Guard-2 and Guard-3 spread an opaque shield over the stretcher so that Jeetu is completely hidden from sight and they exit with the stretcher.

Now Jaya believes that Jeetu is killed but nobody responds to her. Before leaving, Guard-1 utters customary thank-giving message, “InterPlanta Services thank you for your cooperation”. They act as if they are robots and do not deliver any sensible communication. Instead they are keen on following the instructions mechanically and do not respond even if some question is asked by the donor. Guard-1 also customarily informs Jaya that no harm will come to the donor and he will not suffer any discomfort. He means that the donor may not feel pain in his body during transplantation. He is least bothered about the mental sickness of the inmates.

When Jaya is allowed to ask questions, she asks which part of his body is going to be removed. Guard-1 denies a reply that he is not allowed to tell that. When Jaya is furious how they can be rude, by not telling which part of his body is going to be used; Guard-1 replies that after all the formalities get over, everything will be revealed to them. Jaya seeks whether she can see the donor (Jeetu) in the hospital or

the clinic. Guard-1 says security and health regulations prohibit any contact between donors and their families, so she cannot meet him in the hospital. Jaya angrily asks Guard-1 what is the need to ask any question, if she is not really going to get any response. Then Guard-1 insists her to sign the despatch voucher. Jaya condemns them as stupid and their formal procedure as stupid. Guard-1, like a robot, does not react to the emotions of Jaya, instead thanks her for cooperation. Jaya is irritated and asks him to get out of the house and is about to push him. Anyhow, Guard-1 moves a little away, and continues his formal departure note as if a machine is doing its responsibility. Jaya literally pushes him outside and closes the door, but even through the door she hears the remaining message from Guard-1 that “InterPlanta Services extend our heartfelt gratitude for your family’s support and compassion!”

After the Guards have left, Jaya is worried about Jeetu. Ma is interested in watching TV. Jaya is angry at Ma for not at all worried about her son (Jeetu) who is taken to a slaughter house. Ma advises Jaya to watch TV to learn manners but never utters a word about Jeetu. Jaya, by standing between Ma and TV asks whether her role is switched over to daughter-in-law but not daughter. Ma clearly says that Jaya has no husband at home and abuses her as a slut. Jaya becomes the victim of patriarchy with a vegetated husband and dominant mother-in-law.

#### **Act II, Scene IV**

The setting is the same house but it is night. Ma is snoring in her corner and Jaya is standing near the gym equipment. Om lies in the corner pretending asleep. Jaya wakes up Om and says she wants to talk. She questions Om, what will happen if they find Jeetu is not the right person. She believes that Jeetu will be brought back home and they come again home in search of the right donor Om. Om denies saying that they will not come back; instead, they will use Jeetu instead of Om. That is unbelievable to Jaya because they have been worried about pure, hygienic happy organs and they cannot be so stupid in picking up any damaged or infected organ during donation. According to Jaya, Om’s organs are prepared ones with regular diet but Jeetu’s organs are infected ones which can be unsuitable for organ donation. So they cannot be careless while doing the procedure.

Om says, by this time, they would have come back if they have found that the donor is wrong. It is understood that they are using Jeetu as a donor. Jaya

anticipates that they may use any small organ of Jeetu and returns Jeetu home. Om questions then why Jeetu is not returned, Jaya worries may be they might have taken Jeetu's stomach or intestines. She curses them as merciless murderers who kill human beings easily for organs. Om agrees that there are no laws to protect strays like Jeetu and moreover, he is not officially in the records, so they can do whatever they want to do with Jeetu's body. Om calls those hospitals as game sanctuaries, where the rich have licenses to hunt socially disadvantaged types, the poor.

Om narrates how Jeetu will be tortured like a dog in the sanctuary. Jaya understands that Om is jealous of Jeetu, and Om agrees that he does not want to accept Jaya as his wife. He also says that he will throw her on the streets if he is unanswerable to Ginni. Through the conversation it is understood that Jaya loves Jeetu because Jeetu loves her and also Om has no love towards Jaya.

Om then describes how he has lost his job as a clerk. There is no demand for the clerical jobs and no choice is left to him and so he has chosen this job as a donor. Jaya blames Om that he might have chosen other choices, instead of blaming that he is chosen as a donor; she means that the choice is left to Om but he has mishandled his opportunity. She further adds that instead of waiting in the queue of donors, he might have gone for other choices. Jaya questions him if he has chosen the choice, why he has to hide when the guards come for him. Om rejects her accusation that it is fate that has decided Om to lie down and Jeetu to be sacrificed. Jaya asks him about his fate and Om is least bothered about her fate. Jaya compares herself as a used coconut shell thrown away after scraping out. Om appears to be selfish as well as a male chauvinist and Jaya is shown as the victim of the patriarchal society.

The Guards come back and Jaya expect some news about Jeetu. Om does not even bother and care about Jeetu's life anyway. Jaya opens the door; Om is not concerned about any news from the agency; Jaya is shocked to believe her eyes. Jeetu enters the room, being helped by the guards. Jeetu is wearing silk pyjamas, white on white. Heavy bandages are found across his eyes and wrapped around his head. Guard-1 gives his customary message. He addresses Jeetu as Prakash (they have mistaken Jeetu as Om) and delivers his message of gratitude on behalf of the Agency. It is also mentioned that the transplantation is a successful one and the

whole family will continue to get the benefits according to the terms and conditions of the agreement.

### **Act III**

#### **Act III, Scene I**

The setting is the same house without any change. Jeetu is sitting on the floor with his head between his knees. Ma is watching TV and is wearing headphones. Jaya and Om are sitting on either side of Jeetu. Jeetu is refusing to accept the benefits and he is in a mood to walk out of the place. Om calls Jeetu as a selfish man and blames that he has never cared about his family. However, Om is selfish because he has escaped being the donor and indirectly has forced Jeetu to be the donor, without Jeetu's willingness. Therefore, Om cynically calls Jeetu as selfish. Jaya insists that Jeetu has become a donor and to stay there enjoying the facilities provided. Jeetu becomes furious and shows his eyes to them; in the place of his eyes, there are enormous goggles, created to look like a pair of imitation eyes. Jeetu angrily says that the reward he has received in the house is blindness.

Jaya speaks practically and tells Jeetu that the agency will not provide the facilities if Jeetu leaves the house. Jeetu says that he has not committed himself to the job and so he is not ready to suffer. When Jaya insists that Ginni may help him, but Jeetu says that Ginni is not a woman but a rich demon who plucks the poor man's eyes. Om believes that Ginni may find that the eyes of a wrong person (Jeetu) are chosen instead of the actual donor (Om). Om narrates how his body has been prepared for the transplantation with the injection and medication. If Ginni knows that the infected pair of Jeetu's eyes is transplanted, she will not easily take that. Jaya believes that Ginni may not find who the donor is and in case, there will not be any problem. But Om denies that Ginni will find the fault and will become angry and the guards will be sent to punish the offence. Actually, the later part of the play reveals that Ginni does not show any difference and Jaya is more practical and clever in predicting the movements of the agency than the others.

Jeetu becomes hopeless about his survival and thinks about committing suicide and Jaya boossts him that he can live a happy life. Jaya does not understand why Jeetu is not ready to pretend to be Om for a while during the virtual meeting.

Jeetu explains the reason, as a victim of organ donation. He says he is in a place beyond death and worse than death. He describes, how he sees things – things are visible to him but not clear because he see images just like a bunch of bright white lines and when Jaya opens her mouth to speak he sees a gaping black hole. He is getting madness because he cannot close his eyes and he does not want to see lights and shades which disturb him a lot. Now, Jeetu justifies that he is not selfish but he wants to get away from the mental trauma, because he cannot close his eyes, he cannot cry or dream too.

Om pretends that he is ready to do anything for the family and Jeetu counters him then why he has run away from the Guards. Jeetu blames Om as a coward and Jeetu wants to disappear instead of talking to Ginni or anybody else. Om believes that once the truth is found, Ginni will throw both Jeetu and Jaya out of the house mistaking them as an infected couple in the donor's house.

The warning tone indicates the meet with Ginni, Jaya is worried about the meet and Om is confident that he can explain everything to Ginni. Jeetu says that he can see clearly something, but Om insists that Jeetu and Jaya have to keep shut when he explains things to Ginni. Om tries to communicate with Ginni by greeting her but Ginni is addressing Jeetu as Om and Jeetu is excited to see Ginni. It is understood that while doing the surgery, Jeetu has been prepared to receive the image of Ginni straight into his mind. So, she addresses Jeetu as Om and continues talking with him and Om is completely ignored in the conversation though Om has been repeatedly saying that Ginni is talking with the wrong person.

The conversation between Ginni and Jeetu happens as if they are intimate to each other and Jeetu is ready to do anything for Ginni because he is impressed by looking at Ginni as well as her house. Jeetu reacts as if he is mesmerised by Ginni, this might be because only Ginni can open his eyes as he cannot see anything else clearly and so he wants to go into that unreal world. Jeetu admires Ginni for she is beautiful like a magic. Ginni requests him for the second phase of transplantation, and Jeetu without asking which part of his body is going to be removed next, readily accepted the offer. Jaya repeatedly pleads Jeetu not to agree for any more transplantation because she believes that Jeetu will be killed. But, Jeetu looks as if he is not listening to anyone else, but only Ginni. Ginni instructs him that the Guards



will come and take him for the second phase of transplantation and she cuts the call. Jeetu is disturbed when Ginni leaves and behaves like a madman without eyes.

Om is jealous of Jeetu and threatens him that this time they can remove any part of his body. So Om prefers to go for donating the organs. Jeetu says that he is ready to give up his whole body, if he is able to see and he can see only if Ginni appears on the screen. Jaya is trying to explain Jeetu that he becomes a madman moving his hands without any real image in front of him; so she explains what he has seen on the screen is not real. Jaya also reminds that same Ginni has taken away his eyes. Jeetu defends that he likes the newer vision than the normal eyes because he is impressed by the vision that he has seen while talking with Ginni. Jeetu blames Jaya for not telling that Ginni is young and beautiful and when Jaya again insists that Ginni is not real, Jeetu takes it easily and in madness to obey the words of Ginni. Jeetu finally says that according to Jaya's wish, he will be alive and the whole family will be taken care of and he is very much ready to leave them and join Ginni.

The Guards are knocking the door and when the door is opened Om is ready to go with them for transplantation. When the Guards enter, Om insists the Guards to take him because he is the actual donor according to the records. But Guard-3 holds Om pinned in the wall and Om keeps on shouting that Jeetu is his younger brother and he is not the donor. Guard-1 asks Jeetu to follow him so that they can immediately leave. Jaya does not allow Jeetu to leave; so, Guard-2 holds her and Jeetu leaves the house saying Jaya that her husband Om needs her right now and he does not need her. Jaya angrily asks about his ideals – Jeetu's ideas on freedom and pride. Earlier Jeetu does not like the idea of Om being a donor because he has thought that it will affect his freedom too, but now he becomes the donor voluntarily. Jaya is furious because, she thinks that Jeetu has lost all his senses. But, the Guards forcibly push Om and Jaya inside the house and leave with Jeetu. Om is greatly infuriated and abuses them that they have no rights to lock them indoors. Jaya too is shocked and felt defeated but Ma is completely absorbed by the TV program and is watching TV.

Jaya calls Ma to get her attention but Ma is wearing the headset so she cannot hear anything. When Jaya shakes Ma, she removes one of the headsets to receive her words. Jaya reports Ma that Jeetu is taken again by the Guards, Ma reacts that she is

least bothered about anyone in the house. Jaya forcibly compels Ma to come back into the world of reality and to respond to the changes that happen in the house. When Jaya snatches the remote and throws down, Ma becomes furious and shouts loudly at Jaya. Ma and Jaya push and pull each other to get hold of the remote while Om is moving towards the door.

The Agents from VideoCouch Enterprises open the door from outside and announces that Ma's order has come. Ma has ordered the VideoCouch which is a long gleaming case on wheels. The Agents sets up the VideoCouch which looks like a coffin box with electronic dials and circuitry. The equipment is installed after Ma has signed the delivery voucher and she deliberately avoids Jaya's questions. The Agents inform that the VideoCouch has a nourishment panel and the hydration filter; it is programmed to receive seven hundred and fifty video channels from all over the world. The Agents have attached a power-line to the unit to activate the system and it looks like a tiny space-module.

The VideoCouch, in a sweet voice, welcomes the customer (Ma). When the Couch begins to speak, Ma is helped into it by the Agents. She lies down inside the couch and she gasps and grunts once or twice. There is a breathing mask on her face and then the lid is closed and sealed by the Agents. Jaya is worried about Ma, but the Agents inform that the device is very comfortable for Ma. They also inform that Ma does not need anything from the outside world as the equipment has a full-recycling and bio-feed-in processor. In case, if Ma wants to get away, she can delink the programme. Jaya understands that the unit is bought from the account of InterPlanta Services. Jaya is worried about the malfunction of the equipment but her worries are ignored by the Agents.

When the Agents leave, Jaya finds that Om has just finished tying a bundle together. He tells Jaya that he is going to InterPlanta Services again. He believes that they will accept him again and ignores Jaya when she says that nobody is with her. Om replies that Ma is at home and he instructs him to look after the house. As a typical wife she is expected to take up the job of a housewife. He also instructs Jaya not to open the door when the Guards come again and he assures that he will be back soon. Jaya stays alone in the house as Jeetu and Om have left and Ma is almost out of the world by folding herself inside the couch.

### Act III, Scene II

The setting is the same at night and the scene is set after five days. Jaya is asleep and there are occasional hums of sound from the VideoCouch. Jaya is awakened by the warning tone sounds from the Contact Module. There is a male voice from the Contact Module which addresses Jaya as “Zhaya”. The voice is very fond of Jaya, but she is frightened to talk to the Module now. The voice introduces as a friend of Jaya, but she refuses the relationship by saying she cannot accept a person as a friend without meeting or seeing the person. She says it is madness to talk to a lighted ball. The voice introduces its name as Virgil. She is alert now and resists seeing the image of Virgil because the other members of the family fail to differentiate the real and unreal image after viewing the image on the Contact Module. She also says that she is not ready to pluck her eyes out like Jeetu or to sleep into a box like Ma. The voice assures that if Jaya sees the image, she will definitely like.

Jaya refuses to see the image, but the image gets enlarged on her back and when she sees the legs, and identifies that the image is Jeetu. She observes that Jeetu’s body is completely recovered and out of suspense she calls the image as Jeetu. The voice responds in the American accent and the image is Jeetu’s but the voice is not his. The image is upset when Jaya is not happy to see the image. Jaya says that she cannot be happy when she sees the ghost of Jeetu or the image of Jeetu. She believes that Jeetu is killed and used by the Agency. Actually, the body of Jeetu is brought with Jeetu’s willingness and Virgil has used the body of Jeetu. Jaya believes that Jeetu is killed and his body is used; but the voice says it is not death but it is a rebirth of Jeetu’s body. Jaya also has found that Ginni is not a woman but a computer animated image which is used to talk to the donors.

Virgil argues that Jeetu is happy in the new cased body but Jaya says his mind has been infected when he has made the choice. Jaya was shocked to know that every voice has been recorded even when the Module is off. Each and every word spoken by the family is heard by Virgil. It accepts that it knows who is Om and who is Jeetu and Om is Jaya’s wife by overhearing the conversation. Jaya understands that Virgil has been old and sick and now after using Jeetu’s body he becomes young and energetic. Virgil wants the healthy body of Jeetu but not the body of Om. The plan

has been kept as a secret and now the image through its voice reveals all the secrets to Jaya, the only live inmate in the house. Jaya (Jaya's body) is wanted to bear the child of Virgil, and they are interested only in child bearing women. When Om has said he is unmarried they have found using polygraph that he is telling a lie and they are usually after the married women who do not have children. The plan is that they take young men's bodies to live in and young women's bodies to make them pregnant. They do this because they become impotent in producing children. Virgil has been living for many years using many bodies and Jeetu's body is the fourth one in the last fifty years. Virgil also has overheard Jaya's longing for a child and now it gives an option to Jaya to become a mother with Jeetu's body. She is finally convinced that she will beget Jeetu's child and she moves forward to touch the image.

Immediately, the Guards from InterPlanta Services knock the door to fix an equipment to make the child possible for Jaya. Jaya is irritated to know that the machine knows even about her fertility cycle. Virgil wants to be with Jaya but he cannot survive in a polluted country like India. He recommends the procedure of child bearing as a painless one, but Jaya insists that she wants the pain because the pain tells her that she is alive. When the voice (Virgil) describes the mechanical procedure of pregnancy, Jaya becomes angry and throws things at the Module. Jaya rejects the procedure that there is no closeness without risking the skin touch and she does not believe in the unrealistic world of the machines. She manages to attack the Module, it cracks with sparkles and the figure of Jeetu is gone. The Guards outside are knocking the door with an urgent message to Jaya from the Receiver. They plan to break in through the door and meanwhile, Jaya grabs a piece of broken glass in her hand.

The speaker is installed outside the door by the Guards and the speaker with the voice of Virgil, warns politely that Jaya cannot win against it. Jaya says that she has lost everything and she has nothing to lose. The voice insists that still Jaya has her life to be given. Jaya tells the voice that she holds her death and pride and nobody can shackle her. Jaya is determined not to give up her pride for the sake of machines and images and if she wants to die she can wear rags and die with her head upheld high. She threatens that if the door is forcibly opened she will cut her throat using the broken glass piece. As an awakened colonized, Jaya commandingly corrects the

pronunciation of the voice; which addresses as “Zhaya” instead of Jaya. She is determined to change her name to be called as “Jaya” by Virgil. She insists the image to listen to “her” which means she is not going to listen to the machines anymore. She also informs that she is going to stay alone and she does not want any sound or disturbances. She is going to live a life of her own and she may take pills as much as she likes, she can watch TV and she can bath as many times as she wants. For the first time and also the last time in her life, she is strong in taking a decision to live her life. She also warns the machine to take rest because it may have a long-hard journey in future and it cannot succeed all the time. Jaya settles down comfortably to watch the TV; she looks happy and relaxed; she points the remote and turns the sound up loud. Jaya, as a clever and intelligent woman, is successful in coming out of the situation where the others are caught in the trap.

### **3.5 Harvest – Character Analysis**

#### **3.5.1 Jaya**

Jaya is shown as a typical housewife of a poor Indian family who serves her family consisting of husband, brother-in-law and mother-in-law. She is the wife of Om, the organ donor and she is nineteen years old. She is a very assertive female character, although women’s resistance is not the central concern of this play. It is a dystopian play about trading human organs and the commodification of the third world body that such a trade is predicated upon. Here, it is through the character of Jaya, Padmanabhan voices a possible resistance. There are suggestions of a discord in her relationship with her husband. However, Jaya does not seem resigned to submit to her fate. She openly expresses herself in front her husband’s brother Jeetu (with whom, it is suggested, she has been having a liaison): “What do you know of my needs, my desires? ..... A woman wants more than just satisfaction.”. Although her illicit relationship with Jeetu is not condoned by the playwright, we are nevertheless given an insight into what miseries a woman’s life can be reduced to, if she does not find a legitimate outlet for her sexual desires. It is not just direct interference with the woman’s body, but also cultural dictates that can stifle her physical existence.

However, it is towards the end that we get a firm assertion by Jaya to be the master of herself and her own body. When Virgil, an American man, tries to gain control over her body, in order to make her bear his child, she firmly refuses to negotiate with him. She is determined to lay down her own conditions. If Virgil wants her body, he must come to her in person. Jaya resists Virgil's advances and retains her own dignity in one swift stroke. While Virgil weighs his options, Jaya threatens to reclaim her own body through suicide.

Jaya certainly uses her own body to write her own fate, if nothing else, and thus, to voice resistance. Padmanabhan takes the argument a step further by suggesting that a reaction to commodification of women's body might not necessarily lead to compromised situations like exploitative women-headed households but also to a more assertive control by the women over their body. For, even in the face of her husband's unemployment, and the consequent poverty in the family, Jaya refuses to 'migrate' to a foreign land and asserts her power through her control over her body.

### **3.5.2 Om Prakash**

Om Prakash is the main protagonist of the play. We see the character, Om, signing up as an organ donor for Ginni who is an American woman simply because there is no other job left in India. Ginni pays him to lead and live a healthy life, so when it is time for donating an organ, there is no difficulty or problem in doing so. This play feels nice in the beginning because it seems that after signing up as an organ donor, they enjoy all benefits of luxurious and healthy life. However, what lies underneath is when Om and his small family start to enjoy their new lifestyles; they also start to deny the consequences gradually.

By seeing the financial situations of Om and his wife Jaya, we can appreciate money as a necessity to life. In this play, we see Om pretty much selling his life in order to obtain the top dollar for this family, well at least in India it is considered top dollar. Jaya is evidently distressed about Om's decision on signing himself to Ginni because the family is already on an off and on a troubled relationship because Jaya has a secret relationship with Om's younger brother Jeetu. Jeetu works as a prostitute as mentioned earlier, Ma is Om's mother who also lives in the house who favours Om more than the others. It can be said that it is so easy for Om to be able to sign to

Ginni because it shows how uncaring and what his body means to him, in order to get the riches.

Om's insistence is that his role in the selection procedure is entirely passive which allows Padmanabhan to critique the liberal discourse of free will and choice that advocates organ markets on the basis of individual autonomy. She suggests that it is precisely this discourse which creates the economic structure of millennial capitalism in which the selling of organs becomes an 'option' for the disenfranchised third-world individual. As Om's final reaction makes clear, his judgement has been severely impaired by the lure of unlimited wealth. When the reality of what he has done hits him, he is terrified: 'How could I have done this to myself? What sort of fool am I?'

### **3.5.3 Ginni**

Ginni is the American woman who has paid Om to receive his organ through transplantation. Throughout the play, the characters on stage are seen talking to the image of a beautiful woman called Ginni, the alleged buyer of Om's organs. The other main character is the module in the room which seems to have materialised from some futuristic thriller; Ginni (genie), the American lady, appears on it now and then like some Big Sister to see whether the Prakash (Ma's) family is following the rules. They lead antiseptic lives, eating multi-coloured pills instead of food, not mixing with others, and even without getting a cold.

Ginny is careful, however, to provide the donors with plenty of comforts to compensate them for their efforts. Ginny reminds the family by pampering them that, she is only fulfilling her own contractual obligations. Ginny's casual sentence serves as a jolting and disturbing reminder that the receivers and the donors hardly trade in equivalents: Ginny provides 'things' for which the donors pay her back in their own lives. In fact, Ginny's continual gifts amount to a little more than mere investment.

Ginny's presence on the screen is invisible. She communicates with the donor family only through the Contact Module. She is, thus, never physically present on the stage, a fact that is highly significant because Padmanabhan has chosen a genre – theatre – which is explicitly concerned with a tangible, embodied and physical presence on stage. Yet throughout the play, Ginny is only ever visible in two-

dimensions, on the screen of the Contact Module. The only embodied performers on the stage are the racially and visually distinct bodies of the third-world donors.

### **3.6 HARVEST - THEMES:**

*Harvest* has many strong themes and at the lateral level the concept of organ donation getting its corporate touches becomes the main theme; feminism is the second stronger theme in the play. There are many other social themes present in the play.

#### **3.6.1 Poverty & Unemployment**

The social issues of the third world nation are described in the play, where the poor sector of the people suffers without a job. The tenement of the building where the protagonists of the play reside depicts the pathetic situation. It is a single-room with no privacy for any member of the family. The space is congested and so the movement is restricted too. Let it be for a married couple or lovers or for an individual, the members have to wait for the absence of others to create their own space. For instance, Jaya's secret love relationship with her brother-in-law Jeetu gets its space when Ma gets her bowel movement. When Ma goes to use the common toilet, which is two floors down, they get their private space. The toilet is used by forty families of the tenement and everyone has to wait in the queue to get their turn to use the toilet.

Om becomes jobless when the clerical position deteriorates as the computer and technology has its tremendous growth. Being jobless, Om is forced to choose the job of an organ donor and his brother Jeetu chooses himself to be a prostitute as he wants to be free and not to get committed to anyone. The clothing and accessories used by the family members too indicate that they are in a wretched situation.

#### **3.6.2 Patriarchy:**

Ma and Om are shown as the carriers of patriarchy in the house. Later on, the machines try to take over the position of a patriarch replacing Ma and Om. Jaya, the daughter-in-law of the house becomes the victim of patriarchal dominance. Ma, the mother-in-law wants to control Jaya in every aspect. The way she addresses Jaya and the way she converses reveal her as a dominant mother-in-law. Ma instructs not to



watch out for her husband's arrival, though she has no other job to do at home. Ma never allows any private space for Jaya. Ma insists Jaya to massage her legs when there is nothing to do at home. She always counters when Jaya expresses her opinion. Ma also believes that Jaya should not speak out loudly, let it be in front of her mother-in-law or her husband Om or her brother-in-law Jeetu. It is not the point of whether Jaya is talking rightly or not but the way she emphasizes her opinion in a patriarchal set-up family itself becomes the problem.

Ma abuses Jaya unnecessarily, at times, doubting her character and behaviour. She mocks that Jaya does not understand her husband better. Actually, Jaya is clever than any other family members but it is never accepted till the end of the family. Sometimes, Ma accuses that she is not fit to be the wife of Om and she is not fit to be a woman as a barren without child. As a typical mother-in-law, Ma points out the mistakes of Jaya wherever possible, but never takes efforts to read the mistakes committed by the others. She does character assassination even without confirming Jaya's secret relationship with Jeetu. Once she confirms the secret affair between Jeetu and Jaya, she curses and abuses Jaya. At a point of frustration, Jaya demands privacy and requests everyone to leave her alone, though there is no chance for it.

Ma and Om are cynical while treating Jaya; even Om once says that he wants to throw Jaya outside the house. He does not feel guilty for Jaya's barrenness, as he may be the reason for it, but he too accuses Jaya. Om neither shows interest in begetting a child nor attends Jaya's interest in getting a child, but Jaya alone is accused as a barren woman. Ma also blames Jaya that she does not know how to live with crowded families but towards the end of the play Ma becomes inattentive to the issues happening in her family. Both Ma and Om never treat Jeetu too as their family member; they do not encourage him because he has chosen prostitution as his profession which is a disgraceful act and their cultural practices never accept prostitution as a profession.

After Ma and Om, the image from the insemination machine or which calls itself as Virgil tries to dominate Jaya. It forces Jaya to give her body for begetting a child. The title of the play *Harvest* symbolically denotes that the implantation of seeds of men is sowed in women's body and is harvested. Virgil tries to convince

Jaya to beget his child and tries to do it forcibly towards the end; though the screen play does not show any violent harassment of woman on the screen, the audience can view all these aspects indirectly indicated. As usual, Jaya is tried to be convinced in the name of love and luckily Jaya does not become emotional rather grows rational. Anyhow, Jaya cuts out all the clutches of patriarchal clings towards the end of the play as a strong woman and extricates herself from the clutches of patriarchal society.

### 3.6.3 Feminism:

Feminism is a movement which basically demands the equal rights for women in the society and questions the injustice done to women in the domestic as well as other social environment. *Harvest* is a feminist play more than a dystopian play. The theme is established through a strong, powerful character Jaya, who is stubborn to give up her pride throughout the play.

Jaya has a troubled intimate relationship with her husband and she has always wanted to have a child. Jaya's pleasure or desire is left unattended or unnoticed by her husband Om. Jaya anyhow has a secret relationship with Jeetu and he, in turn, is not ready to fill her womb with a child. When Jaya is requested by Virgil, to beget his child, she denies very strongly the machine's control over her body. As usual, Jaya is tried to be convinced in the name of love by Virgil and luckily Jaya does not become a prey to emotional weakness but she becomes rational. Instead, she creates her own space towards the end of the play and bravely rejects the insinuation of the machine as well as its surveillance. Jaya does not fall into its (Virgil) emotional trap. Jaya does not become a prey to his mesmerizing and enchanting words rather takes a rational step. Having done so, Jaya cuts out all the clutches of patriarchal clings towards the end of the play as a strong woman. She never allows her body to be treated like a woman or land and to get sowed with an alien seeds of men.

Jaya stubbornly declares that she holds complete rights to do whatever she wants with her body and hates others controlling her body according to their whims and fancies. However, having created her own space, she feels liberated to make herself content with what she desires, unlike living to the commands of others. This paradigm shift of patriarch is well evident in the last scene where Jaya sits in front

of TV and watches programmes and begins to enjoy the moment of her life which she has been denied for a longer period.

### **3.6.4 Man versus Machine: colonized versus colonizer**

The domination of the machines and the operators of the machines employed in the play can be seen as the colonizers and the organ donors can be viewed as the colonized. Setting against the background of science and advent of technology Manjula Padhmanaban has depicted the advanced battle between machine and man for possession. It is a question of whatever machine is superior to man or vice versa, but one thing is very clear in this play; human beings have to wage war against the machines, in future, if they fail to control machines made by them. This becomes an essential aspect of science fiction play too. The colonizers of the First World nations have their dominance over the Third World colonized. Subsequently, the inmates of the Third World are trapped under the unrelenting gaze of the First World. This total deprivation of privacy can be interpreted as the ultimate form of surveillance.

The way Om narrates when he stands in a queue to get selected for an organ donor also narrates how people left in such a critical situation to get a job; the job of selling their own organs for food and comfort. Moreover, the guards in the play have an entirely different attitude that have played the role as that of a robots without any emotions or senses; they strictly follow the instructions given and they do not have logical mind as the machines that lacks emotions and practical logical applications. The men in the queue are treated as inanimate objects. They move along the queue and urinate on the way by standing in the queue; they obey the commands whether to remove the dress completely or to wear the dress when they wait in the queue.

Everything of the colonized is decided upon by the colonizer. The donors are expected to be happy even if they have some personal problem. The following instructions are given to the donor – where and when they have to wash themselves; where, when and what they have to eat and in whole, how to live their life. The relationship among the family members is also monitored and each and every word spoken in the house by all the housemates has been eavesdropped by the machines deliberately.

The machines plan to end the sense and feelings of human beings and begin to treat them as lifeless objects; the machines have control over thinking capabilities of the human beings as well controlling the emotions of the human beings. They just ignore when questions are asked and has been least bothered to give any response. The machine interferes and decides upon who should visit the house and who should stay in the house. The comforts of the men are the temptation used by the colonizers to control over them. The protagonist Jaya overcomes these temptations cleverly and wins over the machine by avoiding its domination.

### 3.7 Questions:

1. Justify that *Harvest* is a dystopian fiction.
2. Elaborate. *Harvest* is the stage for women to take over their stance more stubbornly.
3. Can the play *Harvest* be seen as the description of the battle between the man and the machine?
4. Write on the role of power structure shown in the play.
5. Is the play, *Harvest* supporting the advancement of technology or reject completely?
6. Poverty is the first qualification of organ donation. Justify using the play *Harvest*.
7. Write an essay on the social issues and the causes as discussed in the play *Harvest*.
8. Write an essay on “Jaya is the victim of patriarchy”.
9. Rewrite in an essay “*Harvest* is a postcolonial play”.
10. Write an essay to prove “Jaya is a feminist”.

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## UNIT- 4

### SHORT STORIES

#### 4.0. Objectives:

Reading skill can be improved by reading the novels; moreover, reading novels of Indian writers can show the historical, political, social, geographical sketches of India. Apart from improving reading skills, reading novels improves the analytical and critical skills and develops the social consciousness. This can also improve the readers to understand life in a better way as the novel reflects the experience of the writer from many perspectives.

#### 4.1. An Astrologer's Day - R.K. Narayan

##### 4.1.1. R.K. Narayan – Bio Note

R. K. Narayan is one of the three leading figures of early Indian literature in English, along with Mulk Raj Anand and Raja Rao. R.K. Narayan was born in 1906 in Chennai (then Madras), Tamil Nadu. His father was a school headmaster. Frequent transfers in various schools shifted the family to several places. He spent most of his life in Mysore as his father got transfer to the Maharajah's College High School, Mysore. He was taken care of by his grandmother who taught him arithmetic, mythology, classical Indian music and Sanskrit. The family mostly conversed in English which made Narayan to acquire language, error free.

Narayan earned his bachelor's degree from Maharaja College of Mysore. For some time, he worked as a school teacher and then realised that teaching was not a suitable profession for him. He understood that writing was the best profession he can choose. Then Narayan did not go for any choice, but sat at home and wrote continuously as a full-time writer. Initially, he published stories in local English newspapers and magazines. During this time, writing was not encouraged as a full-time career, yet the family supported him to continue his writing.

Malgudi is the fictional town created by R.K. Narayan. In most of his fictional works, the story runs around this imaginary town Malgudi. It is a replica of a South Indian town. In his first novel, *Swami and Friends*, he introduced this fictional town Malgudi to his reading audience. In the beginning, he was not

welcomed by the publishing world. He was rejected by many publishers; yet he did not lose hope in writing.

Later, Narayan became a reporter for a newspaper called, *The Justice*, which was dedicated to the rights of non-Brahmins. This job helped Narayan to explore a wide variety of people and issues. Graham Greene, the British writer helped Narayan getting his novel published, yet a few copies were sold even after getting good reviews. The second novel, *The Bachelor of Arts* was based on his college experience as a student. The third novel, *The Dark Room* was about domestic disharmony showing gender discrimination in married life. After his wife's death, he was very much disturbed and wrote his next novel, *The English Teacher*, another biographical novel by R.K. Narayan. By then, Narayan became a popular writer and he ran his own journal *Indian Thought* in 1940. Then, he published his first collection of short stories titled, *Malgudi Days* in 1942. By 1948, his books were widely circulated and sold. He also wrote a screen play for the film *Miss Malini* which was released in 1947.

Continuously, Narayan produced fictional works and most of them had autobiographical elements. Some of his important works were *The Financial Expert*, *Waiting for the Mahatma*. By 1953, he was accepted as a great writer in the United States as his works were published there. He received numerous awards, including India's highest literary honour, Sahitya Akademi Award in 1960 and several Nobel Prize nominations, and his novel *The Guide* (1958) saw both film and Broadway adaptations. The book, *The Guide* was written on his journey to the United States and it became a successful one. This book represented Narayan's writing skills and elements, ambivalent in expression, coupled with a riddle-like conclusion.

Narayan's next novel, *The Man-Eater of Malgudi*, was published in 1961. He visited America and Australia and delivered a series of lectures on Indian literature. Then, Narayan published several short stories and a few novels as an acclaimed writer, world-wide. He also translated the *Kamba Ramayana* (Tamil version) and the *Mahabharata* into English. Narayan died in 2001 in Chennai at the age of 94.

R.K. Narayan's writing style was marked by simplicity and subtle humour. He told stories of ordinary people trying to live their simple lives in a changing world. The themes of Narayan's stories and novels seem to be of perennial interest

especially to a sensitive mind interested in human beings. The themes of Narayan are all dependently interrelated and inter-connected. One of them is man's susceptibility to self-deception which is the most recurrent providing excellent field for Narayan's comedy. The study of the family and various family relationships, renunciation, generational disaffiliation, conflict between tradition and modernity, the East-West encounter and education are some of his other themes.

#### **4.1.2 An Astrologer's Day – A Short Summary**

The story is based on a single day event of an astrologer. An astrologer is a soothsayer or the fortune teller who predicts someone's future and guesses someone's past. This short story is about a one-day happening of an unskilful astrologer who is capable of earning money without any knowledge on astrology.

The astrologer is not given any name in the story. The first thing which attracts the customers is the appearance of the astrologer. His whiskers of his moustache run down his cheeks and so everyone can easily predict that he is a skilled astrologer and becomes a centre of attraction. Some of the trades that emerge on the roadside are run by medicine sellers, sellers of stolen hardware and junk, magicians, an auctioneer of cheap cloth who attracts the whole town by his auction-cum-sale of a variety of clothes, a vendor of fried groundnut whose attractive voice is louder to get his customers by giving different names to his shop as "Bombay Ice-Cream", "Delhi Almond" "Raja's Delicacy" and so on which really attracts the crowd. As the road is crowded in this manner, the astrologer too gets his business crowd.

The astrologer has no light for his business in darkness and he depends on the light that is kept on the groundnut heap nearby by the fried groundnut vendor. Most of the shops and merchants on the pavements depend on the light from the shops as there is no street light facility by the municipal or government. The gaslights which make hissing sound, lamps stuck on poles, used cycle lamps are the varieties of lights used by the shop keepers. Some of the shop keepers manage without light by using the light of nearby vendors like the astrologer has been using the light of his nearby shop.

The bewildering criss-cross of light rays and moving shadows on the road suits the business for the astrologer. Basically, he is not an astrologer, as he has not



studied the subject. He does not know the basics of the stars too and there is no difference between the customer and the astrologer because he does not know how to calculate and predict one's past and future based on the birth stars. Though he is not a learnt astrologer, the customers are happy and astonished to listen to his prediction: "that was more a matter of study, practice, and shrewd guesswork". Anyhow, like an honest man who toils the whole day and earns money for his livelihood, the astrologer too goes back home with the wages he has earned the whole day. Here the short story writer, indirectly points out that the astrologer is not an honest man, because he has not learnt astrology and earns money by using his wit.

There is a hint that the astrologer has a hidden past. The family of the astrologer owns cornfield and an ancestral home, where the astrologer might have lived happily by tilling the land. When he has left the village, he has no plans for his livelihood and he has chosen the profession as an astrologer accidentally. Therefore, it is difficult for the astrologer to survive in a new town finding a new profession in a new place.

The astrologer, usually, manages to find the problem of a customer after a five minutes' talk with the customer. So, he regularly allows his customer to speak for ten minutes and for the ten minutes he will not disturb his customer. With this brief confession of ten minutes, the astrologer catches up his responses for at least ten questions to be asked by the customer.

The astrologer is witty to tell the customer in advance that all his words may not be correct and most of his predictions are right. This definitely will make the customers to believe in the words of the astrologer. Without any of the tactics, the astrologer also can manage with some default comments to read the palm of a stranger-cum-customer. The astrologer may pretend examining the palm of the customer and reads aloud that "In many ways you are not getting the fullest results for your efforts," and it is obvious that men on earth mostly have misfortune in life; if not all, those who come to an astrologer must have an unfortunate event in his life and so they will be impressed by the astrologer.

On the day of narration, the astrologer has to pack up his things and go home because it is getting dark and the fried-groundnut vendor has switched off his light and gets ready to go home. Without the light of the next fried-groundnut vendor, the

astrologer cannot continue his business in darkness. So, the astrologer too gets ready to go home and so slowly packs up his things. When the astrologer is about to leave his bundle, he notices a man standing in front of him.

The astrologer tempts the stranger to chat with him. The stranger does not show any interest to the call of the astrologer. The way the stranger looks at the astrologer and his palm leaves has insulted him so he has decided to go for a challenge with the stranger. The astrologer, without the willingness from the stranger just begins his prediction by saying that the trouble has come to the stranger because of his nature. The stranger does not like that and tells the astrologer to stop his prediction and challenges him to predict something worthy. The astrologer is offended by this challenge and tells that he charges only three pies per question and the money spent to the astrologer for prediction is worth spending. After hearing this, the stranger has taken out an anna (one rupee is equivalent to 16 annas) and has flung it out to the astrologer and has said that he has some questions to ask. The challenge by the stranger is that if the astrologer's prediction goes wrong the astrologer has to return that anna with interest.

The challenge is accepted by the astrologer and he demands the stranger that if he gives all answers correctly, he has to be paid five rupees. The stranger agrees to pay eight annas for a correct answer and if the astrologer fails to tell the correct answer, he has to pay the stranger twice the amount per question. After a while, the agreement is made between the astrologer and the stranger and the astrologer gets ready for his prediction by reading the palm leaves. The astrologer catches a glimpse of the face of the stranger by the match light; he is frightened and wants to leave home without any prediction.

The stranger does not allow the astrologer to leave so easily and he holds the wrist of the astrologer and says that he cannot get out of it then. He also has complained that the astrologer has called him for reading his fortune when he has not shown any interest. The stranger, in a threatening voice, warns the astrologer that he cannot get out of it. The voice of the astrologer is shaky and dull and requests the stranger to leave him that day and he will speak to the stranger the next day. The stranger does not leave the astrologer to go and is serious about the challenge. The astrologer, then, begins with his usual tactics, by saying, "there is a woman..." but

before he begins the first sentence like this, the stranger stops the astrologer. He directly asks the astrologer a question and he wants an answer to the question.

The astrologer then understands that the stranger is very strong and will not leave without getting a worthy response from the astrologer. The astrologer, before responding to the first question of the stranger, demands one rupee (sixteen annas) instead of the earlier agreement eight annas. The astrologer has won the deal of getting paid one rupee for his response. The astrologer responds that the stranger has been left to die sometime back and at another time, the stranger has escaped from an attack. Now the stranger gets confidence on the words of the astrologer and admires him. The stranger insists the astrologer to tell more about him. The astrologer tells the stranger that he has been pushed into a well nearby in the field in his village and he has been left there to be dead. The astrologer predicts that he cannot meet the culprit in this world because, he is dead four months back in a distant town and so convinces the stranger that he will not meet the culprit again.

To his surprise, the stranger is addressed as Guru Nayak by the astrologer. Now Guru Nayak is shocked to know that the astrologer can predict his name and strongly believes that the astrologer has some real power to read one's past and future. The astrologer says that he knows all the other things too and insists Guru Nayak to listen carefully. The astrologer adds the other things that he knows about Guru Nayak. The astrologer advises Guru Nayak to catch a train and leave the town immediately. Therefore, the prediction of the astrologer is that Guru Nayak has to stay in his village and should not come out of it. After all his predictions and advices, the astrologer takes a pinch of sacred ash and holds it to Guru Nayak and tells him to rub it on his forehead and to go home. The astrologer is really witty to chase away Guru Nayak and the reason is revealed towards the end of the story.

The place is left empty, as almost all the vendors have left home by the time the astrologer completes his conversation with Guru Nayak. Guru Nayak has gone off in the darkness after paying a handful of coins to the astrologer. The astrologer has not counted the coins but has hurried home as it is late as well as there has been no light to check the coins. On the contrary, the astrologer is worried that Guru Nayak has cheated him when his wife counts twelve and half annas instead of sixteen annas. The astrologer feels relieved that day because he has been guilty for what he has

done years ago. In an inebriated mood the astrologer has pushed him into the well and has no guts to go back to his village thinking that Guru Nayak is dead. The astrologer is now relieved of his past and goes to sleep peacefully on the pyol.

Actually, when Guru Nayak has lit cheroot, the astrologer identifies him as his childhood rival. Luckily, Guru Nayak has not identified the astrologer because it has been dark and there is no light. Meanwhile, the astrologer wants to get away from Guru Nayak, as he may kill the astrologer if he finds the identity. The only thing which irks the readers is that Guru Nayak is very ignorant and does not doubt the astrologer for letting him know all of his past events with minute details. The astrologer though escapes from his village after attempting a murder, yet he has not lived a peaceful and comfortable life.

#### **4.1.3 An Astrologer's Day – Analytical Summary**

The story is based on a single day event of an astrologer. This story is set in a typical South Indian town which is usually common in the stories as well as novels of R. K. Narayan. An astrologer is a soothsayer or the fortune teller who predicts someone's future and guesses someone's past. This short story is about a one-day happening of an unskilful astrologer who is capable of earning money without any knowledge on astrology.

The astrologer is not given any name in the story. He begins his work in the middle of the day and in the usual spot, he gets ready for his job. He is very punctual in reaching the spot where he works. He opens his bag and spreads out the equipment that he uses for his profession. The bag contains a dozen cowrie shells, a square piece of cloth with some mystic charts on it, a notebook and a bundle of palmyra writing (manuscripts written on the preserved palm leaves which are usually used by the astrologers to predict someone's future).

The professional equipments are secondary ones to attract the clients to his profession. The first thing which attracts the customers is the appearance of the astrologer. He has applied sacred ash and vermilion on his forehead. More than that, the saffron coloured turban that is worn around his head is the most centre of attraction. The colour of the turban itself is enough to attract any sort of customers. His eyes are very bright and gleaming; the reason behind this is, his continual search

for getting customers for his livelihood. The eyes become more powerful because they are placed in between the painted forehead and the dark moustache. These attractive eyes become a tool of attraction among the customers; the customers feel light and comfort at his eyes. His whiskers of his moustache run down his cheeks and so everyone can easily predict that he is a skilled astrologer and becomes a centre of attraction.

The astrologer sits under the branches of a huge tamarind tree which is located in one of the corners of the Town Hall Park. The location is unique for many reasons: the road is always busy with a moving crowd from morning till night; throughout the road a variety of business shops are found. Some of the trades that emerge on the roadside are run by medicine sellers, sellers of stolen hardware and junk, magicians, an auctioneer of cheap cloth who attracts the whole town by his auction-cum-sale, a vendor of fried groundnut whose attractive voice is louder to get his customers by giving different names to his shop as “Bombay Ice-Cream”, “Delhi Almond” “Raja’s Delicacy” and so on which really attracts the crowd. As the road is crowded in this manner, the astrologer too gets his business crowd.

The astrologer has no light for his business in darkness and he depends on the light that is kept on the groundnut heap nearby, by the fried groundnut vendor. Most of the shops and merchants on the pavements depend on the light from the shops as there is no street light facility by the municipal or government. There are varieties of lights used by the shop keepers. The gaslights which make hissing sound, lamps stuck on poles, used cycle lamps are the varieties of lights used by the shop keepers. Some of the shop keepers manage without light by using the light of nearby vendors like the astrologer has been using the light of his nearby shop.

The bewildering criss-cross of light rays and moving shadows on the road suits the business for the astrologer. Basically, he is not an astrologer, as he has not studied the subject. He has not practiced with any expert too. When he begins his life, he has not been sure about his life and how it is possible to predict the lives of the others. He does not know the basics of the stars too and there is no difference between the customer and the astrologer as he does not know how to calculate and predict based on the birth stars of a person. He manages the profession with the learnt skill of studying people’s minds, the psychology of the customers.

Though he is not a learnt astrologer, the customers are happy and astonished to listen to his prediction: “that was more a matter of study, practice, and shrewd guesswork”. It is not an easy task to get into a new business and to manage the domestic expenses with the earning. As a newcomer of the town, it is rather difficult to get settled with a new business which he has no idea about it. Anyhow, like an honest man who toils the whole day and earns money for his livelihood, the astrologer too goes back home with the wages he has earned the whole day. Here, the short story writer indirectly points out that the astrologer is not an honest man, because he has not learnt astrology and earns money by using his wit as well as cheating the customers without letting them to know the truth.

In the first part of the story, there is a hint that the astrologer has a hidden past. It is not discussed in detail just to maintain suspense in the story. When the story is developed the suspense is kept and is revealed towards the end of the story. In the middle of the story it is told that he has a past and so he has left the village. Otherwise, he would have continued his ancestors’ job. They own cornfield and an ancestral home, where the astrologer might have lived and tilled the land. He would have married a woman and lived as a farmer. When he has left the village, he has no plans for his livelihood and he has chosen the profession of being an astrologer accidentally. It is also mentioned that he has left the village without anyone’s knowledge. That must be a secret plight which also indicates that something is wrong. He has crossed a few hundred miles away from his village; this too indicates that he does not want to have any sort of connection with his native village. Therefore, it is difficult for the astrologer to survive in a new town finding a new profession by being in a new place.

The astrologer himself is a victim of mankind’s troubles. He has experienced the common problems faced by the human beings and the majority of the problems are based on one’s marriage and money. He has been studying through his own experiences which have sharpened his understanding of the problems of a common individual. He is clever enough to tackle his customers. He charges three pies per question asked to him. After five minutes talk with the customer, the astrologer manages to find the problem of the customer. He usually allows his customer to speak for ten minutes and for the ten minutes he will not disturb his customer. With this brief confession of ten minutes, the astrologer catches up his responses for at

least ten questions to be asked by the customer. He also prepares advices for the customer which would suit his situation.

The astrologer is witty to tell the customer in advance that all his words may not be correct and most of his predictions are right. He manages to answer at least nine questions correctly out of ten questions. This definitely will make the customers to believe in the words of the astrologer. Without any of the tactics, the astrologer also can manage with some default comments to read the palm of a stranger-cum-customer. The astrologer may pretend examining the palm of the customer and reads aloud that “In many ways you are not getting the fullest results for your efforts,” and it is obvious that men on earth mostly have misfortunes in life; if not all, those who come to an astrologer must have an unfortunate event in his life and so they will be impressed by the astrologer. Otherwise, the astrologer may use his skills of character analysis as, “Most of your troubles are due to your nature. How can you be otherwise with Saturn where he is? You have an impetuous nature and a rough exterior.” This will definitely trap the customer if he has no misfortune in life. By one way or the other the customer gets satisfied with the astrologer’s skill of palm-reading and pays him the cost.

On the day of narration, the astrologer has to pack up his things and go home because it is getting dark and the fried-groundnut vendor has switched off his light and gets ready to go home. Without the light of the next fried-groundnut vendor, the astrologer cannot continue his business in darkness. So, the astrologer too gets ready to go home and so slowly packs up his things. He picks up his cowrie shells and the other equipments to bundle them up in his bag. The place is fully dark and only the green shaft of light from a faraway shop spots out.

When the astrologer is about to leave his bundle, he notices a man standing in front of him. He hopes positively that he can become his client on that day. The whole day has not paid him any wages, so he calculates the man standing in front of him would pay wages of that day. As usual, he tries his best by inducing the emotion of the stranger as, “You look so careworn. It will do you good to sit down for a while and chat with me.” This is one of the usual ways of attracting a customer by saying that there is some worrisome problem in the customer’s mind and a solution may be

offered during the chat. The chat with the astrologer, of course, costs money and it is not a free piece of advice.

The stranger does not show any interest to the call of the astrologer. He replies vaguely and grumbles which indicates that he is not interested in reading his future. The astrologer stresses his invitation but the way the stranger looks at the astrologer compels him to challenge with the astrologer. The way the stranger looks at the astrologer and his palm leaves has insulted him so he has decided to go for a challenge with the stranger. The astrologer, without the willingness from the stranger just begins his prediction by saying that the trouble has come to the stranger because of his nature. The stranger does not like that and tells the astrologer to stop his prediction and challenges to predict something worthy. The astrologer is offended by this challenge and tells that he charges only three pies per question and the money spent to the astrologer for prediction is worth spending. After hearing this, the stranger has taken out an anna (one rupee is equivalent to 16 annas) and has flung it out to the astrologer and has said that he has some questions to ask. The challenge by the stranger is that if the astrologer's prediction goes wrong the astrologer has to return that anna with interest.

The challenge is accepted by the astrologer and he demands the stranger that if he gives all the answers correctly, he has to be paid five rupees. The stranger refuses at first and then agrees to give eight annas. The stranger agrees to pay eight annas for a correct answer and if the astrologer fails to tell the correct answer, he has to pay the stranger twice the amount per question. After a while, the agreement is made and the astrologer gets ready for his prediction by reading the palm leaves.

The astrologer prays, as it is his custom before he starts reading every customer. The stranger is lighting a cheroot (the country made cigar). The astrologer catches a glimpse on the face of the stranger by the match light. There is a pause which is unusual of the astrologer and this pause in the conversation has an element of suspense in the story. The road is busy with cars, carts and horses and the place is quite noisy of the crowd. The stranger sits down, is sucking his cheroot and puffing out. The astrologer becomes very uncomfortable. He returns the money to the stranger saying that he is late to home as well as he is not used to such kind of predictions. The astrologer, again, begins to bundle up his equipment in his bag.



The stranger does not allow the astrologer to leave so easily and he holds the wrist of the astrologer and says that he cannot get out of it then. He also has complained that the astrologer has called him for reading his fortune when he has not shown any interest. The stranger, in a threatening voice, warns the astrologer that he cannot get out of it. The voice of the astrologer is shaky and dull and requests the stranger to leave him that day and he will speak to the stranger the next day. The stranger does not leave the astrologer to go and is serious about the challenge. The astrologer, then, begins with his usual tactics, by saying, “there is a woman...” but before he begins the first sentence like this, the stranger stops the astrologer. He is very straight and tells that he is not interested to know all about his past. He directly asks the astrologer a question and he wants an answer to the question. It seems the stranger is searching for some man and his question is whether the man will be caught or not. He also threatens to respond as “yes” or “no”, otherwise, he has to give back all the money with interest.

The astrologer, then, understands that the stranger is very strong and will not leave without getting any response from the astrologer. The astrologer, then, begins as usual by muttering a few chants. The astrologer, before responding to the first question of the stranger, demands one rupee (sixteen annas) instead of the earlier agreement eight annas. The astrologer has won the deal of getting paid one rupee for his response. The astrologer responds that the stranger has been left to die sometime back and at another time, the stranger has escaped from an attack. Now the stranger gets confidence on the words of the astrologer and admires him. He also shows the scar on his chest to the astrologer. The stranger insists the astrologer to tell more about him. The astrologer tells the stranger that he has been pushed into a well nearby in the field in his village and he has been left there to be dead. The stranger is awestruck and agrees that he has been pushed into a well nearby in the field but a passer-by happens to peep into the well and has saved the life of the stranger. The stranger is overwhelmed by enthusiasm and also agrees that if the passer-by has not come there, he would have died.

The stranger asks his next question when he will meet the culprit and the clenched fist of the stranger indicates that he must be very angry with the culprit. Actually, the stranger has been searching for the culprit who has pushed him into the well for the past few years. He is seeking the astrologer’s help to predict the chance

of meeting the culprit again to take revenge upon his past inhumane act. The astrologer predicts that he cannot meet the culprit in this world because, he is dead four months back in a distant town and so he convinces the stranger that he will not meet the culprit again. The stranger has been living for all these years to take revenge upon his enemy; but is grunting now because he has missed the chance of killing his enemy.

To his surprise, the stranger is addressed as Guru Nayak by the astrologer. Actually, Guru Nayak is the name of the stranger. Now Guru Nayak is shocked to know that the astrologer can predict his name and strongly believes that the astrologer has some real power to read one's past and future. The astrologer says that he knows all the other things too and insists Guru Nayak to listen carefully. The astrologer adds the other things that he knows about Guru Nayak. He tells that the village of Guru Nayak is distant and lies towards the north of this town and it will take two days journey to reach the village. The astrologer advises Guru Nayak to catch a train and leave the town immediately. He also warns that Guru Nayak may face another danger in his life, if he leaves the village again. Therefore, the prediction of the astrologer is that Guru Nayak has to stay in his village and should not come out of it. After all his predictions and advices, the astrologer takes a pinch of sacred ash and holds it to Guru Nayak and tells him to rub it on his forehead and to go home. The final warning is also given that if he travels towards the south of his village, he will face danger, otherwise he will live longer. The astrologer is really witty to chase away Guru Nayak and the reason is revealed towards the end of the story; the element of suspense is developed throughout the story.

Guru Nayak responds that he has no reason to leave his native place and he has been out of his village just to look for his enemy and to kill him once he meets. He also regrets that his enemy has escaped from being killed by him. He feels satisfied that his wishes is fulfilled that his enemy has got a deserving death. The astrologer adds his comments that the enemy is crushed under a lorry. This has satiated the revengeful thought of Guru Nayak.

The place is left empty as almost all the vendors have left home by the time the astrologer completes his conversation with Guru Nayak. The astrologer picks up his things and put them into his bag. Even the green light from a distant shop is gone

now and the place is completely dark. Guru Nayak has gone off in the darkness after paying a handful of coins to the astrologer.

When the astrologer reaches home, it is nearly midnight. His wife has been waiting for him at the door and asks reason for his late arrival. He flings the coins in front of her saying a customer has given all those coins and asks her to count them. The astrologer has not counted the coins but has hurried home as it is late as well there has been no light to check the coins. The wife counts and finds it is twelve and a half annas in total. The wife is very happy and says that she can buy some jaggery and coconut the next day. The child has been asking for sweets for so many days and she has nothing to provide and now she has got some money to prepare some sweets for her. On the contrary, the astrologer is worried that Guru Nayak has cheated him; instead of paying 16 annas (one rupee) he has paid only twelve and a half annas.

The wife senses something wrong with her husband and asks the reason for his worries. The astrologer does not respond the reason but says nothing. However after dinner, sitting on the pyol (Pyol is a raised platform on which to sit or even lie down. It is at about knee-height, and built on either sides of the main door of a house.), the astrologer confesses the truth to his wife. Here the suspense is revealed to the reader, towards the end of the story. The astrologer feels relieved that day because he has been guilty for what he has done years ago. Years back, he has left his village, come to the town, married and settled down to escape from a murder accusation which he has attempted. He has never gone back to his village and has never thought of going back to his village. On that day, he feels free of guilt because he himself comes to know that the person (Guru Nayak) whom he has thought of murdered years back is alive now. The astrologer feels that he is relieved off his burden of all these years. The wife wonders when she comes to know that her husband has attempted to kill someone. This shows that the astrologer has lived a normal life, where no one can doubt him as a rogue or murderer. The astrologer confesses that it has happened when he has been a very young immature drunkard. One day, he has a quarrel with Guru Nayak while gambling. In an inebriated mood, the astrologer has pushed him into the well and has no guts to go back to his village thinking that Guru Nayak is dead. The astrologer is now relieved of his past and goes to sleep peacefully on the pyol. The story ends here that the astrologer's wit has saved him from being killed by revengeful Guru Nayak.

Actually, when Guru Nayak has lit cheroot, the astrologer identifies him as his childhood rival. Luckily, Guru Nayak has not identified the astrologer because it has been dark and there is no light. Meanwhile, the astrologer wants to get away from Guru Nayak, as he may kill the astrologer if he finds the identity. Anyhow, when it does not work, he plans to get money for telling what he has known already. The only thing which irks here is, Guru Nayak is not sharp enough to doubt the astrologer for letting him know all of his past events with minute details. This might be because he has strong belief in astrology or maybe he has no idea that there is a chance for a drunkard would turn into an astrologer. The astrologer though escapes from his village after attempting the murder, but he has not lived a peaceful and comfortable life. He has no money to fulfil the needs of his family as well he has no peace in his mind as his act of murder has always emerged in his mind. It can be treated as his punishment for the crime which he has attempted at his younger age. Moreover, he has guided Guru Nayak to go back to his village and stay there, which may help Guru Nayak to look after his life instead of ruining his mind and family.

#### **4.1.4 An Astrologer's Day - Themes**

The short story, "An Astrologer's Day" by R.K. Narayan has various themes and the major theme is guilt. The other themes are beliefs on Fate, Karma, and other concepts such as fear, freedom, desperation, relief are discussed too.

##### **4.1.4.1 Fate/Karma:**

In the story, "An Astrologer's Day", R.K. Narayan strongly emphasises the Hindu's belief on Karma. The Hindu idea of karma works very well in this story. According to Hinduism and Buddhism, the total of a person's good deeds and bad deeds in the present and the previous births exist and will affect his fate in future birth or may be in the present birth. These religions have belief in Karma to discipline the people, as it is the role of every religion to discipline its own followers. Here, these religions believe that a person has to fear about committing a sin; he has to believe that his wrongdoings of one birth will affect him in any of his births in the present and in the past.

In this story, the karma of astrologer chases him for years together though he manages to escape from it towards the end of the story. The astrologer, as a young

man, in his youthful folly, being drunk has stabbed a man (Guru Nayak) and has pushed him into a well thinking that he will die and has left the village without anyone's knowledge. Though the astrologer has escaped from the legal punishment for murdering a man, he has been living with guilt for many years. Though he has money, land and house of his own in his village, the astrologer has fled the village just to suffer in poverty. When the wife talks about the sweet that has been asked by their daughter for several days, one can understand that he has been living a poor life. Even the narration describes the way the astrologer attracts the crowd which indicates how difficult it is for the astrologer to earn wages of a single day.

Even then, when it is believed that the astrologer has done away with the crime which he has committed when he has been very young, it has been carried over by the astrologer throughout his life. He has mistaken that Guru Nayak is dead and is killed by him. This thought has been haunting the astrologer for many years. He has never thought that Guru Nayak will come alive, he will search for him and will take upon his revenge. It is ironic that the astrologer has recognized Guru Nayak and in case, if Guru Nayak has recognized the astrologer the fate of the astrologer might be pinned to death. Otherwise, if the astrologer has not run away from his village years back, definitely, Guru Nayak might have attempted to kill the astrologer. The astrologer escapes from the hands of Guru Nayak, just because, he has not committed the murder but has attempted one.

The witty-intelligent astrologer, whose presence of mind always works for him, has sparked an idea to escape from the revenge of his enemy forever. Though the astrologer does not pay for his crime and outwits the enemy by not revealing his identity, the astrologer does not escape from the punishment for his bad deeds. The astrologer has spent years regretting his bad deed of his past and that itself can be considered as the punishment given to the astrologer. Karma is common to everyone and it functions on deciding everyone's fate without any partiality. That is why the astrologer has been punished by his own karma for attempting murder which he has not committed really. Fate is impartial in treating people.

#### **4.1.4.2 Guilt:**

“An Astrologer's Day” is a story based on a single day event of an astrologer. The unnamed astrologer in a town believes that he has killed Guru Nayak, his

childhood rival. During a brawl, after drinking, the astrologer and Guru Nayak have fought and Guru Nayak has been stabbed near his chest by the astrologer and finally has been pushed into a well. That is why the astrologer believes firmly that Guru Nayak has been murdered by him. Out of guilt, fear and crime, he gets out of the village and crosses hundreds of miles away from his village to escape punishment for the crime. As a murderer the astrologer might have got punishment but he ran away from the village to escape punishment. Thus, the astrologer spends a number of years in the faraway city with the guilt of being a murderer.

In case, if the astrologer has stayed in the village he might have known the fact and have got his punishment legally. But, he has carried over the burden at his heart for the crime which has not happened. Otherwise, Guru Nayak might have killed the astrologer if he has not fled the village. The mental trauma which has been haunting the astrologer might have waned away. Here the astrologer, as a young man, has been left with the choice of living all alone with guilt and fear in a faraway land for years.

The astrologer cheats his mind and the world around him as he is guilty of the murder. He hides the truth to everyone and so his guilt hurts him more. He has no way to suppress it but to carry over for a long time. At least, if he shares it to someone, his pressure would get reduced. He has been suffering with this conscience by deceiving everyone. He pretends to be happy with his wife and child in a small house. On the contrary, he deceives his family as well as his own self. Finally, when the astrologer comes to know that Guru Nayak is alive and saved by someone, he gets relieved and completely gets away from guilt. His guilt becomes a great punishment all these years.

#### **4.1.4.3 Identity:**

The astrologer has dual identity in the story “An Astrologer’s Day”. As an irresponsible youth, in a drunken state, the astrologer has attempted to kill Guru Nayak in a brawl and has pushed him into the well. He makes his escapade from his village to avoid any punishment for the murder. Anyhow, Guru Nayak is saved by someone in the village. The astrologer, without knowing the fact, stays away from his village and settles down with his new family in the far away city.

The astrologer's first identity can be viewed as an irresponsible rogue. He himself describes towards the end of the story that he has been gambling and drinking when he has been young. The way he fights with his rival Guru Nayak reveals that the astrologer has no control over him. Both the drunkards fight with each other irresponsibly and not in a position to understand what happens around them. They, in an inebriated mood, have not thought about anything seriously as they are out of their minds and the astrologer, who has fully lost his control, attacks Guru Nayak with a sharpened knife. It has stabbed Guru Nayak near his chest; Guru Nayak still has the mark on his chest. As the astrologer is not in sense, he pushes Guru Nayak into the well allowing him to die. Then, when he gets the fear of killing someone, he escapes from his village. Thus, the astrologer can be identified as a rogue, an irresponsible man, a drunkard and a coward who has no guts to face the situation.

When the same astrologer enters into a city to set up his new life, he has changed his identity. His new identity is a fake one by changing his attire and appearance as an astrologer. He conceals his actual identity with his saffron coloured turban on his head and the painted sacred ash and vermilion on his forehead. He reaches the city as a new person and now one cannot find any kind of the previously mentioned identities in him. Moreover, the deception is made when he chooses the profession as an astrologer. He has no knowledge on astrology; but he fakes to be one in the city. The concealment of the old identity is deliberately made so that he will not be caught by any of his villagers and to avoid being identified with the old identity as a murderer.

The new identity as an astrologer in the new city requires no name, no place of origin. He will be treated as a holy person and usually, a holy person's identity is never questioned and is not supposed to be traced. He is thought to be a great man of power and will never be questioned of his personal background. So he cleverly chooses this profession and his new identity as well. The author also deliberately avoids telling the name of the astrologer and throughout the story he is unnamed. As an astrologer, he evades the legal punishment for the murder (which had not happened actually) and he uses the same identity to cheat Guru Nayak that he should not recognize him as his rival of the past.

Anyhow, with this new-made identity, the astrologer becomes a responsible husband as well as father of a family. He has completely changed his way of life as a responsible man, who runs his family with his own wages. This new identity suits him well, as he is not harmless to anybody now. As a successful astrologer, he lives a happy and peaceful life with his family. Though the second identity of the astrologer is a fake one, he has easily adopted into that role. This new identity is a deliberately chosen one to chase his fear and guilt away and to protect him legally from punishment. Even towards the end of the story, when his wife is shocked to hear the past of her husband that he has tried to kill someone, the astrologer is not very keen on that. He gives a lame excuse by saying that it has happened when he has been young. Therefore, the astrologer is using his new identity to cover up his old identity and in a way, is excusing himself that it has not been a mistake at all. This new identity, being an astrologer, offers him a forged and self-deceiving life but not the real and justified one.

#### **4.1.4.4 Fear:**

The short story of R.K. Narayan runs around the theme of fear. The main character of the story is an astrologer, who is unnamed throughout the story; he has a plight from his native place out his fear.

As a young man, on a drunken day, the astrologer has happened to stab a man named Guru Nayak. In an inebriated mood, he has pushed Guru Nayak into the well allowing him to die. He has fled the village immediately being afraid of legal punishment for the murder which he has committed. Actually, Guru Nayak is saved by someone and so even if the astrologer has stayed in the village, he might not have been punished for the crime, but definitely would have faced the wrath of Guru Nayak. The astrologer has to leave all the comforts of his lifestyle in his village to escape from the crime, just because he has no courage to face the consequences of the crime. His family has an ancestral house and corn fields to cultivate and so the astrologer has no worries to survive in his village. He abandons everything when he is haunted by fear of being arrested and put in prison or being hanged to death for his murder attempt.

The astrologer's fear chases him to a faraway city and makes to strive for every single day. He changes his appearance and the way of living to hide his past.



He has enclosed himself in a different way of living because of his fear that one day or the other he may be caught by someone. The fear haunts him ever when he is living in the city as an astrologer. He conceals his fear but it does not mean that he has given up it completely.

Towards the middle of the story, when the astrologer gets a stranger as his client, he just wants to make money out of him. As it has been dark, and he has been away from the village many years back, he cannot easily identify that the stranger is none but Guru Nayak. Now, he wants to get away from Guru Nayak, as he comes to know that Guru Nayak is after the murderer (actually the astrologer). He is fear struck that he will be caught by Guru Nayak, if there is enough light and if Guru Nayak stays there a day or two during his hunt for the murderer, i.e. the astrologer will be caught definitely. Out of fear, he tries to avoid Guru Nayak, after identifying him. Guru Nayak fails to identify who is the astrologer. Guru Nayak is keen on knowing whether he will find his murderer (actually the astrologer). Then the astrologer decides to get away from his fear, and he cunningly advises Guru Nayak: Guru Nayak has to leave the city to escape from danger and his search for the murderer will not be successful because the murderer is killed in an accident. Finally, the astrologer has got rid of his fear in a fraudulent way.

#### **4.1.4.5 Wit:**

The short story, “An Astrologer’s Day”, written by R.K. Narayan uses ‘wit’ as one of the themes. Though the astrologer is not a genuine and honest man, though he has not been a responsible person at his youth, yet he has survived as a successful breadwinner of the family only because he is witty. The astrologer feels guilt and fear after he has attempted to murder his rival, Guru Nayak in the village; yet he overcomes his guilt and fear using his wit.

While the astrologer has been drunk, in a brawl, he stabs Guru Nayak and has pushed him into the well. He does not know the consequences as he has not been in stable mind. When he realises his mistake, he wants to escape from the prosecution of the murder case. As a witty man, he plans to a great escape: he flees the village; he chooses a new place to settle down which is several hundred miles away from his native village; he changes his identity, otherwise, he may be caught if someone identifies him; he chooses an identity of a holy person, the astrologer, so that no one

will doubt at him. All these are done successfully and unto the end of the story nobody has found his disguise.

The astrologer, who is actually not the real one, manages in the new city to get his business run successfully. Though he is not a learnt astrologer, the customers are happy and astonished to listen to his prediction: “that was more a matter of study, practice, and shrewd guesswork”. Settling down in the city with a family is not a big challenge to his witty mind, but to establish a new business without knowing the basics of it becomes the real challenge for him. The astrologer does not know any science of astrology or any calculations of stars and other things related to his business. As a sharp observer of human minds, he has managed to read the minds of human beings and predict their thoughts. He successfully has made everyone to believe that he is an astrologer.

The astrologer himself is a victim of mankind’s troubles. He has experienced the common problems faced by the human beings and the majority of the problems are based on one’s marriage and money. He has been studying through his own experiences which have sharpened his understanding of the problems of a common individual. He is clever enough to tackle his customers. He charges three pies per question asked to him. After five minutes talk with the customer, the astrologer manages to find the problem of the customer. He usually allows his customer to speak for ten minutes and for the ten minutes he will not disturb his customer. With this brief confession of ten minutes, the astrologer catches up his responses for at least ten questions to be asked by the customer. He also prepares advices for the customer which would suit his situation.

The astrologer is witty to tell the customer in advance that all his words may not be correct and most of his predictions are right. He manages to answer at least nine questions correctly out of ten questions. This definitely will make the customers to believe in the words of the astrologer. Without any of the tactics, the astrologer also can manage with some default comments to read the palm of a stranger-cum-customer. The astrologer may pretend examining the palm of the customer and reads aloud that “In many ways you are not getting the fullest results for your efforts,” and it is obvious that men on earth mostly have misfortune in life; if not all, those who come to an astrologer must have an unfortunate event in his life and so they will be

impressed by the astrologer; or he may use his skills of character analysis as, “Most of your troubles are due to your nature. How can you be otherwise with Saturn where he is? You have an impetuous nature and a rough exterior.” This will definitely trap the customer if he has no misfortune in life. By one way or the other, the customer gets satisfied with the astrologer’s skill of palm-reading and pays him the cost.

When the astrologer meets the stranger, (Guru Nayak) his witty mind readily attracts him without knowing it is Guru Nayak. As usual, he tries his best by inducing the emotion of the stranger as, “You look so careworn. It will do you good to sit down for a while and chat with me.” This is one of the usual ways of attracting a customer by saying that there is some worrisome problem in the customer’s mind and a solution may be offered during the chat. The chat with the astrologer of course costs money and it is not a free piece of advice. This shows how he makes money by reading the minds of people and it needs some intelligence which the astrologer has.

Even after, when the astrologer finds that the stranger is his rival Guru Nayak who is actually hunting for him to take revenge upon his murder attempt, the astrologer is cool and composed. He tackles the problem carefully; in the beginning, he wants to get away from Guru Nayak without revealing his identity. When it does not work, he cleverly makes out another plan to get away from the revenge plan of Guru Nayak ever. There lays his masterly plan to send Guru Nayak back home by making him to believe that the astrologer is dead after being crushed under a lorry. It is merely the astrologer’s cleverness which makes Guru Nayak to believe the words of the astrologer and to leave the city. Therefore, the astrologer tackles things using his wit and escapes from great dangers of life.

#### **4.1.4.6 Tradition and Modernity:**

The short story “An Astrologer’s Day” has the contrast of tradition and modernity in its narration. The comfort and sophisticated life of urban India is found contrasted with the rural regions. This story is set in the period of colonial India; as it is published during colonization of the British in India. Under the British colonization, India has enjoyed the liberty of the growth in science and technology which has sped in Europe as well as America in the beginning of the twentieth century.

The middle class and the lower middle class people have the access to use innovations of science at their affordable rates. Anyhow, the differences emerge as the rural regions are ignored from such comforts of new innovations made in the fields of science and technology. In the story, “An Astrologer’s Day”, Narayan narrates how the traditional world of India gets synchronized into the modern world with new technologies. In the story, the fusion of traditional elements and modern elements occur together in the city, where the astrologer lives, so he is exposed to modern technology with its ancient past.

The description of the locale, in which the story is set in, such as gaslights with hissing sounds, the cars and other vehicles making the traffic, and the notebooks available in the marketplace, indicates the modernity has its footpath into the traditional set-up of India. The description of the road which leads to the Town Hall Park also symbolically denotes the growth in the city as a modern place; yet the absence of municipality lights in the narration shows some disparity in the development of modernity. Moreover, with all these changes in their lifestyle the people in town still believes in astrology and the position of Saturn in the sky; the people still believes that these decide their fate and visits the astrologer.

The life of the astrologer is narrated as a representation of the poor sector in the modern India. They strive for daily food after long-day earning and even to buy basic things they have to wait for days. This is the contrast of modern India, as portrayed by R.K. Narayan, which cannot get away from the past culture and poverty.

#### **4.1.5 Questions:**

1. How does the astrologer's appearance help him attract customers? How does he help the customer satisfy their needs?
2. How do you characterise the astrologer's attitude toward the stranger?
3. What details does the astrologer give the stranger (Guru Nayak) about his past?
4. Why does the astrologer advise the stranger (Guru Nayak) to go home immediately?

5. Explain the elements of suspense and surprise using the story “An Astrologer’s Day”.
6. Analyze the conflicts in “An Astrologer’s Day”.
7. What are the professional equipments of the astrologer?
8. How did the astrologer manage to attract people?
9. What is the secret of the success of the astrologer?
10. What was the agreement made between the astrologer and the client?
11. Why did the astrologer leave the village?
12. What would the astrologer do if he had been in the village?
13. Describe in your own words the place where the astrologer sat and worked.
14. How did the astrologer manage to win the confidence of the people?
15. Write an essay on the skills used by of the astrologer.

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## **4.2. A Lesson in Humility, in Sahyadri Hills - Sudha Murthy**

### **4.2.1. Sudha Murthy – Bio Note:**

Sudha Murthy, an Indian writer and activist, was born in 1950 in Shiggaon in north Karnataka. She has a B.E. in Electrical Engineering and an M.E. in Computer Science; she was a gold medallist at both the graduate and postgraduate levels. She was the first woman engineer to be employed by TELCO. She married Narayana Murthy, who is one of the founders of the IT company Infosys. Sudha Murthy was one of the initial investors in the company. She is now the Chairperson of the Infosys Foundation.

Sudha Murthy has founded several orphanages, participated in rural development efforts, supported the movement to provide all Karnataka government schools with computer and library facilities, and established Murthy Classical Library of India at Harvard University. Murthy initiated a bold move to introduce computer and library facilities in all schools in Karnataka and taught Computer Science. She got the "Best Teacher Award" in 1995 from Rotary Club at Bangalore.

Sudha Murthy is best known for her social work and her contribution to literature in Kannada and English. *Dollar Bahu* (Dollar Daughter-in-Law), a novel originally authored by her in Kannada and later translated into English as *Dollar Bahu*, was adapted as a televised dramatic series by Zee TV in 2001. Sudha Murthy has also acted in the Marathi film *Pitruroun* and the Kannada film *Prarthana*. She has also appeared in *Kaun Banega Crorepati* season 11 in its finale week episode "Karamveer".

Sudha Murthy, as a prolific writer in English and Kannada, has written nine novels, four technical books, and three travelogues, one collection of short stories, three collections of non-fiction pieces and two books for children. She has published several books, mainly through Penguin, that exposes her philosophical views on charity, hospitality, and self-realization through fictional narratives. She frequents literary festivals and participates in television discussions on women's issues. All her four novels demonstrate the strained relations between two women in the same family. Another theme that Sudha Murthy deals with is the eroding effects of emerging capitalism in Indian society on the close human relations. Her books have

been translated into all the major Indian languages and have sold over three lakh copies around the country. Other books by Sudha Murthy are *Grandma's Bag of Stories*, *The Bird with Golden Wings: Stories of Wit and Magic*, *Gently Falls the Bakula*, and *The Day I Stopped Drinking Milk: Life Stories from Here and There*. The stories revolve around activities like stitching masks together, doing chores, as well as the stories of kings, queens and fantasy worlds that grandparents tell their grandchildren.

Sudha Murthy is not only an Indian author and industrialist, but also a social worker which she needs to be fondly remembered for. Murthy's Infosys Foundation is a public charitable trust founded in 1996 and Murthy is one of the trustees. Through the Foundation she has built 2,300 houses in the flood-affected areas. Murthy's social work covers healthcare, education, empowerment of women, public hygiene, art and culture, and poverty alleviation at the grassroots level. Her vision of a library for each school has resulted in the setting up of 70,000 libraries so far. She is helping out rural areas by building 16,000 public toilets and several hundred toilets in the city of Bengaluru. The foundation has conducted relief work during national natural disasters like the tsunami in Tamil Nadu and Andaman, earthquake in Kutch – Gujarat, hurricane and floods in Odisha, Andhra Pradesh and drought in Karnataka and Maharashtra. The Government of Karnataka awarded her the prestigious literary award, the 'Attimabbe Award' –for her literary work for the year 2011–12.

Sudha Murthy is the recipient of the R.K. Narayan's Award for Literature and the Padma Shri in 2006. She has also been given an honorary doctorate degree of science by IIT Kanpur. She is honoured with a National Award from Public Relation Society of India for outstanding Social Service to the Society and another Award for Excellent Social Service by Rotary South - Hubli. She has received the Life Time Achievement Award at the Crossword-Raymond Book Awards in 2018.

Sudha Murthy remains as an inspiration to many, with the multiple roles she has played over the years of an engineer, author, philanthropist, homemaker and many more. She was way ahead of her time and very confident to reach the height as a dedicated activist and an acclaimed writer in India.

#### 4.2.2. Introduction to “in Sahyadri Hills, A Lesson in Humility”:

The short story “In Sahyadri Hills, A Lesson in Humility” is written by the Indian author Sudha Murthy. Apart from being a writer, she is the chairperson of the Infosys Foundation and the wife of Narayan Murthy. This story is taken from the author’s collection of short stories entitled, *Wise and Otherwise: A Salute to Life*. It is a non-fiction book published by East West Books Pvt. Ltd, Chennai (Madras) in the year 2002. The same book had its revised edition which was published by Penguin Books in 2006, with an additional chapter added. *Wise and Otherwise: A Salute to Life* had sold over 30,000 copies in English since its first publication in 2002 and had been translated into all the major Indian languages.

The book, *Wise and Otherwise: A Salute to Life* is a collection of around fifty short stories which is a tapestry of human character, behaviour and attitudes. It is based on the author’s travel to several places and her encounters with many people whom she has met in her journey. This is a kind of travel writing, in which the author wants to share her observations on different kinds of people and culture through her writing. The book describes the encounters Sudha Murthy has had with ordinary people and extraordinary minds during her travels and personal experiences.

*Wise And Otherwise: A Salute to Life* contains sketches of various people, across the length and breadth of the country. All the stories in the book, *Wise and Otherwise: A Salute to Life*, are based on the author's personal experiences, and it is a kaleidoscopic collection of human attitudes and character. The author as a teacher and social worker has had close interactions with various sections of the society. As a keenful observer of people and their characteristics, she has been able to bring to this collection a myriad of experiences and emotions that cuts across all the barriers of class, religion, and location.

Some of the narrations in the book explore the real world through the characters met by the author Sudha Murthy. For instance, in one of the stories, a man dumps his own father in an old age home, disclaiming any relationship to him. He recalls his relationship quickly enough on his father's death to make sure of his inheritance. In another story, a young girl showers love on her little brother, only to be sold by him into prostitution, ironically on a Rakhi day. In one more story, a



beggar goes to a region devastated by an earthquake, to pose as a victim and benefit from any relief package that has been designed for those affected by the disaster.

*Wise And Otherwise: A Salute to Life* also tells the story of a sick woman who does not fail to express her gratitude even while she is in her deathbed; she teaches gratitude as a lesson to be learnt. There is the story of a young boy who fishes for crabs and makes a small amount each day, which supports his family. When he is asked what is the use that little amount would be to him, he says pragmatically that the small amount is better than nothing. A man in a tribal settlement teaches the author that there can be grace and dignity even in the acceptance of gifts, and not just in giving of them. This is the prescribed story for detail reading. This story talks about a tribal chief in the Sahyadri hills teaches the author that there is humility in receiving too. These are just some of the poignant and eye-opening stories about people from all over the country that Sudha Murthy recounts in this book. From incredible examples of generosity to the meanest acts one can expect from men and women, she records everything with wry humour and a directness that touches the heart.

The stories have disturbing and stunning reality which actually shocks the reader and makes them to feel ashamed of certain narrated characters that are shrewd, deceitful and inhumane. These stories, thus, reveal the darker sides of the real world which are based on her experiences through the characters whom she has met during her travels. Written in a simple, unadorned language, the author uses these stories to explore and analyse many vastly different behaviours that cuts across many sections of society. Ultimately, the book proves that for all, the many differences in language, culture, class and place, human nature is the same everywhere; which is capable of the basest behaviour and also capable of supreme acts of selflessness and caring.

#### **4.2.3. In Sahyadri Hills, A Lesson in Humility - Short Summary**

The short story “In Sahyadri Hills, A Lesson in Humility” is written by the Indian author and social activist Sudha Murthy. All the fifty-one stories in the collection is based on the author’s encounter with people of different culture and background. She has no difference in liking any place during her visits, even if it is a small remote village or a drought-hit area or a deserted mountain top or a dense forest or a monument in Egypt or China. Of course, she spends her leisure hours for

travelling, yet there is a purpose in her visit. Those who want to spend their leisure hours will never choose such destination for travelling. As an activist cum travel writer, Sudha Murthy has an intention of visiting people at such crisis and to learn from the difficulties their way of life. Like all the stories, this story is also based on the real life incident which is encountered by the author, Sudha Murthy. As the title indicates, this story is set in the Sahyadri Hills of Karnataka (located in the Western Ghats traversing the states of Karnataka, Goa, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Kerala and Tamil Nadu). Actually, the Western Ghats is known as Sahyadri Hills in Maharashtra and Karnataka.

The Sahyadri Hills is a densely forested region in Karnataka, where the author has a planned visit. Travelling in a densely forested region, during the rainy season is a challenging task even for the natives of the place, who are habituated to survive there during rainy season. The author describes the challenges that she has anticipated during her travel in the dense jungle on a rainy day. Therefore, the writer is least bothered about the dangers and enjoys her travel. Sudha Murthy, as a nature-lover is ready to lose her comfort and advents into the danger of travelling into a dense forest during rainy season and enjoys the natural scenery around her. The author, then, describes the purpose of her visit to the Sahyadri Hills, the forest region of Karnataka. The purpose is to visit a tribal village which is located deep in the forest area.

The author has great concern over the fieldwork as a member of charity which shows her involvement in the charity as a deserving person, who is dedicated to contribute her comfy life for the empowerment of a subaltern tribal community. Accordingly, the author, Sudha Murthy is travelling through the dense jungle to reach a community for charity work; to help the community to get a better schooling. The other local groups of tribals feel that the Thandas are delightful. The headman, the Thandappa, is the senior-most man of the tribe and is considered the supreme power and is treated as if he is the living God. All the other members of the tribe have a great reverence and oblige to him. When the author is passing by the woods, it has been drizzling but by the time, she reaches the tribal village, there is a downpour. The author feels strange as if she has been into a new world. Even after, she reaches the school after a long walk and being stared by the villagers, she has

not realised that she is an outsider of the place; but everybody has looked at her as an outsider or a newcomer.

The author, Sudha Murthy has completed an adventure by reaching the school and she herself feels it as an adventure. She describes why she has felt reaching the school is an adventure. Once, she stops at a lady to ask the way to school. The lady has been walking with rhythmic grace even with the three pots of water balanced on her head. This lady may be habituated in this way carrying water of many pots together on her head. When Sudha Murthy stops the lady to ask the way to go to the school, she does not respond instead she has made an exclamatory sound and after being stared at the author, she walks away.

Then, the author approaches an old man to ask the way to go to school. Actually, the old man has been weaving a cane basket and humming a folk song. After kneeling down in front of the old man, the author asks him in a loud and clear voice, the location of the school. It also appears that the old man has wanted to ask the author many questions that have risen out of his curiosity. Anyhow, the old man does not ask any questions to her; instead he has simply said something in his dialect and has shown the directions using his hand. Then, she describes the structure of the school, which is actually an old thatched building; she guesses that the building must be probably built by the tribes themselves. Some of the children are found playing outside the school and the other students who are found under a shed-like shelter are busy doing something with leaves and straws. There is a small opening in the wall of the school, which has no doors but has served the purpose of a window.

When she has been desperately waiting for someone to respond to her, an elderly man approaches her and asks what she wants. The author introduces herself to the elderly man and tells him the purpose of her visit. The author finds that the elderly man is not at all showing any interest in her offer that she has wanted to provide to the school. Then, the author guesses the reason behind his discouragement to get the offer for the school. As she is new to the place, she is not accepted as a friendly, warm person, so he does not show any interest in the offer made to the school. Communication is the prime factor to connect the relationship; here the author does not know the dialect used by the tribal community and so they are reluctant in accepting her offer. So the author wants to settle the issue by trying to

converse with them in a more friendly way and to make them comfortable with her, so that they may not treat her as an outsider.

After conversing with the elderly man in the school, the author understands that he is the watchman as well as the peon of the school and she comes to know that he resides in the same building. At times, the elderly man works as a tourist guide to face his personal expenses. The author also understands that he is not a paid employee, which means he is not given any salary by the school or by the government. The elderly is not paid any wages, but has been expected to work there for all the years because his grandson is studying in the school at free of cost. After the author listens to, the elderly man, then, he shows interest in conversing with the author. So the author has changed the conversation about the school with the intention of knowing more about the school. Through the elderly man, the author comes to know that the school is run by the state government.

The uneducated parents have not attended schools and their way of living also is not easy and comfortable without formal education. The author is happy because, those parents, though have not been educated, yet has shown interest in sending their children to school to get education. She is satisfied that the parents understand the importance of education and send the children to school. Then, the author asks the elderly man about the practical difficulties faced by them to run the school. Anyhow, he takes the author to a nearby cottage and introduces her to the Thandappa, the head man of the tribal village. The Thandappa appears to be more than ninety years old who is actually happy to meet the author. The author asks the Thandappa the same question which she has asked the elderly man, the practical difficulties they face to run the school. The Thandappa responds that going to the school daily during the rainy seasons is difficult. Moreover, the school uniform will not dry easily during the rainy season; though it appears to be a simple problem, it is a familiar problem too. Later on, the author meets many people and has asked about their problems in running a school and has listened to many such problems from them.

After a while, the author again visits the same tribal settlement during the winter season. The author has brought the school children some clothes and umbrellas as she has understood that they may need these during rainy season. She

requests the Thandappa to accept the things which she has brought for the children who are studying in the school. She also justifies that she has no idea earlier about what the children may need and now she has brought them things which may be useful to them. She has handed over a big bag of gifts for school children to the Thandappa.

The Thandappa is a little hesitant in accepting the gifts given by the author. The author believes that he must be embarrassed to accept gifts from her. She convinces him to accept the gifts by saying that they have not asked for any gifts, but she voluntarily gives the gifts. She also requests him to accept the gifts saying that the gifts will be helpful to the children during the rainy season. She also requests the Thandappa to get the clothes stitched for the children according to their size. Though she has been trying to convince him to make her gifts to be accepted, the head man of the tribal village, the Thandappa does not accept the offer, instead walks into his hut without saying a word in response.

After the author has persuaded for a while, some of the young students have come closer, but they are shy to talk to her or to respond her questions. Then, one of the young children responds that they have heard about computers, but have never seen any; they have seen televisions but not the computers. The author is very much impressed by the way the children are enthusiast in learning.

By then, the Thandappa returns from his hut and he has a bottle of red liquid in his hands. The Thandappa actually wants to present a gift which she likes, but he regrets that the gift offered by him may not be liked by her, yet it is the best gift according to the community. The Thandappa, then, explains the method of preparation of the gift which he has offered the author. The author is embarrassed to get a gift from the Thandappa. She is hesitant to accept a gift from them because they are poor and they themselves do not have enough food or drink to eat properly. Hence, the author politely refuses to accept the gift offered by the Thandappa. The Thandappan, then seriously responds that he cannot accept the gifts of the author. So, the Thandappa stubbornly refuses that he will not accept the gifts offered by the author. The author is shocked to hear that her gifts will not be accepted, she feels embarrassed to accept gifts from the poor and she feels humbled for hurting the sentiments of the tribes.

The author also practically thinks that if a group or organization has many problems and the charity helps to solve one of the problems; then it is usual for the recipients to complain about something which has not be done by charity or to show gratitude for what has been accomplished. For the first time, she is taken aback when the charity is provided with a valuable gift and the beneficiary is refusing to get the help if a return-gift is not accepted. The author has great admiration for the old man, the head man of the tribes, the Thandappa. She thinks over that the old man has no schooling but has been practising a highly valuable philosophy of life that is “give when you take; do not take without giving”.

The author admires his culture as the best and she happily accepts the gift with a smile. Therefore, the author is taught humility through a humble natured great man the Thandappa of the tribal community and the author also feels happy to learn such a great lesson from a modest personality like the Thandappa.

#### **4.2.4. In Sahyadri Hills, A Lesson in Humility – Analytical Summary**

The short story “In Sahyadri Hills, A Lesson in Humility” is written by the Indian author and social activist Sudha Murthy. This story is taken from the author’s collection of short stories entitled, *Wise and Otherwise: A Salute to Life*. All the fifty-one stories in the collection is based on the author’s encounter with people of different culture and background. She has travelled to various people to meet them and to account their way of life in the form of stories.

The writer begins the story by admitting that she is fond of travelling and as a travel writer she has travelled widely. She has no difference in liking any place during her visits, even if it is a small remote village or a drought-hit area or a deserted mountain top or a dense forest or a monument in Egypt or China. The author is very much delighted to visit different places of the world invariably in the same mood. The selection of places which has listed out, poses that she is not visiting the place merely for spending her leisure hours. Of course, she spends her leisure hours for travelling, yet there is a purpose in her visit. For instance, visiting a drought-hit area gives one no more enjoyment but it lets one to know about the darker side of reality. Those who want to spend their leisure hours will never choose such destination for travelling. As an activist cum travel writer, Sudha Murthy has an intention of visiting people at such crisis and to learn from the difficulties through their way of life.

Like all the stories, this story is also based on the real life incident which is encountered by the author, Sudha Murthy herself. As the title indicates, this story is set in the Sahyadri Hills of Karnataka (located in the Western Ghats traversing the states of Karnataka, Goa, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Kerala and Tamil Nadu). Actually, the Western Ghats is known as Sahyadri Hills in Maharashtra and Karnataka. The word 'Sahyadri' means 'patience' and so the name "The Sahyadri Hills" means "The Mountain of Patience". It is the largest mountain range in India next to the Himalayas. The mountain range in Karnataka offers some fabulous trekking trails capped with renowned lofty peaks, cascading waterfalls, wildlife sanctuaries and rocky hill terrain to attract the advent seekers.

The Sahyadri Hills is a densely forested region in Karnataka, where the author has planned a visit. During the author's visit it has been a non-stop drizzling day. Travelling in a densely forested region, during the rainy season is a challenging task even for the natives of the place, who are habituated to survive there during rainy season. Therefore, it is not an easy task for the author to travel in the Sahayadri Hills during the rainy season.

The author describes the challenges that she has anticipated during her travel through the dense jungle on a rainy day. One of the most dangerous things that she has prepared for in her mind is to handle the leeches. The leeches during the rains in the forest area are very harmful and one cannot avoid its dreadful attack on the traveller. Usually, the travellers risk the danger to enjoy the travel by overcoming the difficulties during their travel. There is no possibility of enjoying a travel without leaving someone's comfort. Therefore, the writer is least bothered about the dangers and enjoys her travel. She recollects her feelings when she has sensed the mild smell of exotic trees, shrubs and flowers; and also the chirping of different kinds of birds and the gentle whistle of the unpolluted breeze. The writer happily admits that these are the joys of travel and one can never experience this happiness in a town or city life. Sudha Murthy, as a nature-lover is ready to lose her comfort and advents into the danger of travelling into a dense forest during rainy season and to enjoy the natural scenery.

The author, then, describes the purpose of her visit to the Sahyadri Hills, the forest region of Karnataka. The purpose is to visit a tribal village which is located in

the interior forest area. As an activist and social worker, she has been involving herself into many social activities to help the people of downtrodden areas. She belongs to a charitable trust that is behind educating the minorities to improve their standard of lives. There are many involved in charity by sponsoring financial support to the needy and that attitude of generosity should be appreciated. However, if a member of charity gets involved into the field work, it is really a task that needs to be appreciated for one's Good Samaritan work. The author has great concern over the fieldwork as a member of charity which shows her involvement in the charity as a deserving person, who is dedicated to contribute her comfy life for the empowerment of a subaltern tribal community. The author has advent into many such trips for the empowerment of such downtrodden communities and the narration of this story is about one such events.

Accordingly, the author, Sudha Murthy is travelling through the dense jungle to reach a community for charity work; to help the community to get a better schooling. The tribes, whom the author is planning to meet, are called as Thandas, the name of a local tribe. The other local groups of tribal feel that the Thandas are delightful. Each sect of this tribe has a headman who is addressed as the Thandappa. The headman, the Thandappa, is the senior-most man of the tribe and is considered as the supreme power and is treated as if he is the living God. All the other members of the tribe have a great reverence towards him and oblige to him. The Thandappa follows the customs, which has been taught to him since his childhood days and everyone follows the same accordingly.

When the author is passing by the woods, it has been drizzling but by the time she reaches the tribal village, there is a heavy downpour. The author feels it is strange as if she has been into a new world. The heavy downpour of the rain, the shiny leaves of the vegetation and the strong smell of wild flowers have made the author to realize that she is in a different world; she has felt as if she were in a different planet. Though the place is new to her; nobody in the village has seen her as an outsider. She too does not feel that she is an intruder. Even after, she reaches the school after a long walk and being stared by the villagers, she has not realised that she is an outsider of the place; but everybody has looked at her as an outsider or a newcomer.



The author, Sudha Murthy has completed an adventure by reaching the school and she has felt it as an adventure. She describes why she has felt reaching the school is an adventure. Once, she has stopped at a lady to ask the way to school. The lady has been walking with rhythmic grace even with the three pots of water balanced on her head. Walking in a graceful manner with loaded three pots is not so easy unless one has a good practice. This lady may be habituated in this way carrying water of many pots together on her head. When Sudha Murthy stops the lady to ask the way to go to the school, she does not respond instead has made an exclamatory sound and being stared at the author, she has walked away. The author guesses that she may not be interested in talking to a stranger and especially a stranger from a town is new to her; at least, she must be familiar with people of nearby villages and not from the town. The author also guesses that the lady might not have understood the language to respond in turn.

Then, the author approaches an old man to ask the way to go to school. Actually, the old man has been weaving a cane basket and humming a folk song. As he has been seated for weaving, the author kneels down near him to converse with him. After kneeling down in front of the old man, the author asks him in a loud and clear voice, the location of the school. The old man becomes very curious and it is very well expressed all over his face. It also appears that the old man has wanted to ask the author many questions that have risen out of his curiosity. Anyhow the old man does not ask any questions to her; instead he has simply said something in his dialect and has shown the directions using his hand.

Therefore, the author has found it difficult to reach the school and she counts it as an adventure. The first thing is that the place is new and she has to walk for a long distance. The second thing is the poor weather as there has been a heavy downpour. The third problem is that the author has communication problem as there is no common language between the author and the tribe. These are the reasons that made her to think that reaching the school itself becomes a great challenge.

Then, the author describes the structure of the school, which is actually an old thatched building; she guesses that the building must be probably built by the tribals themselves. It is a primary school with a few children. Some of the children

are found playing outside the school and the other students, who are found under a shed-like shelter, are busy doing something with leaves and straws.

The author, observing the students playing around, moves inside the building. She has found a small room with two chairs, two tables and a blackboard with a pot of water beside it. There is no proper infrastructure provided to the school. The school does not even have the electricity supply and has no electric lights or fans. There is a small opening in the wall of the school, which has no doors but has served the purpose of a window. That small opening is the only ventilator of the entire room.

The author predicts that it must be the office room of the school yet she has not found anyone in that room. There is no office staff member found in the room as well as around the place. When she has been desperately waiting for someone to respond to her, an elderly approaches her and asks what she wants. The author introduces herself to the elderly man and tells him the purpose of her visit. She also explains him that she has come to see what sort of help the charity, which she is part of, can provide the school.

The author finds that the elderly man is not at all showing any interest in her offer that she wants to provide to the school. Then the author guesses the reason behind his discouragement to get offer for the school. As she is new to the place, she is not accepted as a friendly, warm person, so he does not show any interest in the offer made towards the school. Thus, the author cleverly plans to convince him by communicating her message properly. She wants him to be comfortable while talking with her; then she can again talk about the offer. Communication is the prime factor to connect the relationship; here, the author does not know the dialect used by the tribal community and so they are reluctant in accepting her offer. So, the author wants to settle the issue by trying to converse with them in a more friendly way and to make them comfortable with her, so that they may not treat her as an outsider. This is one of the benefits of travelling which boosts one's communication skills in a better way and also to understand the new environment and to adapt to it.

After conversing with the elderly man in the school, the author understands that he is the watchman as well as the peon of the school and she comes to know that he resides in the same building. At times, the elderly man also works as a tourist guide to manage his personal expenses. The author also understands that he is not a

paid employee, which means he is not given any salary by the school or by the government. He has been working there for many years by staying in a small hut in the courtyard of the school. It is piteous to know that he cannot even remember for how many years, he has been working in the school. The elderly is not paid any wages, but has been expected to work there for all the years because his grandson is studying in the school at free of cost. His service has been exploited in the name of offering free education to his grandson.

After the author shows interest in listening to him, the elderly man then gradually, shows interest in conversing with the author. So, the author has changed the conversation about the school with the intention of knowing more about the school. Through the elderly man, the author comes to know that the school is run by the state government. There are two teachers working in the school and there are around fifty students studying in the school who reside both far and near the school. There is no compulsion for the students to wear uniform in the school.

The author is satisfied with the number of students attending the school. The reason is that the family background of those children has no formal education. The uneducated parents have not attended schools and their way of living also is not a comfy one without comfortable without formal education. The author is happy because, those tribal parents, though have not been formally educated, yet has shown interest in sending their children to school to get formal education. She is satisfied that the parents have understood the importance of education and sent the children to school.

Then the author asks the elderly man about the practical difficulties faced to run the school. The elderly man does not reply much for this question. Anyhow, he takes the author to a nearby cottage and introduces her to the Thandappa, the head man of the tribal village. The Thandappa appears to be more than ninety years old who is actually happy to meet the author.

The author asks the Thandappa the same question which she has asked the elderly man, the practical difficulties they face to run the school. The Thandappa responds that going to the school daily during the rainy season is difficult. Moreover, the school uniform will not dry easily during the rainy season; though it appears to be a simple problem, it is a familiar problem too. Later on, the author meets many

people and has asked about their problems in running a school and has listened to many such problems they have encountered.

The purpose of the visit, as it is already mentioned, is to make their life ease and better through the support of charity. The main purpose is to provide easy access to education in the tribal settlement. Thus, after collecting data and has acquired knowledge about their lifestyle and problems faced by them and after thanking them for their cooperation, the author has left them.

After a while, the author again visits the same tribal settlement during the winter season. There is no rain this time when she visits the place. The entire scene is transformed due to the new season and the place looks charming and beautiful and the author describes the place as a paradise. She finds the difference as there is no mud or croaking sound of frogs heard as she has had them during her last visit. The sky looks clear; the flowers of the rare species bloomed and the birds are making sweet sounds.

This time also, the author meets the Thandappa, who recognizes the author and greets her with a smile. His eyes appear as if they welcome the author warmly. The author has brought the school children some clothes and umbrellas as she has understood that they may need these during rainy season. She requests the Thandappa to accept the things which she has brought for the children who are studying in the school. She also justifies that she has no idea earlier about what the children may need and now she has brought them things which may be useful to them. She has handed over a big bag of gifts for school children to the Thandappa.

The Thandappa is a little hesitant to accept the gifts given by the author. The author believes that he must be embarrassed to accept gifts from her. She convinces him to accept the gifts by saying that they have not asked for any gifts, but she voluntarily gives the gifts. She also requests him to accept the gifts saying that the gifts will be helpful to the children during the rainy season. She also requests the Thandappa to get the clothes stitched for the children according to their size. Though she has been trying to convince him to make her gifts to be accepted, the head man of the tribal village, the Thandappa does not accept the offer, instead walks into his hut without saying a word in response.

In the meantime, the author tries to interact with the children who are standing nearby her. She asks them about their interest in learning and they have not responded anything to her. After the author has persuaded for a while, some of the young students have come closer, however, they are shy to talk to her and to respond her questions. The author talks with them sweetly and makes them to believe that she is a friendly person. Then, one of the young children responds that they have heard about computers, but have not seen one; they have seen televisions but not the computers. The boy continues his wish that he wants to learn computers. He has also asked the author whether she has any books on computer written in Kannada. The author is very much impressed by the way the children are enthusiastic in learning.

Sudha Murthy has been brought up in a teacher's family and being herself a teacher, she is delighted to hear when the children have shown interest in education. She also wonders that the children though live in the interior hilly areas are fresh and modern in their thinking. Though they belong to a backward region, their ideas are surprisingly much ahead. This brings happiness on the author's mind. She promises them that she would definitely search for such books in Bangalore for those children. She also has promised that if she has not found any book, then she herself can write one for them to understand computer in their mother tongue. The young students are very pleased with her response and the author becomes extremely happy about the interaction.

By then, the Thandappa returns from his hut and he has a bottle of red liquid in his hands. He addresses the author as 'amma' out of respect which means mother and presents the bottle to her. He apologises that he does not know her favourite food which she eats or drinks at home, but he offers a very special drink of their tribal community to her. The Thandappa actually wants to present a gift which she likes, but he regrets that the gift offered by him may not be liked by her, yet it is the best gift according to the community.

The Thandappa, then explains the method of preparation of the gift which he has offered the author. It is a bottle of red liquid; it is a special drink which is prepared during summer in the forest area of Sahyadri Hills. They extract juice from a wild red fruit and store it for at least two years. This juice is fresh and nothing else is

added to it. The Thandappa says that this juice is a healthy drink and it can be drunk by adding some juice to a cup of water after stirring well.

The author is embarrassed to get a gift from the Thandappa. She is hesitant to accept a gift from them because they are poor and they themselves do not have enough food or drink to eat properly. Moreover, the author has gone to their place to help them as a charity and not to receive anything in turn. So, the author politely refuses to accept the gift offered by the Thandappa.

The Thandappa, then, seriously responds that he cannot accept the gifts of the author. He explains the reason that the ancestors of his tribe have lived in the forest for generations and they have practiced and taught certain customs as their ways of living. When someone offers something as a gift, the gift has to be accepted; but only when some return gift is offered. In case, if the return gift is not accepted, the tribe will never accept any gifts from anyone. So the Thandappa stubbornly yet humbly refuses that he will not accept the gifts offered by the author.

The author is shocked to hear that her gifts will not be accepted, she feels embarrassed to accept gifts from the poor and she feels disturbed for she does not want to hurt the sentiments of the tribals. She has not encountered such a critical situation in her life time. Usually, as part of charity work, when she offers some help, the beneficiaries express their gratitude. The author has also come across with some bitter experiences, where she has been complained for her services. The author also practically thinks that if a group or organization has many problems and the charity helps to solve one of the problems; then it is usual for the recipients to complain about something which has not been done by charity or to show gratitude for what has been accomplished. There have been cases where the recipients have complained about the amount of help rendered to them, without even understanding the help offered to them. The author has taken everything lightly and has crossed the paths of charity because she finds fulfilment in the giving and is not bothered about the responses, whether it is a positive response or a negative one. For the first time, she is taken aback when the charity is provided with a valuable gift and the beneficiary is refusing to get the help if a return-gift is not accepted.

The author, now, has great admiration for the old man, the head man of the tribe, the Thandappa. She thinks over that the old man has no schooling but has been

practising a highly valuable life-principle that is “give when you take; do not take without giving”. The author admires his culture as the best and she happily accepts the gift with smile. The image of the Thandappa grows bigger in the author’s mind and she has great reverence for him when he utters the words, “There is a grace in accepting also.” The Thandappa stands as a hero of reciprocity, humble and perseverance. Therefore, the author is taught humility through a humble natured great man the Thandappa of the tribal community and the author also feels happy to learn such a great lesson from a modest personality like the Thandappa.

#### **4.2.5. Subaltern Studies**

The short story of Sudha Murthy, “In Sahyadri Hill, A Lesson in Humility” is taken from her collection of short stories *Wise and Otherwise: A Salute to Life*. It narrates her own travel experience to different places and her encounter with people of different culture in a realistic way which is narrated too in a realistic way. The book can be read as a writing which focuses on minorities; the Subaltern Studies mainly focuses on the subordinate class. Sudha Murthy talks about the culture of neglected minorities in the society; she focuses on some of the Tribes in India which is actually part of the Subaltern Studies. The Subaltern Studies Group (SSG) or Subaltern Studies Collective is a group of South Asian scholars who have been interested in the postcolonial and post-imperial societies.

The term *Subaltern Studies* is sometimes also used to talk broadly to others who share many of their views and they are often considered to be an offshoot of postcolonial studies. The Subaltern Studies has become one of the most influential movements in the field. They are against the conventional way of looking at things. Their approach is against the traditional one, which focuses mostly on the elite class society let it be the rulers or the administrators or the academicians. This new approach insists upon reviewing everything that has been registered in the past with a new angle; from the angle of the minorities, or the neglected. The conventional approach has taken it for granted, the masses is the same as the minority, but the Subaltern Studies shakes the view and tries to relook everything from the angle of the neglected minorities. Therefore, this group wants to focus on the neglected or the minority community in the limelight in any form of narration as the minorities have been deliberately omitted in the past.

A key movement in postcolonial studies was the 1980 intervention of the Subaltern Studies Group. The term “subaltern studies” was first used by the distinguished Indian historian, Ranajit Guha. The term “subaltern studies” stands as a general attribute to the subordinated or neglected communities in South Asia, whether the subordination can be expressed in terms of discrimination through class, caste, age, gender, religion, language or in any other way. Like Postcolonialism, the Subaltern Studies too, studies the “binary relationship” by comparing and contrasting the elements ‘the subaltern’ and ‘the centre’. Therefore, the Subaltern Studies is used to study the interplay of dominance and subordination in colonial systems, mostly focuses India but it is applicable to any nation or historical moment or community.

Subaltern Studies, as a whole, aims to uncover the histories of groups that within the colonial and nationalist archives went largely focusing on the groups which have completely ignored and marginalized without being documented. Documentation of such hidden history becomes their prime aim for the subaltern scholars. Turning towards popular accounts of public history and memory in order to combat what Guha terms as “elitism,” the subaltern studies group’s primary focus was and is to recover, examine, and privilege the agency of the underclass within the networks of capitalism, colonialism, and nationalism.

Using the key term of Ranaji Guha, the cultural studies scholars and historians too have used the concept in their research related works. E. P. Thompson, Raymond Williams, and Eric Hobsbawm are some of the scholars, who have motivated the subaltern studies in the 1960s using the terms of Guha. The Subaltern Studies Group aims to focus on working class and particularly “peasant” historical accounts in post/colonial and post-imperial South Asia, specifically India. This group of scholars emerged out of the University of Sussex under the academic guidance of professors Ranajit Guha and Eric Stokes, and largely involved the following scholars: Shahid Amin, David Arnold, Gautam Bhadra, Dipesh Chakrabarty, N. K. Chandra, Partha Chatterjee, Arvind N. Das, David Hardiman, Stephen Henningham, Gyanendra Pandey and Sumit Sarkar. In 1982, these collaborators produced the *Subaltern Studies* journal, writing on South Asian history and society in a way that they felt had not been done so far; this project thus emerged as a field, “Subaltern Studies”.



The formulation of the term “subaltern” used by the group is not taken from the British colonial rank of the “subaltern,” which then referred to military officers who were subordinate. Instead, the term “subaltern” is taken from Italian Marxist scholar Antonio Gramsci’s own use of the word in his prison notebooks. In its original Gramscian context, “subaltern” referred solely to peasants who had not been integrated into Marx’s conception of the industrial capitalist system. Subaltern studies then seeks to fill the gap in historiography between the people’s history and the perceived history of India—between what has been archived in a narrative of power by the British Raj and what has been regarded as popular history.

The scholars of the Subaltern Studies Group sought, and still seek in the group’s subsequent repetitions, to give the subaltern, peasant domain autonomy as the voice that facilitated political action despite imperial dominance. According to Ranajit Guha, Subaltern Studies intervened in historical schools of thought that could not represent the history of nationalism in India without celebrating the role the elites played in bringing the larger nation into the discourse.

#### **4.2.6. Travel Writing**

Travelling is an act of moving from one place to another place. It may occur for various purposes such as travelling to find one’s work place, or for preaching or it can be a place of relaxation when it is arranged as a trip for pleasure. Some are not at all happy and comfortable in the journey but are focused only with the purpose. Some just travel for pleasure without any purpose behind but to enjoy the world around them. Some are very interested in travelling even if they have a purpose or not.

There are many benefits of travelling that are enjoyed by the travellers who travel just for pleasure. It is proved that travelling keeps one’s body and mind in peace. Travelling gives boost to someone who gets into a busy and tedious lifestyle. Travelling improves one’s social and communication skills; especially when someone travels to a new place where the native language of the traveller is not used; one learns the better way of communicating with the other people. Travelling also improves one’s creative thoughts especially when someone gets out of their comfort zone; when someone breaks out of their daily routine and when new places are explored, it triggers original thoughts by developing new neural connections. It also

teaches real-life lessons through the experience of travel. It improves one's tolerance as well as confidence. Overall, it provides outstanding memories to relish upon them in a lifetime.

Travelling also exposes the traveller into a new horizon where one can come into contact with people from different cultural backgrounds; which further gives the traveller an opportunity to see issues and daily life challenges from a different perspective. For instance, if some villagers, who live nearby a river, cross the river daily to connect themselves with the world; we may not understand the difficulties faced by them unless we live with them. If we live with them for a while we may better understand the difficulties they face in their daily life. Therefore, travelling allows us to understand situation from a newer perspective as an insider. The traveller, thus, plays the dual role here; as the insider as well as the outsider. He also connects the gap through his writing.

Travelogue writing is a genre in literature where the experiences of the traveller are narrated in an interesting way. It can also be addressed as Travelogue or Travel Narratives. The Travel Narratives contains vivid descriptions of the place where the traveller visits. It also has the descriptions of the subjective experiences while visiting a place, with subjective comments about the place with reference to history and culture of the place and accounts the travellers' interactions with local people. The traveller, thus, plays the role of a mediatory, who writes the life of a native as an outsider and exhibits the new culture and people through travel writing.

Of course, thoughts, feelings, and reflections are important parts of our experience of travel. So, descriptions of a traveller's inner world are not out-of-place in the travelogue. Likewise, notes and observations on history, society, and culture are also become common features of travelogues, as we certainly learn about the world when we travel.

Travelogue can be broadly divided into two broad genres: Travel Literature and Travel Documentary. The Travel Literature is a record of an author's travelling experience. The Travel Documentary is a documentary film or television program that describes travel in general. Literary travel writing can take the shape of books, novels, memoirs, articles, poems, journals and diaries, journalism, personal essays, travelogues, op-eds, blog posts, and other more experimental forms of writing. A

Travelogue need not be formal but the Travel Writing is a more formal one with academic tone. The Travel Literature encompasses outdoor literature, guide books, nature writing and travel memoirs. One early travel memoirist in Western literature was Pausanias, a Greek geographer of the 2nd century AD. In the early modern period, James Boswell's *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides* (1786) helped to shape travel memoir as a genre.

Anyhow, in the twenty-first century we may not completely depend on travel writing to know about newer places because the people who live in those places document their lives in videos and posts in live-relays, or through social media posts. However, the travel writing is not merely for reporting one's lifestyle, as it is mostly mistaken for; but it has the other aspects to be looked upon. The travel writing has always existed in the vicarious tension of what a writer from one culture experiences (and attempts to comprehend) when visiting people who belong to another community or of different culture.

Bruce Chatwin, Peter Mayle, Frances Mayes, Eric Newby, Mark Twain and Rebecca West are some of the best Travel Writers for the beginners to research on travel writing. Shivya Nath, Rajat Ubhaykar, Janhavi Acharekar, Bishwanath Ghosh, Nabaneeta Dev Sen are some of the notable Indian Travel Writers.

#### **4.2.7. Themes in Sudha Murthy's Writings**

Sudha Murthy's writings have invariably many themes related to the issues existing in the contemporary society. Her writing demonstrates a marked change to feminine writing in the overall viewpoint. It is a common practice in feminine writing to blame men for women's sufferings, as if men and women were born rivals and marriage was a license to carry out women's oppression. The fictions of Sudha Murthy display the complicated relationship between two women in one family. Marriage becomes the tool for the enactment of oppression in the domestic set-up; where both men and women become the reasons for oppressing a woman.

Sudha Murthy explores another theme in her writing, the diminishing impact of rising capitalism on close human relationships in Indian society. Liberalization in the Indian economic system provides the Indians with hundreds of opportunities to accumulate capital. There are opportunities provided to young boys and girls to

travel to the first world countries for getting education and job opportunities and they are given opportunities to easily access modern facilities. These are the positive aspects of the contemporary society for those in the Third World nations. These are opportunities because they bring upon changes in their social and financial status in the society. At the same time, there emerges a kind of friction typically close relationships within the family. Sudha Murthy looks at it as a great drawback and she deals artistically with collapsing household ties in her works.

There are some minor themes involved in the writings of Sudha Murthy. The superstitious beliefs of the Indians, the caste system and issues related to marriage, beliefs in horoscopes, and beliefs on bad omen or dark times, cultural rituals and practices, conventions religious beliefs are part of any Indian household. Sudha Murthy has touched upon all these as part of her writings.

Sudha Murthy has brought out the inconsistencies in the life style of the Indians through her characters. Her writings do not focus on the mainstream characters; instead she involves her minor characters than her major characters. As part of the minority writings the writer, deliberately uses the minor characters. Her writings can be termed under the Subaltern Studies, as many of her characters belong to minority groups.

The prominent features of Sudha Murthy's characters belong to minority or lower class community of the society. There are many dimensions found in the character such as charity workers or teachers who are willing to serve the needy. She binds them simultaneously with the conventional Indian society and with the ultramodern society today.

If the comparison of female characters of Sudha Murthy with the female characters of other Indian female novelists is made, one finds that the women of Murthy have a positive approach to life. The women characters value hard work and their take on life is highly enthusiastic. Sudha Murthy's women plan their own fate and bring about changes in external situation.

In the stories of Sudha Murthy, the characterization as an art form is clear and direct in keeping with the storytelling tradition in India. As a result, the novels of Sudha Murthy and short stories cater to today's Indian reader's section only. She

stands out as an excellent narrator because of her devotion to Indian culture and not being influenced by the Western culture of storytelling.

The narrative techniques of Sudha Murthy are unique. She presents, clarifies and deciphers her characters leaving almost no place for readers to do anything. This may suit customary Indian technique for narrating. Although it makes her works one-sided, she stays a focal point of fascination for the new readers of India. This must be thought about the incredible support of Indian writing.

Sudha Murthy sets her books by weaving the strings of customs and advancement in all her works. The old age customs and tradition of Indians are still used through her stories. She sets the activity of her books in the towns, provincial inclinations that exist in huge urban communities. Juxtaposition of country existence with cosmopolitan life of the urban areas makes her work illustrative of Indian life. It likewise causes her to draw out the showdown between two ages.

Sudha Murthy has used the real life characters in her works. She is very much familiar with the individuals and their ways of life around there. Her characters have Kannada names like Akka, Appa, Avva and such names of South Indian ones. She has used these just to make the characters to remain one among the others in the society; once the readers read the stories, they may identify with any of the characters. This gives life to her characters when her works are read.

#### **4.2.8. Questions:**

1. Why did the Thandappa refuse the monetary benefits?
2. Why the service rendered by Sudha Murthy is considered the best among the other charity members?
3. What did the children of the tribal settlement expect from Sudha Murthy?
4. Why the travelogue of Sudha Murthy is considered the great? What is the lesson learnt by Sudha Murthy? How did the Thandappa impress Sudha Murthy?
5. Describe the poor condition of the school in the tribal settlement.
6. How Sudha Murthy's travel writing is better than a travelogue?

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## UNIT- 5

### NOVEL

#### **5.0. Objectives:**

Reading skill can be improved by reading the novels; moreover, reading novels of Indian writers can show the historical, political, social, geographical sketches of India. Apart from improving reading skills, reading novels improves the analytical and critical skills and develops the social consciousness. This can also improve the readers to understand life in a better way as the novel reflects the experience of the writer from many perspectives.

#### **5.1. Coolie - Mulk Raj Anand - Bionote**

Mulk Raj Anand was one of the pioneers of Indian writing in English. He was born in 1905, in Peshawar in India (now in Pakistan). He belonged to an ordinary middle-class family. His father was a member of the coppersmith community, who later became a soldier, and his mother belonged to an agricultural family. Anand inherited the typical qualities of both his parents – cleverness and resourceful craftsmanship of his father and the sturdy commonsense of his peasant mother. The class of society which he belonged shaped his writing with a great sense of compassion for the poor, exploited and under-privileged people. His early life was lived in the midst of poverty and misfortune. The sufferings he underwent in his personal life left a deep impression on his mind and stirred his mind into creativity. His works attempted to capture the social realities of British India in the language of the colonizers.

Anand was educated at Khalsa College, Amritsar and went on a scholarship to London for his doctor's degree which he eventually obtained in philosophy. Anand might have chosen teaching as his profession; instead, he chose creative writing as his career. He, initially, focused on non-fiction writing which focused on various themes such as Persian Painting, The Hindu View of Art and The Golden Breath. He admired the Indian poets like Iqbal, Tagore and Sarojini Naidu, which were reflected in his last works. He was also associated with various students, peasants and other movements of India, as well as worked for India's freedom movement. He died at the age of 98 in 2004.

Anand's first novel, *Untouchable* (1935) was about the struggles and humiliations faced by lower caste man, a toilet cleaner named Bakha. This novel made everyone to wonder about the protagonist being a victim of social issues because the protagonists were always successful heroes in the past. Then he published various novels on different social issues that emerged in Indian society.

Anand's second novel, *Coolie*, published in 1936, created a stir in the literary world. The varied themes based on Indian life were presented in the novel – the contrast between rural life and urban life; the relationship between the Muslism and the Hindus; the relationship between the ruling British (colonizers) and the ruled Indians (colonized). It was the story of a young boy named Munoo who was transplanted from his rural to urban life and was left to die pathetically.

Anand's other major works are *The Village* (1939), *The Sword and the Sickle* (1942), and *The Big Heart* (1945; rev. ed. 1980). Anand wrote other novels and short-story collections and also edited numerous magazines and journals, including *MARG*, an art quarterly that he founded in 1946. He also intermittently worked on a projected seven-volume autobiographical novel entitled *Seven Ages of Man*, completing four volumes: *Seven Summers* (1951), *Morning Face* (1968), *Confession of a Lover* (1976), and *The Bubble* (1984).

Religious hypocrisy, feudal system, East-West encounter, the place of woman in the society, superstitions, poverty, hunger and exploitation are Anand's common themes. He was notable for his depiction of the lives of the poorer castes in traditional Indian society. Anand was awarded with International Peace Prize in 1953, Padma Bhushan in 1968 and Sahitya Akademi Award in 1971 for his invaluable literary contributions.

### **5.1.1. Character List: Who is Who**

#### **Munoo:**

He was an orphan of fourteen year old boy. He was brought up by his uncle. Poverty led him to various parts of India and was torn into pieces at the end. He worked hard but he could not change his life style. He was a failed man in the world of greedy masters.



**Daya Ram:**

He was the uncle of Munoo. He brought up Munoo in poverty. His helpless situation forced him to stop Munoo's education and to join Munoo as a servant boy to one of the master's house. He was cruel towards Munoo to make him accept the situation.

**Gujri:**

She was the wife of Daya Ram and the aunt of Munoo. She was kind towards Munoo, yet she was forced to send him to the town as a servant due to poverty.

**Babu Nathoo Ram Mal:**

He was the accountant of the Imperial Bank. He was money-minded and so paid fewer wage to the servants. He wanted to be paid more so he invited the higher official to his house to get his promotion. He violently beat Munoo for playing with Sheila, his daughter, which forced Munoo to escape from the house.

**Bibiji:**

She was the wife of Babu Nathoo Ram Mal. She was very arrogant and unkind. She always abused Munoo for no reasons. Whatever Munoo did, she abused him. She even abused her own kids, if they were disturbing her. Her cruel words and attitude made Munoo to flee from Shamnagar.

**Prem:**

He was the younger brother of Babu Nathoo Ram Mal. He was a doctor. He was kind towards Munoo. Only because of Prem, Munoo could survive as a servant in the Babu's house.

**Mr. England:**

He was the higher official of the bank, who was given a tea party by Nathoo Ram to get an early promotion. That party became a failure one as Mr. England was not comfortable at the Babu's house.

**Seth Prabha Dyal:**

He was a coolie, and became a partner in business out of his hard work. He was a hill man like Munoo, and finally he became the owner of the factory. He was kind towards all his servants. He treated Munoo as his own son. His partner Ganpat was not a genuine person who slackened his business and life. Finally, he left the city as a failure man and went to his village.

**Parbati:**

She was the wife of Prabha and she was very kind towards all the servants. He treated Munoo as her own son.

**Ganpat:**

He was the partner of Prabha in business. He cheated Prabha by taking away all the money and left Prabha in bankrupt. He was cruel towards all the servants and he hated Munoo very much.

**The elephant driver (mahout):**

This man was working in Tara Bai Circus Team. He helped Munoo to go to Bombay without train fare. He provided food to Munoo on his way to Bombay.

**Hari:**

He was a coolie who worked in the Cotton Mill of Bombay. Due to poverty, he made his whole family to work in the factory. He was weak and hardworking coolie who was helpful to Munoo.

**Lakshami:**

She was the wife of Hari. She also worked as a labourer in the factory along with her husband and children.

**Ratan:**

He was a wrestler and a labourer in the factory. He was not afraid of any superior officers like the other coolies. He became friendly with Munoo. He helped the coolies and advised them to join the Trade Union.

**The foreman:**

He was an Indian, working in the factory, and had an upper hand towards the coolies. He treated them cruelly.

**Jimmy:**

He was the supervisor of the factory. He was an Englishman and never bothered about the welfare of the coolies.

**Mrs. May Mainwaring:**

She was an Anglo-Indian. She wanted to be an English woman, so she married an Englishman to get her identity. She was sometimes, kind towards Munoo and at times, she was cruel to him. When Munoo was sick, she took care of him.

**Major Marchant:**

He was the doctor who treated Munoo during his fever in Shimla. He became very friendly with May.

**Mohan:**

He was a coolie, a rickshaw puller in Shimla. He showed care and concern towards Munoo's health.

**5.1.2. A Short Summary - Coolie**

*Coolie* is the story of Munoo, a fourteen year old boy. He lost both his parents due to poverty after losing their mortgaged land and became an orphan. He was brought up by his paternal uncle Daya Ram. His aunt was kind enough to provide him food and shelter. He went to school regularly and played with his friends in the evenings and on holidays. During holidays, he, along with his friends, grazed the cattle. Unfortunately, his uncle got a job for Munoo in the town, Shamnagar, which he did not like at all. He missed his friends and his village and without least interest he went to the town to work as a servant in one of the Babu's (officer) house.

Daya Ram, the uncle of Munoo was not affectionate and kind towards Munoo. He got the wages of Munoo from the Babu, where Munoo worked and did not even provide good clothes for Munoo to wear. When Munoo complained about

the house owners' ill-treatment he advised Munoo to behave properly and also warned that he had to obey the masters. Then, Munoo developed a kind of hatred towards his uncle and decided not to trust his words, because he found that his uncle was not his well-wisher.

Munoo, after joining as a servant in the Babu's house, suffered a lot as he was thrashed and abused regularly for little reasons by the Bibiji, the wife of Babu. On the first day, he was humiliated for defecating on the ground in front of the compound wall of the residence. Munoo was ignorant about latrines as he was from the village and he was treated inhumanely. He was given work from the early morning to his bed without a break. After his lunch, he was sometimes allowed to visit his uncle but that also did not comfort his tormented soul. He was not given the food cooked in the kitchen but the stale left-over food was given. He had to prepare tea and to wash utensils, after each time, the dishes and tea were made. He had to clean the house and make the bed. He had to peel vegetables and to fill water in the pitchers from the public water-pipe line. Only the Chota Babu, the younger brother of Babu was kind towards Munoo. Bibiji's non-stop abuses and curses were a torture to Munoo.

One day, when Munoo was playing with Sheila, the elder daughter of the Babu, Sheila warned him that he was restricted to play with her as he belonged to a lower community. Yet the music of phonogram tempted to dance like a monkey and when Sheila and her friends enjoyed and laughed at him, it encouraged him to continue the game. Unfortunately, he had bitten the cheek of Sheila playfully and it turned the pink cheek of hers into blue. This completely irritated the Babu and Munoo was beaten like an animal even after he apologized for his unintentional mistake. Munoo was whipped severely so he wanted to escape from that place. He slipped out of the Babu's house in the early morning when he was left in the kitchen. He felt disgrace and hatred towards his uncle, so he had chosen not to go back to his village. He knew, once he got into any of them again, he would be beaten more. He moved towards the railway station and managed to jump into a moving train through the window. He fell on his side on a hard bunk; he felt alone and he was so scared. He did not know that the train was going towards Daulatpur city.

Munoo was rescued and protected by Prabha Dyal, a businessman of Daulatpur. He was travelling with his business partner, Ganpat and with some workers of their pickle factory. Prabha Dyal was a hill man and was very kind to Munoo and readily accepted Munoo as his son. Ganpat was doubtful about Munoo that he might be a thief. Prabha wanted Munoo to take care of the factory's account, but Ganpat was reluctant to this idea. Parbati, the wife of Prabha was very kind and took care of Munoo as her own son. She fed him well and took care of him when he was sick.

Munoo learnt his work in the factory; he had to deliver the products of factory in the bazaars and to collect revenue from the shop owners. Ganpat looked pretentious but Prabha trusted him. Ganpat collected huge amount of money from the customers and did not hand over to the factory accounts. He cheated Prabha and started a new factory. Prabha was left alone with loans and finally his factory was seized. Prabha became sick and could not recover from his illness and was advised to go to his village. So, the family vacated the city with Tulsi. Munoo was expected to join them after some time. Unfortunately, Munoo was beaten by a police constable for not having license to work as a coolie in the railway station. This induced Munoo's thoughts to get a dignified life like Sahibs. Hence, he decided to go to Bombay with the help of a mahout (the elephant driver) who worked with a circus team. The mahout helped Munoo to reach Bombay without paying his train fare. Munoo reached Bombay thinking that his life style would change as a dignified coolie.

When Munoo reached Bombay, he understood that the coolies in Bombay were the same as he had seen in the other places. This disappointed Munoo and he understood he had changed his dress to appear not like a coolie. He was determined to buy shoes and clothes to change his appearance after getting his first salary. Munoo happened to meet Hari, an old man, who was working in a cotton factory. He assured Munoo that he too would get a job opportunity in the factory. So, he joined with Hari and his family to the industrial colony. Munoo got a job in the Cotton Mills. Munoo toiled hard in the factory but the coolies were not treated well and nobody took care of the welfare of the coolies.

Ratan, a wrestler, became the friend of Munoo. He made Munoo to understand how the coolies were ill-treated in the factory and he made many of the coolies to join the Trade Union so that the Union would take care of the welfare of the coolies. The coolies joined together to get proper wages from the employees as their standard of life was very low with the wages they were paid. Unfortunately, the strike by the coolies was converted into a communal riot at the national level. Munoo was attacked in the riot and was admitted for treatment. After he recovered, when he was in a dilemma to go back to the factory or not, unfortunately, he met with an accident. An English woman, May Mainwaring was in the car and she did not want to get into trouble for hitting Munoo. So she decided to take him by the car to Shimla, where she was heading to. That was how Munoo was shifted from Bombay to Shimla.

May used Munoo as a servant to do all the menial jobs including making tea for her, serving breakfast and dinner, cleaning, sweeping, shopping, passing messages, and all sorts of jobs. Along with these, Munoo was asked to be one of the coolies among the four, to carry the rickshaw whenever May wanted to visit someone down the hill or when she went for shopping or when she wanted to relax. May was kind enough to provide proper food to Munoo, though he was not paid anything for his work.

Munoo's health condition worsened after a while and Mohan, one of the rickshaw coolie warned Munoo to take care of his health or to go back to his home. Munoo neglected his advice and continued to work in the same way. Once, when Munoo and the other rickshaw coolies were waiting for the dance party to get over, Munoo spat and the spittle was full of blood. Mohan alerted everyone and Munoo was brought to the segregated hut down the hills after getting medical advice from the doctor Major. It was understood that Munoo was suffering from consumption (tuberculosis). Munoo hoped that he would recover and would go back to Bombay because Ratan wrote to him saying everything was alright with the Union in the factory. Unfortunately, the condition of Munoo worsened and Mohan visited Munoo regularly. Finally, one day, in an early morning, Munoo died leaving his dreams behind.

Therefore, *Coolie* was a story of a poor unfortunate coolie Munoo who had miserable death. It was a realistic portrayal of the coolies in Inida who had not enjoyed any comfort or basic rights in their lives but were being exploited by the rich capitalist society.

### 5.1.3. Analytical Summary

#### Chapter-I

In the first chapter, Munoo the young boy of fourteen was spending his leisure hours with his friends. He was born and brought up in a village of the Kangra hills. He was an orphan as his parents were dead and was taken care of by his paternal uncle, Daya Ram. On the day of the opening scene, his aunt came in search of Munoo since Munoo had to leave the village to town as a child labour.

Munoo's aunt Gujri shouted for Munoo as he was not found nearby their house. Munoo, though heard the voice of his aunt, did not want to go back to his house. He was not interested to leave his village. He was very reluctant to get settle in town. He was not very happy in his village either, yet he was not sure about his life-style in the town.

Munoo's childhood was not the happiest one because the aunt of Munoo had never treated him as her own son. She had no child, but she had no concern over the welfare of Munoo. She provided him food and shelter, but had always treated him as a child of 'other' or as an unwanted child in the house. So, she had taken this chance to send Munoo away from the village. When she knew, Munoo was deliberately not giving attention to her calls, she was irritated. She started scolding him and abused him.

Munoo and his friends were actually rearing their cattle when Munoo's aunt kept calling Munoo. Munoo pretended as if he was not hearing the voice of his aunt. He knew that she called him to set his trip to the town along with his uncle Daya Ram. Jay Singh was one of the playmates of Munoo, who belonged to the land owner family. Comparatively, he was richer among Munoo's playmates. Jay Singh did not steal mangoes or any other fruits like Munoo and the other playmates did. Jay Singh was not interested in studies. His father gave him two annas daily for pocket money,

but Munoo and his friends had no money and they went to school. All these boys grazed their cattle together on their holidays.

Munoo was studying fifth standard. Munoo always compared his status and life style to that of his playmate Jay Singh. The food eaten by and the clothes used by Jay Singh were always compared by Munoo. Munoo often realized that his life was not as easy and comfortable as that of his playmate Jay Singh. Anyhow, when Jay Singh knew about Munoo's trip to the town Shampur he became jealous of Munoo. Jay Singh imagined about "beautiful things to eat, beautiful clothes to wear and beautiful toys to play with" (2). In reality Munoo had no option to enjoy all those beautiful things in town, which Jay Singh dreamt about. Even then, Munoo hid his terrific feel which he had towards his stay in Shampur town. However, Munoo enjoyed the jealous feel of Jay Singh when he talked about town life. But he had no real interest to go to town.

Jay Singh's father was a land owner. He had taken up the land of Munoo's father too. So Munoo had some bitter feel towards Jay Singh's father for confiscating the mortgaged land of his father. He also pointed out how the poor farmers had to give up their lands, due to poverty. Land means a lot for farmers and losing the land is nothing but losing their livelihood, because without land, their survival becomes tough in a rain-forbidden dry village. The landlords usually seized the land covering the unpaid rent due to scanty rains and poor harvested become enemies to the poor farmers and decided their unlucky fate for the whole family of farmers. Munoo's father has died of bitterness and hopelessness for the lost land leaving his wife to starve. Munoo's mother had to support her younger brother-in-law and her child, Munoo, without a single penny. She had then joined a mill where she had to ground the mill-stones day and night, tiringly, by changing her left and right hand to hold the wooden handle of the mill stone without proper food and rest to survive three lives. Munoo's mother too was dead leaving Munoo as an orphan boy who was then taken care of by his uncle. Munoo's uncle and aunt had taken care of Munoo. Once, Munoo becomes fourteen years old, they got a brilliant idea of sending Munoo as a coolie in Shampur, so that he can share the burden of family expenses. In case, if Munoo had any of his parents alive, he or she might have taken care of Munoo, avoiding his entry into child labour.



Munoo was not going to Shampur to enjoy the town life, but to toil as a child labour. Though he claimed his friend that he would not come back to the village again, he felt hurt about it. He had dreamt about all the nice things that belong to town, but he was not mentally prepared to go to town yet.

Munoo, actually, was happy in his village (hill). When his aunt scolded him for his playful irresponsible activities, he was provided, food, clothing and shelter. He went to school, he played with his friends, and he stole ripe and unripe fruits from anybody's garden. He liked to climb trees and enjoyed the cool breeze. When Munoo thought all these beautiful things, these memories held him back not to leave the village and he was not interested to leave for the town.

As Munoo, heard his aunt's voice again, he called his cattle and got ready to go back home. The other boys also gathered their cattle and started to their home. That was the last day of Munoo's village life in the hills.

## **Chapter - II**

Daya Ram, Munoo's uncle and Munoo walked together towards the town Shampur. Munoo was striding slowly, which showed his disinterest towards his journey. Daya Ram, like a commander, was forcing Munoo to walk fast. Though he was an attendant in a British run bank, he behaved as an officer in the bank. He was the chaprasi (a junior office worker who carries messages) in the Imperial Bank of India. The attire of Daya Ram showed that he was part of British government service. He was proud of his gold-brocaded red coat and neatly tied white turban. He was a little showy to seek the attention of the passers-by to indicate that he worked for the British government which was considered very prestigious. Meanwhile, he showed his anger towards Munoo throughout his journey to the town.

Munoo was bare feet and the ten-mile walk made his feet sore, yet Daya Ram was pitiless to allow him to take rest or nurse his feet that hurt him. Munoo openly said that his feet hurt him, but his uncle was rather irritated than to be consolable and kind. Once, Munoo said loudly that the driver of the cart can give him a lift, if his uncle asked. This cooled the driver and he offered a seat to Munoo, but his uncle refused the offer and threatened the cart driver that he would be imprisoned if he

created any problem with the servant of the British government. To avenge upon the shouts of the driver, Daya Ram, abused Munoo and urged him to walk fast.

Munoo's legs were tired of walking and his urge to move his journey towards the town made Munoo to use his toes at times for walking. However, Munoo relished the sight of the town, for that was the first time Munoo observed the people, houses and things of town. He widely opened his eyes and mouth out of excitement, at the marvels of different carriages, different types of carts, tongas and other vehicles. For the first time, he happened to see the rail engine which was a mystery to him. The absence of cattle and fields in the town confused Munoo because he had no idea how the townspeople got their food. His uncle explained that the townspeople were businessmen and officers and they bought things they ate. That sounded very strange to Munoo.

Daya Ram told Munoo that he was going to be a servant in the house of an officer. The officer actually worked in the Imperial Bank, where Daya Ram worked as an attendant to the officer.

Everything that Munoo came across in the town became new to him; let it be the sweets or toys in the shops. Once, he was tempted to taste some cool ices, but he dared not to ask his uncle, but his uncle kept on urging to move fast or else he would be lost in the town, in case if he failed to follow his uncle. One such amusements, Munoo had encountered was a phonogram. Munoo was surprised to know that it sang a song. He wondered who was singing and whether someone can enter into a tiny disc. He cannot believe that a machine can sing so realistically. When he slowed down his steps to listen to the music, he was about to be hit-and-run by a fast-moving cart. Fortunately, he escaped from an accident and his uncle slapped on his face for his carelessness that he might have been killed, if he did not walk along with him. While crying Munoo, recollected resentment and thought that he hated his uncle.

When Munoo crossed an area of the town he had observed silk clothes and shoes were sold there. He was happy about being in the town because he had always wanted to buy one pair of shoes for himself. Now, he got the hope of buying one pair for him. When he observed some people of his own age, who looked like villagers of his place, carrying weights on their backs, it surprised him.

The journey halted for a while, upon reaching the building of the Imperial Bank. When Daya Ram met a high class Muslim man, he flattered and changed his tone and as a token of respect he addressed the man as Babu. This Babu was actually Nathooram Mal, the Sub-Accountant in the Bank and was the officer from whom Daya Ram had wanted to meet to get a job for Munoo. Daya Ram introduced Munoo to him and instructed Munoo to wish him with utmost reverence. Munoo admired the way the Babu looked and the way he dressed up and his most appreciation at his heart was for the shoes that the Babu was wearing. Munoo suddenly had an idea of buying one pair of shoes like the Babu wore. He was not keen on showing any interest to the instructions by his uncle. He observed everything as he was into a new world for the first time. Finally, the Babu agreed Munoo as his servant and instructed Daya Ram to leave Munoo in-charge of Bibiji Uttam Kaur, Babu's wife at his home.

On the way to Babu's house, they met another man who was the higher official of the bank and Daya Ram offered a customary salute to him. Munoo was confused because he had thought Nathoo Ram Mal was the officer in the bank. His uncle explained the new man was the chief officer of all the other officers in the bank. Munoo understood the reason for Daya Ram's mixed gesture of fear, humility and reverence.

Daya Ram and Munoo walked together towards the residential quarters. The house of the Babu Nathoo Ram Mal was a one-storied square house with the colonial touches. Daya Ram introduced Munoo to Bibiji as their servant. Munoo noticed Bibiji's way of wearing sari was different. Her looks appeared to be strange to Munoo and actually he was a little frightened of Bibiji. By the time, the child cried from inside and to instigate fear of Munoo, Bibiji started abusing her own young baby and cursed it in a worst manner. Munoo suddenly thought of his aunt and yet remembered his aunt was not very bad to curse like that. So he thought Bibiji was very bad and he was possessed by sadness and self-pity.

Bibiji instructed to buy vegetables from the market and sent them through Munoo. As soon as he joined as a servant, he had the responsibility of serving the family by forgetting his comforts. He had walked a long distance and without food he had to take up his work. He wondered why he was not offered food because, in his hills (village), they usually offered food at the destination point; whereas Bibiji

was giving him orders and was not taken note of his hunger or tiredness. So, he hated the custom of the town. Even Daya Ram was not bothered about the discomfort that his niece would face. Instead on the way back, he said that Munoo would be given plenty of food in the house and he would be paid three rupees per month.

Daya Ram also advised Munoo that he had to serve best for his masters by insisting that his masters were kind people. When Munoo heard that he felt like crying. Munoo had an uncomfortable sleep at night as he was tired, had not changed his clothes even after a long tiring walk for miles, and an old ragged blanket cannot protect him at night with the mosquitoes. The corner of the kitchen which was given for him to sleep became a hell to him.

As soon as he returned with the vegetables, he was given a loaf of stale pancake. He was asked to peel the potatoes, then to help her to cook meal. The meal was prepared, but Munoo did not know who ate it; because he was not given any meal. He only remembered the shrill voice of his mistress who went on abusing and cursing all the time.

In the evening, when Munoo fell asleep, he was made awaken by the curses of the mistress and she asked him to serve dinner for Babuji. Munoo observed that the utensils were kept clean in the kitchen. The grocery items were filled neatly. He also entered into the house to check what was there. Before day break, he was instructed by Bibiji (as she was sleeping on the bed) to rake out the ashes in the fire place (oven).

Munoo had a very strong bitter experience on his first morning in the house. He was not sure where the latrine of the house was. In his hills, he used the open fields, whereas this place was new to him. He did not know where he had to relieve. As there was no idea, Munoo ran to the wall outside the house and sat down there. After seeing Munoo, sitting in front of her house near the compound wall, all the residents looked at Munoo with disgust. Bibiji shouted that the prestige of the family had come down. She was worried what the other officers who resided nearby would think about the family. She went to the extreme level of cursing him and Munoo wished that he could disappear from the world somehow. Usually, he relieved himself in the open, and he never felt ashamed as he had done before. He felt as if he was a thief who had attacked his house. Finally, he found solace in Chota Babu

Prem, the younger brother of Babu. He was a doctor, who actually treated Munoo in a better way than the other members of the family. He took up the incident in a lighter manner. He told his sister-in-law, that she would have shown the lavatory (toilet) of the house to be used by Munoo. She was panicked to hear that because she cannot imagine a servant boy of a low class from the hills can use their toilet. She instructed someone to call the sweeper to clean the shit of Munoo; Prem advised her not to scold Munoo further because it would create more nuisances.

Bibiji instructed him to have a bath before he entered the kitchen. She called him as an uncivilized man and told him to get out of her sight. It was a humiliating incident for him. After bathing Munoo scrubbed the utensils with ashes by sitting on the slab stone down. Sheila, the elder daughter of the family wanted to help Munoo washing utensils but Bibiji restricted Sheila.

Bibiji belonged to an orthodox Hindu family. When her husband's Muslim friends visited them she served them in Chinese crockery and she would not use them for herself. She also told Munoo that she was very hygiene, whereas Munoo noticed that she boiled eggs along with water for tea which was considered unhygienic even at his village. Munoo understood it was not about hygiene but of a mere pretention to draw a line between two castes and two classes.

Munoo observed how Bibiji treated her children she abused them non-stop. She called them witches and cursed them for not giving her leisure hours to take rest. Munoo wondered, as a mother, she was not willingly taking care of the kids. She said she had hardly few hours to sleep. Even if she herself committed a small mistake like burning the toast she cursed and abused someone and continued her work. So Bibiji's abusive words and curses became part of Munoo's routine. Munoo, at times, would wonder why she was not abusing him if she stopped for a while.

When Munoo went out to empty trash and used ashes on the road side. He happened to meet other servant boys of his age in the neighbourhood. One of the boys guided him, where he had to throw trash.

A few days later, Munoo got a chance to dance in the living room of his master when the music was on. He danced like a monkey which was enjoyed by Sheila and Lila, the children of his master and Prem, the Chota Babu too had

encouraged his dance while Munoo made faces like monkey. When Bibiji shouted at Munoo for entering into the living room, Munoo understood easily that he was restricted to enter into all the rooms except the kitchen. It did not hurt him much because he was happy that Prem treated him well and more than that he had got the chance of going near the instrument at least once and had danced for the tune.

Bibiji instructed him to give tea to Prem and children. When Munoo was keen about knowing how to carry and set the tea table, Bibiji became furious with him for asking questions. She had never taught his work properly, instead, she insulted and abused for every word Munoo spoke or things he did. Though Prem treated him well, sometimes he too humiliated Munoo by reminding him of his shitting on the open ground.

Bibiji also insisted that Munoo had to wash his hands before he touched anything in the kitchen. He deliberately told lie to her saying that after washing his hands he had not polluted them. But he had touched the dirty door mat, but had not washed his hands. Only after getting confirmation from Munoo, that he had washed his hands, she would allow him into the kitchen.

Setting the tea table was very strange to Munoo. He was not allowed to the sitting room, yet he watched from a distance, how the tea was made. The milk from the long jar was poured, then tea from the pot was poured, and then sugar was added in the cups. He wondered that in his village everything was boiled together. Bread and butter were the new combination for Munoo which he had never seen at all. Sheila wanted to give him some tea; whereas her mother shouted at Munoo to scrub the utensils with ashes. While Munoo was scrubbing the utensils Bibiji shouted at him saying that they were not done properly. Luckily, when her husband asked for tea, she had to move and Munoo got some relief from her abuse. Munoo was asked to get hot water ready for the masters to bath. He believed that the sitting-room was a cooler place to take rest awhile, but he was strictly forbidden by the Bibiji to enter into the sitting room.

When the masters had their razors to shave the beards, Munoo was too curious to know about the machines. He was happy that the Chota Babu, Prem explained him things new to Munoo and he was kind towards him. When Bibiji came to know about the conversation, she became furious and shouted at Munoo. Munoo,

anyhow, had some hope that one day, the mistress (Bibiji) would accept him as a lovable servant and would stop shouting at him. This hope of Munoo failed because he could not get any reputation from his mistress.

Washing tea utensils and peeling vegetables became his routine and so Munoo, then, had to wash the tea utensils and then to peel the vegetables. He compared Bibiji with his aunt. Usually, his aunt would take care of all the household works. She had no hatred towards him but Bibiji always showed her hatred towards him for little reasons at times. Later, Munoo understood that she can always find something to abuse him for some fault, “the way he placed a pot, the manner in which he handled the broom, or the way he held the potatoes as he peeled them”.

Kausalya, the friend of Sheila came in search of Sheila. Munoo was keen to observe the visitors. Bibiji introduced Munoo by narrating the incident of shitting near the compound wall in their residence. Sheila reported how he had danced like a monkey. Therefore, Munoo was taken as a rustic or an animal than as an innocent boy from a village on the hills. Munoo was hurt when he realized how the outer world looked at him. He had understood his position of being a slave and as a servant he had to do all the odd jobs in spite being abused or beaten. Suddenly, he became sad and retired into his lonesome world.

When Munoo’s eyes followed Bibiji to know about the place where she kept money, Bibiji insulted him as a thief. Munoo, out of humiliation, bent down to peel the vegetables. Even then, she forced him to sweep the other rooms and do the beds, so that he cannot find the secret places where she kept money. Munoo’s intention was not to steal the money, but he observed and noticed everything because everything was new to him.

While sweeping the carpet with the broom, Munoo felt that he was in fairyland. When he looked at the photographs, touched the chairs, and looked at other things, he felt privileged. After cleaning he made the beds. Then, he was instructed to fill water in the pitchers.

Daya Ram came to collect lunch for his master in the bank. When he asked Munoo whether he liked the house, he was forced to say that he liked the house and masters. When he got a chance to go along with his uncle, being alone, Munoo

confessed everything that Bibiji was too harsh and too frequently abused him. Daya Ram instead of convincing Munoo, he told him that his mother and aunt spoilt him by being kind and never letting him to do any work. So he firmly advised Munoo to learn the work and grow as a servant for his welfare. Munoo's hatred towards his uncle grew as he did not understand the feel of the young boy.

On his return, Munoo was offered two chapattis, some lentils and some vegetables. He was not offered his food on a plate. He was made to eat his food only by holding in his hand. He was considered as a person of low status and so he was not allowed to eat using the utensils. This greatly hurt him and he could hardly swallow his food. Again, he had to wash the utensils and by the time he felt tired and lied down.

After Sheila and Kausalya came back from school, they turned on the music in the sitting room which attracted Munoo's attention. The next moment he began to perform his monkey dance in front of them just to amuse them. They too enjoyed his funny movements and laughed at him. On one evening, when Bibiji was out with Lila, Munoo showed interest to play with the girls and when he was about to join them to play, he was roughly pushed by the girls saying that he was a servant and not supposed to play with them.

The Chota Babu bought some English sweets such as rasgulas and gulab jamans. He offered some to Munoo on a plate. Munoo treated him as a hero among the others. When Bibiji returned, she nagged Munoo again and gave a list of job to him. Munoo was grinding spices in a stone mortar with a wooden stone pestle, when some juice spilt over while grinding, he was rebuked. When he did not wash his hands before touching the same pan, again the same thing happened. He felt tired and wanted to sleep for a while. In due course of time, Munoo became tired of abuses than being tired of his hard work.

Munoo was used to the routine of domestic slavery in the Babu's house. He did not settle down very easily. He asked himself several questions and got the answer that he was the servant of Babu Nathoo Ram and this new identity of being a servant disturbed his psyche. He wished that once he grew, he also might get a job like his uncle. He dreamt many things to accomplish in his life. He compared his bare feet with his masters' feet which wore boots. He thought that one had to be a



Babu or Sahib to eat the English sweets and to wear silk clothes. He often compared and contrasted the rich people around him and struggled to get himself identified.

Munoo also understood the hierarchical ladder in which his own master was a servant to the higher authority. He believed that his master too was a slave to someone else. Munoo had recalled all the stories of his ancestor's village, his country which he had read at school, had the records of the desire for power, the desire for honour, and the desire for property. As an orphan boy Munoo believed that nobody loved him and nobody would ever love him. He also understood that the rich town people were the superiors to the poor people of the hill (his village). Therefore he convinced himself to remain as a slave to the masters by convincing his inferiority.

Days after, there was an English visitor to the Babu's house. The higher official of the bank, Mr. W.P. England, the chief cashier of the bank visited the Babus. The Babu was actually the Sub-Accountant of the Imperial Bank a lower level post than the chief cashier. He pleaded the chief cashier, Mr. England to visit his house for a tea party. Earlier, he had invited the officer for a grand feast but the officer refused saying that he had no liking for the Indian food. The Babu managed to get him agreed for the tea party at least. The reason behind this invitation was to personally request him some offer and promotion in the bank. Though Mr. England did not like it, he accepted without any interest. The whole house of Babu was cleaned and decorated for the visit. The whole family including Munoo was excited to receive an English visitor. It became a prestigious incident and the whole street anticipated to look at an Englishman at a close distance.

In reality Mr. England was from a poor background and when he came to India, he was given the post of the chief cashier. The Indians believed that all the Englishmen were rich. They treated Mr. England also in the same manner. As expected Mr. England arrived the Babu's house. Actually, the purpose of the visit was to impress the English man, but everything went on reverse. Mr. England felt uncomfortable in the house as it was hot. He refused the sweets saying he never liked the Indian ones. When he was offered the English sweets, he said that the Indian made English sweets had more sugar which he did not like and so refused it. The Babu was trying to tell all the stories of his family history, which Mr. England did not care at all. Munoo was also excited to see an Englishman very closer. He tried to

wish him saying “good morning sir”. After a short time, Mr. England insisted that he wanted to move. The whole house was in a hurry to offer him tea. So Munoo was hurrying in with the tea-tray and when he heard the master’s voice, the tray fell from his hands. Mr. England too understood the disaster in the kitchen, yet Prem, managed the scene by bringing tea in a neat saucer excusing Munoo for breaking the china tea set which cost one rupee and 12 annas. Mr. England drank the hot tea and burnt his lips and mouth and took leave from the Babus. Thus, the expenditure of five rupees for the party was ruined as the party had turned out to be a failure one.

Finally, it went on Munoo for carelessly handling the china set and the Bibiji started her reprimand against Munoo. She gave him a sharp slap on his cheek. The Babu also scolded him on that day. He slept sobbing and crying like he had done many other days. There was no interest in Munoo’s mind for the job. He sought for an opportunity to get away from this household chores and rebukes.

During one of his off day, Bibiji deliberately avoided Munoo, meeting his uncle. She delayed him by giving all the works, because she did not want him to complain against them. Anyhow, Munoo without eating their left-over food, firmly said, he wanted to go to his uncle. When he went there his uncle, Daya Ram was sleeping and there was no food for Munoo. When he woke up his uncle and asked for food, he was scolded for being late for food. He also asked why he did not eat at his master’s place. His uncle rejected all the complaints of Munoo against their masters but scolded Munoo for breaking the china sets during an important guest’s visit. Munoo then asked for money to buy food. He knew that the Babu paid him three rupees per month as wages. His uncle told Munoo that he would get clothes and boots for Munoo. Munoo questioned that he had not got any so far. This irritated Daya Ram and so he beat Munoo and sent him away without food or money. This incident hurt a lot and Munoo had developed a stronger hatred towards his uncle. Suddenly, he got an idea of getting away from all these people. He just wished to disappear from that place. He was treated very cruelly which was unjust and that developed his thoughts of taking revenge on these people.

The servant boys in the neighbourhood too followed caste norms. There was a servant boy named Varma, who was a Brahmin and worked in a judge’s house. There emerged a quarrel among the servant boys when Munoo got to the pump to

fill water. Munoo was deliberately bullied by the boy and it ended in violence. Munoo was very weak yet had beaten the boys and also got beaten up by them in turn. After filling up the water he rushed to the house and did not reveal the wounds which he got during the fight with the other servant boys. Though the Bibiji was arrogant, heartless and cruel towards Munoo, she felt pity on him when she learned that he was attacked by the other servant boys. Munoo's wounds were taken care of by the doctor Prem, the Chota Babu. The Bibiji too was concerned about his wound, when his head started bleeding. Later, when the judge's wife came out of her house the two women started abusing and quarrelling with each other.

Munoo got fever, though he had been treated by Prem, the Chota Babu regularly. The pain in him made him to think about his position. He cursed his uncle in his mind for giving vague promises about the job and he felt insecure as there was no one to take care of him. He compared the poor with the rich. He recollected how the grandfather of Bishambar and his whole family died of poverty though they worked hard for their life time yet suffered in poverty; whereas Jai Singh's family was happy enjoying their status for generations because they had plenty of money. He thought about Varma, the servant boy of his neighbourhood. Though he belonged to an upper caste, he too was suffering like Munoo. Therefore, Munoo thought money was the ultimate thing of one's happiness and that state of happiness cannot be attained by labour or slavery, and hence the poor had to suffer and starve in spite of working hard.

One afternoon, he heard Sheila and her girlfriends playing in the sitting-room. He too wanted to play. So he went there and played and danced like a monkey. Though she liked the way Munoo danced funnily, Sheila and Kausalya strictly told him that her mother would not allow him to play with them. Yet, she liked the way he danced funnily. She playfully caught his ears and dragged him about. She pulled his ear hard and Munoo, snarling and gnashing his teeth as if he were a real monkey, had bitten Sheila's cheek playfully. Sheila shouted and called for her mother's help. Munoo did not harm her intentionally, yet his bite turned the pink cheek of Sheila into blue.

The Bibiji cursed and abused him and talked that the prestige of her family was ruined. She also criticized Munoo's birth into a low class one. He yelled at him

how a boy who belonged to a low born can play with the girl of an upper class. Munoo cried a lot and asked for forgiveness. The Babu too came and kicked him though Munoo pleaded him to forgive and explained that he was just playing. Munoo was hurt physically and mentally because he was beaten mercilessly by the Babu.

Munoo was whipped very violently and so he wanted to escape from that place. He slipped out of the Babu's house in the early morning when he was left in the kitchen. He felt disgrace and hatred towards his uncle, so he had chosen not to go back to his village. He knew, once he got into any of them again, he would be beaten more. So he had decided to move to a newer place he hurried through the streets and it appeared as if he was running to get away from the wretched place. He moved towards the railway station and worried that no night watchman can find and stop him. Drenched in sweat, he proceeded towards the train. He accidentally escaped from an incident of being crushed by an engine of the train. He then managed to jump into a moving train through the window. He fell on his side on a hard bunk which hurt his ribs and head. He felt alone and he was terribly scared when the train started. In the train he can hear some voices of people around him. He did not know where the train was going, but he was thankful for being in the moving train.

### **Chapter III**

Actually, the train in which Munoo got into to get away from Shampur town was moving to Daulatpur, a city. In the compartments, there were two businessmen who were partners in business. They were Seth Prabha Dyal and another one was always referred to as 'goat-faced man' and his name was Ganpat. Prabha was addressed as Seth as a token of respect. He was from Kangra, the native place of Munoo's hills. He looked like a soldier than a business man. One of the passengers in the compartment found Munoo, who was lying down under the lower berth. Some were concerned about Munoo because he looked like a dead one. As he was hurt and was hungry, he could not move. When he was questioned about his name and his whereabouts, he was terror-struck.

Prabha asked Munoo his name and his parentage in the hill man's accent that was used in Munoo's village. Actually, Prabha was one among the village before he ventured into this business. He left his home early, lived in the city of Daulatpur, worked as a coolie on the streets and then he became the owner of a pickle-making

and essence-brewing factory. Munoo felt comfortable with Prabha, as he belonged to the hill, so he spoke flawlessly about his native place and the reason for his flee from Shampur.

Prabha was kind towards Munoo, so he asked Munoo's willingness to come and stay with them in Daulatpur; whereas Ganpat warned Seth that Munoo might be a thief. Prabha had developed a fatherly affection towards Munoo. He recollected how he suffered on the streets of Daulatpur as a coolie. He was also a hill folk (a villager). He thought Munoo was also a village folk. He wondered all the hill folks were poor and coolies. He regretted that when he was a coolie in the city his parents died in the village as he cannot provide them two meals per day using the money he earned as a coolie. He wished if they were alive then, they would enjoy all the comforts as he was getting profits from the factory. He thought Munoo was unfortunate that his parents died too earlier. He just thought over all the coolies of the hill who had lived a wretched life. He also compared the life of Ganpat with his; Ganpat's parents provided him everything, but he wasted all his money in gambling, drinking and whoring. Ganpat was not interested in studies though he had a chance of getting education, whereas Prabha was interested in studies though he had no chance of getting education. Prabha's familial situation never allowed him to continue his education. When Prabha came to know that Munoo was in fifth standard before he became a servant in Shampur, Prabha was happy to appoint Munoo as a clerk in his factory. Ganpat did not encourage this idea, rather he instigated the idea because he doubted that Munoo might be a thief, and moreover, he never allowed any coolie to be the in-charge of the factory accounts.

When the train entered the city of Daulatpur, Munoo eagerly looked at the longer buildings and factories with chimneys. He was thrilled at his heart and hoped for a better life in the new world which he entered. From the station, Prabha, Ganpat, Munoo and other four men of the factory got into a bamboo cart to go home.

Prabha's wife Parbati was happy to receive Munoo and Ganpat funnily told her that Munoo was her readymade son. She was not like the Bibiji of Shampur, but very kind towards Munoo. She patted him on his forehead and hugged him affectionately. She also gave him a glass of Sherbet. He was given a bathe by Prabha and then he was provided the meal. There was rice, dal and vegetables, tamarind

pickle – all hill dishes which Munoo missed in the Babu's house of Shampur and there were a few city ones too. That was the most sumptuous meal he had ever eaten. He remembered he was offered such a meal by his aunt on the death anniversary of his parents before he left as a servant to Shampur. After the meals, Munoo lied down on the charpoy and fell asleep.

When Munoo woke up in the afternoon, Prabha asked him to go down and look at the factory. The factory was in a well-like structure. The entry into the factory had no door, but one had to jump into the mouth of a well-like structure. Prabha asked Munoo to get someone's help to get into the factory. It looked dangerous for Munoo. As there was no place for the fresh air as there was no window or there was no chimney. The dark underground space of the factory frightened Munoo. The window of the house was the entry to the factory. One had to be careful while jumping down through the side of the well. He observed the mouth of two black caverns opening out into a narrow yard. On the one side, there were three ovens topped by huge steaming cauldrons on the other side. There was a stack of wood fuel and in the corner; the account books, a paper Mache-inkstand and a bottle of black ink were kept. There were some huge barrels to soak fruits and vegetables. It was a very small factory completely covered in darkness.

Ganpat was in the factory and he showed his disinterest towards Munoo and expressed it by cursing the other coolies of the factory. When one of the coolies emptied the hot boiling water from a huge container, Munoo, unknowingly might have stepped into it. The other coolies shouted to caution Munoo that he would completely get burnt.

Ganpat was furious at Munoo and cursed him and instructed him to sit on the stool which was kept in the corner and not to move; otherwise, he would spoil the work of the other coolies in the factory. Tulsi, one of the servants was preparing the flasks of essence and he had to bring Munoo to the shops, Munoo was supposed to deliver the flasks from the next day. The heat of the factory and the new tedious jobs undertaken by the servants and the grim look of Ganpat made Munoo to think to disappear from this place too. Prabha came to the factory and told Munoo, that he would take him to the shops and to the temple. On hearing this, Ganpat accused

Prabha that he was spoiling the workers. Munoo, thus, went with Prabha to look around the city.

Prabha and Munoo walked to the shops in the bazaars and lanes of Daulatpur. Munoo got the feel that he would be lost in the city if he missed Prabha. They went to many bazaars and they were confusing and the structure was too complex to understand and Munoo did not realize whether he turned left or right. He rushed towards Prabha all the time, having one eye on the bazaars. Prabha introduced a few people in the bazaars to Munoo and had informed the shop owners too, that the new boy Munoo would deliver the essences thereafter. Then they moved towards the temple, the Lotus temple of Vishnu. They offered flowers to the gods and Munoo observed a large crowd murmuring prayers in the temple. On the way back home, Munoo thought that the house of the master was nice and he was free to wonder where he liked. The factory was dark and dirty and he cannot sit down there. He felt insecure in the city because it was too complicated to know and recognise the place. He recollected some of his history lessons which described the rulers of the city. Now he imagined if Prabha had not picked him up, he might still stay in the train with hunger and might be lost in the city. Every time, he got this feel and he ran towards Prabha and caught hold of his finger.

The next day morning he was woken up by Tulsi saying that the young Seth (Ganpat) would be angry, if the servants were sleeping in the early morning. He thought of Shamnagar and his village. He knew his uncle would be angry. He wanted to write a letter about his safe stay and wanted to mention, he did not want to come back. He felt happy that he was not going back his home. Munoo observed the routine of the coolies in the factory. They stayed in the dark rooms of the factory. He felt happy that he was given a place in the house of Prabha to sleep. Ganpat and Tulsi also slept in the house of Prabha. So he felt privileged to stay and work there.

When Munoo went down to do his work in the factory, he was instructed by Tulsi to clean the used ashes of oven so that it would be ready then for the workers to light the oven and continue their work. As Munoo was new to the work Munoo touched the live coal and got his finger hurt. Tulsi felt bad for not giving him proper instruction. He then convinced Munoo, that everything would be used to after a few days of work. Then Munoo used a piece of tin to remove the ashes.

When Ganpat was irritated that the fire of the oven was not yet lit Tulsi acted as a foreman to the servants by hurrying up everyone to do the job. Ganpat abused all the coolies as they were the laziest and spoiled by Prabha. Munoo too hurried up his work as he was scared of the goat-faced Ganpat. He compared Ganpat with the Bibiji of Shampur. However, the other servants of the factory were used to Ganpat's abuses, so they did not even bother when Ganpat kicked them to wake them from sleep. Munoo understood that except Ganpat all were hill people, so he can get used to the new place.

Munoo was getting ready to accept this new job. He felt it difficult when a pungent smoke choked him through his nostrils and he felt it down his throat something irritating. He coughed and spat his spittle. His eardrums seemed to have closed. Munoo heard the voice of someone shouting at his master Prabha. The voice cursed everyone, but the servants never bothered and continued their work silently. The voice was from the neighbour. Rai Bahadur, Sir Todar Mal, who was the neighbour and an advocate by profession and also a member of the City Municipal Committee. Meanwhile, his wife Lady Todar Mal their son Mr. Ram Nath also joined. The problem was the smoke of the factory. It had no chimney for the smoke to vent out. It completely polluted the whole area without an outlet. This shouting and cursing of the neighbours was usual and Prabha handled the situation like a gentle man. But, unfortunately that day, Ganpat handled the situation. He behaved violently and disrespectfully in spite of the fault being found on their side. Consequently, the quarrel turned out to be a violent one where Ganpat attacked the son of Sir Todar Mal which made the situation worse. Fortunately, Prabha entered the scene and apologized for what Ganpat had done and warned Ganpat for behaving in an unjust way. Ganpat was furious that Prabha did not support him rather spoke in favour his neighbours. While the work was on progress, Prabha called Munoo to come upstairs and gave signals that there was something delicious to eat.

Rai Bahadur was the title given to Sir Todar Mal by the British for his rhetoric skills in the court as well as for his contribution of twenty thousand rupees to the Viceroy's fund during difficult period of the British governance. Everyone is scared of him for his connection with the British. He wrote a complaint to Dr. Edward Majoribanks, the Health Officer, to visit the factory once and take some action against the owners of the pickle factory. Unexpectedly, the Health Officer did not



visit the factory or responded to the letter of Sir Todar Mal. This negligence infuriated him and he had to complaint against the Health Officer to the higher official. He waited for the Municipal Committee meeting to complain against the officer as well as against the factory. They failed to convene a meeting and he was advised to withdraw the complaint against the Health Officer. Instead, they made an arrangement that he, along with the Health Officer, visited the spot where the factory was located. The officer showed no interest to inspect the factory, but he merely accompanied Sir Todar Mal for the namesake. Sir Todar Mal was unhappy with the gesture of the Health Officer, yet he was happy that the visit would bring him the centre of attraction in the area and also might solve the problem.

On hearing the inspection done to the factory, Prabha was in panic that he would certainly be sent to jail. He hurried into the factory and filled two jars of pickles and jams and went with Munoo to visit Lady Todar Mal. With joined hands, Prabha bent and laid his head on Lady Todar Mal's feet and asked forgiveness. He offered the two jars of jams and pickles. They accepted the offer and withdrew the idea of sending them to jail. So Prabha was astonished that he did not think that Sir Todar Mal would be this greedy and would fall for jams and pickles.

Munoo got used to life in the factory. It was a dark life. He had no sufficient rest at night as he had to get up in the morning. Without enough sleep, fully tired, Munoo had to sift the cinders from the ashes, had to help Tulsi to light the fire. Then, Ganpat would come and bully the boys and hurry them. Whenever Munoo looked at Ganpat, his face looked frowned. For Munoo, he looked like a parasite, for he had no skills or will to work. Munoo was afraid of Ganpat so never talked casually or jovially in the factory. Anyhow, he developed a good comradeship among the other boys who worked in the factory. Ganpat did not like who imitated his attire or hair style. Munoo wished he could grow up soon and had a beard. He wanted to be a man with true dignity of manhood like Prem, the Chota Babu at Sham Nagar. Munoo liked to carry heavy copper flasks of essence from the factory to the various retail shops to escape the darkness of factory. After delivering, he would enjoy glancing at the shops in the bazaar. When Ganpat found any of the servants leisurely roaming on the streets, he would punish them by ordering to stay indoors for a week and draw fifty pails of water a day.

The work in the factory was difficult as it was in the dark underworld. It had the intense heat of blazing furnaces and the dense malodorous smells of brewing essences, spices and pickle and of dust and ashes and mud. All these were mixed up with the overflow of water from the barrels of soaking fruit and the toes of the servants' foot were plastered in it. They worked for long hours, from dawn to past midnight and they lived mechanically in the factory. When they went up to the house by taking turns to eat the rice and dal which Parbati cooked in the middle of the day; they would feel tired and sleepy and would not feel like going back to work.

During the spring season, (the season of mangoes) the factory prepared mango pickle. Munoo was tempted to steal some mangoes and eat them. He had eaten stolen mangoes from his village. He controlled his temptation, yet he had no ripe mangoes in the factory; so eating the unripened mangoes made him sick with sore eyes. Ganpat found his sore eyes and had beaten Munoo for stealing mangoes; Prabha shielded Munoo and gave the idea of hiding the mangoes under haystack and to eat the ripened ones. Prabha brought Munoo to the hospital for sore eyes, Ganpat was angry at Prabha for spoiling Munoo. Munoo was then down with fever and sore eyes for a few days. The mistress Parbati was kind and caring towards Munoo. She would sit by his bed and ease the throbbing at the back of his head by pressing it with her hands and she would press his body. She took care of him as if she were his mother. After he got cured, Munoo got back into work in the factory. Since he was not completely cured, everyone treated him kindly. Ganpat was on a long tour which was unusual to collect revenue from the customers. Prabha arranged for a loan from Sir Todar Mal. He gave him a note of exchange promising to pay 500 rupees a month. Prabha also borrowed some hundreds from the other moneylenders to manage the expenses. He believed that Ganpat would come back with two thousand rupees to settle the entire amount.

After a long time, Ganpat returned, but there was a change in his attitude. He was harsher towards the servants. He was always in bad-temper, bullied the coolies, cursed the woman servants and was reticent with Prabha. Munoo found the reason of this sudden change in Ganpat. Ganpat's eyes looked guilty and he knew that Munoo found the reason, so he waited for an opportunity to thrash Munoo.

Prabha called Munoo to give some jars of pickle and jam to Lady Todar Mal. Ganpat had been observing all these and unwantedly beaten Munoo for being favourable to his enemies. Ganpat heavily struck Munoo several times till Munoo fell stumbling on the mud in the passage sobbing and shrieking hoarsely. When Prabha entered the scene, he said that Munoo was roaming around the bazaars even after distributing the jars of pickles and jams to the retail shops.

Anyhow, Lady Todar Mal sensed the situation and cursed Ganpat, she also insisted Prabha that she thereafter would not allow any women to stay in one of her rooms, which she had given. She demanded the keys of the room to be given back. She also asked the pro-note money of five hundred rupees to be returned immediately. She also pointed out Ganpat was not genuine and he must be eating the money of his partner Prabha. She also accused that his eyes set on women in the neighbourhood is disgusting. Overall, Ganpat was defamed by Lady Todar Mal in front of everyone on the street.

When Prabha indirectly asked about two thousand rupees which Ganpat collected from the customers, Ganpat cleverly avoided the conversation. He diverted Prabha, saying we need not bribe anyone with jams and pickles or by saying Prabha was spoiling the servants of the factory by being liberal to them. Finally, when Prabha asked, to his astonishment, he admitted he had only fifty rupees. There existed a difference of opinion between the two; even then, Prabha wanted to handle the situation smoothly and to be friendly with Ganpat, and yet he understood that Ganpat was cheating him. Ganpat was adamant to end their partnership and denied the money which he had collected from the customers. Finally, Ganpat cheated Prabha taking all the money and started a new factory and forcibly taken some of the servants from Prabha's factory. He also dealt business with the same customers and so Prabha had to lose his business. Ganpat cursed Prabha that like Prabha's father Prabha had to remain as a coolie and Prabha should die as a coolie. This reflected the cruel heart of Ganpat who was unkind towards his own friend and well-wisher.

Prabha became a bankrupt for he cannot pay a huge amount of his debts now and he was unable to run the factory too. A case was also registered against him and he was beaten up by the police. As Prabha had signed the documents, he had to take up the responsibility. He was sick after he came back from the police station. Only,

Tulsi and Munoo stayed with Prabha; both tried to get some job as coolies in the market so that they can take care of their master and mistress at their difficult times.

Tulsi and Munoo planned to go and sleep in the open at the grain market that night and to get jobs lifting weights in the morning and to help Prabha to get out of his illness. They cannot get the right place to sleep, and wherever they tried to lie down, they were sent away by the other coolies, who were habituated to the place. Finally, they got some place to take rest for a while. Unexpectedly, in the early morning, there was a high demand of getting jobs. It was not easier, as coolies were rushing everywhere to grab the opportunities for lower wages. When Tulsi and Munoo were assigned weight lifting job, it was quite manageable for Tulsi but not for Munoo. After a long struggle, Munoo lifted the sack of grain but in a half way his legs turned and he dropped the sack and fell down. The supervisor cursed him and sent him away. Another coolie said that he can go to the vegetable market for weight lifting because there were sacks comparatively lesser in weight. So Tulsi continued in the grain market as a weight-lifter and Munoo moved to the vegetable market. He wanted to grow as a man so that he can also lift the heavy sack of grain. Tulsi earned 6 annas and Munoo 2 annas and so in total they gained only 8 annas per day of hard work. Munoo cunningly grabbed jobs by talking to the ladies who bought vegetables that he would carry vegetables for them to their homes for 2 pices. When he tried some tricks to the shop keepers to get some job, Munoo understood that the coolies were a nuisance to them. They were rude, uncouth, dirty people to be rebuked, abused or beaten like the donkeys which brought the weights of vegetables to the market every morning. With all these efforts the earned eight annas were spent only for rice and lentils of the whole family.

Meantime, there was no improvement in Prabha's health. The stock in the factory was auctioned for the debts. Prabha worried for the two boys because he knew how difficult to survive as a coolie in the market because in the past he was one such coolies, who toiled hard. Moreover, the doctor too advised him to go away to the hills, if he wanted to save his life. Then, Prabha was persuaded to go home with his wife. Tulsi had to accompany them and came back but Munoo could not accompany as they did not have enough money to buy tickets for all of them. Later, Munoo can join the master and mistress in the hill was the plan.

It was a painful parting. Prabha and his wife wept while leaving in the bamboo cart. The luggage – a trunk and bedding – was lifted by Tulsi and his two friends, who too worked as coolies in the grain market. Prabha arose, and leaning on Tulsi and Munoo's shoulders moved towards the cart. After all the years of toil he was leaving the city only with a trunk and bedding. He philosophically spoke, “Man comes to this world naked and goes out of it naked and he does not carry his goods away with him on his chest”. The neighbouring men and women gathered in the courtyard to say farewell to Prabha, the most successful and now the most broken of all hill coolies. The cart driver was unhappy that his customers were coolies but not rich men. So, he moved the cart very fast planning to get some rich customers, at least in the station. Munoo’s request to drive the cart slowly, considering Prabha’s sickness was not heeded by the cart driver.

There was a huge crowd and a queue waiting for the train to get into the third class compartment. Munoo bribed 2 annas to the ticket collector to get Prabha, Parbati and Tulsi to let into the train through a side door. When Prabha and other two settled down, Prabha pressed a silver rupee (one rupee coin) into Munoo’s palm. He asked him to buy some food and eat and to stay at home because the rent was paid for the month. Munoo got blessings from Prabha and Parbati before they leave. Tulsi promised he would return after two days and asked Munoo to stay in the house. Munoo thought how kind Prabha was to give one rupee to him even when he was in a miserable situation. He was planning to go to the temple for free food. When he left the station, someone asked them to carry their luggage for two annas. Munoo found the job easier and planned to come back the next day too to the railway station.

Munoo managed to get two chapattis and a huge spoonful of lentils to eat in the temple. The whole gang of beggars rushed to get their food and it was difficult to get away from the crowd without dropping the food.

In the temple, Munoo happened to see a yogi (saint) and he wanted to get the blessings of the yogi. He asked the yogi to teach him to walk the path. Anyhow, the saint said Munoo would be accepted as a disciple and taught the ways to become a saint. He asked Munoo to help him to get all the things offered to him and to walk along with him to his residence. He instructed an old woman to follow him at a distance. When Munoo reached the place of yogi, he understood that the daughter-

in-law of the old woman was sent to the yogi to get a God-given child through the yogi. Munoo wondered how foolish these people were that they thought god gave them divinely child if they had intercourse with yogis. This arrangement for the births of ‘sons of God’ to the wives of the merchant class was a shock to Munoo. He felt shame and closed his eyes and slipped away unnoticed.

Munoo slept the night on the boards of a closed shop on a street near Prabha’s house. He was scared to go to the house alone at night for he was afraid of ghost or he might be taken for a thief. In the morning he went to the yard of the railway station, thinking that he might get some job. He pleaded whoever approached to offer him the job of lifting their luggage. He started shouting “Coolie! Coolie!” He heard someone called him and he ran towards the direction bare foot and his body covered with sweat. The police constable was there and asked for his license. Only then, Munoo knew that he was mistaken as a thief and to be a coolie in the station he required license from the government.

Munoo pleaded to the policeman that he was a coolie from the market and only for two days he had been there. Actually, Munoo was mistaken for a thief who had been stealing for one month and he exactly looked like Munoo. Munoo explained the constable that all the hill boys had the same look and this irritated the constable, who in turn hit on the back of Munoo with the baton and turned him away saying no coolies can work there without a license. Munoo’s feet fastened to get away from there as far as he could. Getting furious, Munoo got a secondary thought that he had to go back to him and teach him a lesson. He realised that he should not let everyone to humiliate him. But, when he looked at the police constable at a distance, he changed his mind and walked away from that place. It was disheartening when he observed the way he dressed – the sweat soaked rags and the stiff uniform, the Angrezi (English) policeman wore. He was forcibly moved away from one of the shops when he stayed nearby the shop and he understood only education and clothes decided who was a Sahib (officer) and who was a coolie. At least he got the superior feel that he had got a chance of walking through those streets.

Now, Munoo was confused about where to work. He did not want to go to the vegetable market or to go home not until Tulsi came back. Even after Tulsi’s return, after a month, they cannot stay in the house without paying rent, and Tulsi

can earn for his livelihood and manage in the grain market; but Munoo cannot earn for his expenses if he continued his work in the vegetable market. He had a plan of leaving the city but cannot go back to Shamnagar because he never wrote a letter to Daya Ram and according to Munoo, Daya Ram was dead and for Daya Ram, Munoo did not exist. So, he struck out the possibility of going back to Shamnagar or to his native place.

When he walked further, there was an announcement that Miss Tara Bai, the Female Hercules, the owner of the most spectacular circus was leaving Bombay that night after their last show in the city of Daulatpur. Munoo, in a flash, got the idea of going to the circus show and then to go to Bombay. He recollected, once, in the vegetable market, a coolie was saying that a coolie in any Bombay factory can earn upto 15-20 rupees per month. He also said that Bombay was a wonderful city that one must visit. The coolie's brother worked day and night to collect the fare to reach Bombay and joining the factory there in a short while, he earned good salary. This was the reason that Munoo wanted to go to Bombay.

Munoo visited the tent of Bombay circus, and understood that the cheapest seat cost 8 annas. He had decided to see the circus without paying the price of a ticket. He decided not to waste Prabha's money for any sort of entertainment. So, he avoided the regular entrance and he saw some animals like a bay horse, a white mare, a snub-nosed pony which were kept tied for the purpose of circus. Then, he crept under cover of a small, filthy tent and waited tensely.

An elephant with a group of urchins (mischievous boys) came. Without knowing what happened one of the boys in the crowd removed the tunic of Munoo and threw it towards the elephant. The elephant chewed it mistaking it were a piece of straw. He, in anger, threw the boy's hat towards the elephant. Munoo apologized saying he did not start it but the other boy had. The driver jumped down and caught Munoo's ears and led him towards the trunk of the elephant to frighten him. All the boys shied off screaming, but the elephant did not harm Munoo. The driver smiled and asked Munoo to call the grass-cutter who was going on the road with the bundle of grass on his head. Munoo brought the grass-cutter and asked favour from the driver (mahout) of the elephant to watch the circus show at free of cost.

The elephant driver gave permission to watch the show through any of the holes in the canopy. Munoo managed to watch the show outside the tent through a small hole. In the middle of the show, Munoo was disturbed by the elephant driver to get some water for washing the back of the elephant. He was greatly disappointed when his look made everyone to think that he was a coolie; and that he was a coolie that was why he was asked to get buckets of water for the elephant driver. He wanted to change this public opinion on him. So, he wanted to go to Bombay to change this opinion by raising his standard of living. He requested the elephant driver to appoint him as his assistant. He replied he cannot because they were moving to England very soon and may take years to come back. He advised that Munoo can go to Bombay in the same train of the circus troupe without anyone's knowledge and he would help Munoo to be smuggled in the train. Munoo was thankful to the driver.

#### **Chapter – IV**

The engine of the special circus train started its journey from Daulatpur city to Bombay. Munoo was tensed with fear while leaving Daulatpur by the train. He was secretly shown the place for hiding. He laid flat by the edge of an open truck on the thick-folds of a rolled-up tent. He had thought of the day how he had travelled from Shampur to Daulatpur. Now he felt less nervous than on his first train travel to Daulatpur. He was not guilty also because he had worked for the whole afternoon to get the free ride on the train of the circus troupe. Also, he was not alone because the elephant driver was somewhere in a servants' compartment. He did not want to remember either Shamnagar or Daulatpur because both had treated him badly. He was going away into a new world, the wonderful world of a big city. He imagined seeing the city with its ships and mortars, big buildings, marvellous gardens and rich people who just threw money to the coolies on the streets. He, anyhow, never wanted to go back to the vegetable market of Daulatpur.

The train reached Delhi Central Station. The elephant driver helped Munoo to get down and move into a closed truck, because the day would be hotter in the open truck. He also bought some food for Munoo. Munoo was led into the truck where hundreds of bamboo poles lay stacked. The driver gave the food and left saying he would meet him when the train halted at Ratlam.



Munoo chewed morsels of delicious fried bread and carrot pickle given by the elephant driver. He was thoughtful that some men were so good like Prabha and the elephant driver and some men were bad like Ganpat and the policeman who had beaten him at the railway station. Then he was worried, about his stay in Bombay as the place and people would be strange. He imagined the beggars on the streets of Daulatpur which terrified him but he convinced himself that he had a one-rupee coin given by Prabha. He also remembered the coolie in the vegetable market who told about Bombay that getting a job was an easy thing and the coolies were paid well in Bombay.

In the evening, the train halted and the elephant driver bought Munoo some sweets and milk. Though Munoo was uncomfortably squatting on the unevenly spread bamboos, the elephant driver asked him to sleep on the bamboos even during night because the Parsi Sahibs of the company walked about on the platform in the evening. The elephant driver also revealed that his elephant did not need Munoo's assistance, but he wanted to help Munoo to go to Bombay. He also recalled how a man helped him during his childhood days to travel from Calcutta to Madras. He also advised Munoo to be careful while sleeping or else he might fall down. Munoo had the cream cakes, the sugar plums and the earthen jar full of milk. While travelling he had nostalgia of playing with his friends in his village. Then he was too anxious about life in Bombay and expected wonderful things to happen. He planned about getting to Bombay and work. In the evening, he had another meal in the train, brought by the elephant driver.

Munoo happened to see the glossy special train of the Maharaja painted white and noticed a few alpaca-coated, white trousered men, who wore golden caps on their heads and black boots like those of the Babu at Shamnagar. He was again tempted to buy a pair of shoes for him. Then, he was determined that he would use his first savings to buy a pair of shoes for him. When the train moved towards Bombay he got the mixed feeling whether he would get a job. Though he was determined to go and work in any of the factories in Bombay he was little worried about getting a job and settling down in the new city.

When the train reached Bombay, the elephant driver came to inform Munoo to get down from the train, because it would move the Ballard Pier and then they

would move to England through the sea. The elephant driver warned Munoo that the bigger a city it was cruel to the poor than the wealthy. He also helped him to get out of the station unnoticed. He praised Munoo that he was a brave lad and wished him that God be with him. Munoo's heart was filled with gratitude and fear when he led through the path of go-down after parting from the elephant driver.

Munoo emerged from the Victoria Station. He entered into Bombay, a strange, hybrid, complex, cosmopolitan city. He saw people of different sects and with rich costumes. He observed the buildings and shops when he crossed the pavement. He was hungry so he sat on a corner of the bench near the statue of Victoria. He started eating the sweets given by the elephant driver, and he became thirsty. He searched for a water pump everywhere, and he can not find any. He walked down the pavement and observed a coolie lying down on the street. He suddenly realized that the coolies sleep on the streets of Bombay too and the words of the coolie who said about the rich coolies of Bombay sounded empty to his mind. Again, a grim fear engulfed him and nearing darkness made him feel lonely and helpless, on the strange streets. He walked along the roads without knowing where to go and not knowing how to get drinking water.

On the way, behind the glass doors of a shop, he saw a row of coloured soda-water bottles and the people were sitting on the chairs by marble tables eating and drinking. Munoo wanted the soda water, so he braved inside the shop and sat on one of the chairs. The server in neat uniform identified him as a coolie and asked Munoo to sit down on the floor. He was surprised with contempt for a coolie asking the soda water. Munoo gave money to the server and drank the soda water. He could not relish the taste of the water as he had to hurriedly drink because he felt everyone gazed at him in the shop. He was nervous and felt extremely to get into the rich men's world. The server chased him away from the shop and Munoo regretted he would have fought instead of running away from the shop because he had paid for the soda water though he was a coolie.

While he continued walking with these thoughts there was a hullabaloo in the middle of the road. A small girl was got stuck in between heavy traffic where an old woman and his wife were praying god to save the child. They might have crossed the road carelessly leaving the girl behind. Munoo, in a trance, helped the family by

resuming the girl. The family thanked him whole heartedly. The old man, Hari, was the head of the family who travelled along with his wife Lakshami (aged 14 years) and two kids. He worked at the cotton factory for nearly six months and now had returned from the village with his family and would seek the job at the factory where Hari worked. Munoo requested whether he could get a job in the factory and joined along with the family to Chaupathi with the consent of Hari. They together hunted for a place to sleep on the platform, as most of the places were occupied by many coolies over there. They cannot sleep near the houses of the rich because they can be mistaken for thieves. Munoo understood that it was not easy to earn money in Bombay as he had thought earlier. Finally, they managed to find a place for them to sleep. They waited for the bazaars to be closed to sleep in front of one of the shops.

Munoo observed the coolies on the pavement who were sleeping dead tired and it appeared to him that there were heaps of corpses lying down. This picture triggered him to worry about his future and he felt very alone. The whole street was covered with coolies, lepers, beggars and paupers. In the early morning, Hari woke up everyone so that they can reach the factory on time. Hari's plan was to go back to the old factory and get job for all the members of his family to meet the expenses. He says child labour was common in the factory and many small children were working there. Hari's two kids were eight and nine years old respectively.

Munoo lifted one of the two kids on his shoulder as it was difficult for the old man Hari and so his wife carried the other kid. Again, it was a long journey of walk. They had reached a new area where there were many factories with tall chimneys and they passed through the choking alley-ways of the straw huts. There was a pond where the people of the slum getting washed themselves. Munoo's inner instinct disturbed him and he wanted to run away from that place. They entered into Sir George White Cotton Mills. Nadir Khan, the guard of the mill prevented them to enter the factory. Hari addressed him with respect and said he worked there six months back and wanted to join and so pleaded to meet the authority who appointed coolies in the factory. After waiting for twenty minutes, they met Jimmy Thomas, an English man, who became a foreman after fifteen years of service as a mechanic in the factory. He was not kind towards the coolies and he insulted the poor people of India that they breed like rabbits and shit on the ground while Hari was bargaining

for his wages. From him, Munoo understood that getting a job was not easy in Bombay as there were many coolies of Bombay who were jobless.

Actually, Munoo thought of higher wages and to get a nice house for rent. On the contrary, he would be paid fifteen rupees per month as wages and had to stay with Hari's family by sharing the same hut; the huts in the slum were mostly owned by any of such foremen of the factory. The rent would be deducted from the wages and if the coolies borrowed money in advance, the interest also would be deducted from the wages. Hari was also given an amount as advance money to buy groceries. Towards the end of the month, the rent, interest and advance money repayment would be deducted and the wages would be very less to fulfil the basic requirements of the family for one month. Munoo will be sharing all these with Hari, after getting his wages.

The Sahib's Lane was full of small huts and the hut was lower than the height of Munoo to stand in. The roof of clumsy straw mats which drooped dangerously on the sides from the cracked beams supported it in the middle. The mud floor was at a level lower than the pathway outside. Munoo's dreams were shattered when he looked at the place where he was going to stay. In the darkness of the house, which had no windows or chimney to let the light or air in, Munoo fainted and struggled to breathe. Instead of falling down, he managed to sit down and the couple helped him to get out of his fatigue.

After a while, Munoo felt alright and accompanied Hari to the shopping bazaar of the industrial colony. The bazaar too looked filthy with cheap rated products for sale and it was for the coolies to purchase grocery and some colourful rag clothes, imitation jewellery and tin toys. Hari went to the grocer's general store which was owned by a Sikh. That grocer was not kind to his customers, the coolies. He was irritated and warned them not to talk in front of his shop when the coolies were chatting among themselves. He was harsh to them and abused them for no reasons. The grocer was not genuine to the coolies as he increased the rates of the things which he sold. Also, he had to send gifts from his shop such as eggs and chicken to the foreman of the factory and to compensate his loss he cheated the coolies. Shambu, a coolie, sold his two cocks (each cost one rupee) to provide food for his family. The grocer paid very less money to the coolie and excused that he was

buying to gift their foremen of the factory. The coolie argued that his hens were fed well by starving his own family and he had to be paid fairly. Instead, the coolie was cruelly beaten up and thrown away a few pices for his two cocks. The other coolies rescued Shambu and they all depended on the foreman of the factory as well as the owner of the grocery shop as they were their masters who lent money or grocery for their survival. Though the coolies were paying extra to get their things in the shop they were treated cruelly by the shopkeepers.

The routine was tedious for women those who worked in the factory. They had to wake up very early in the morning, cook for the family, get their children ready, and feed everyone in the family then they should work in the factory. They arrived late in the evening and hardly have any time to relax or chit chat with their neighbours. Sometimes, in the morning they did not have time for washing themselves.

Munoo, along with Hari and family started his first day in the factory. It was difficult for the children to get up and to finish their breakfast in the morning. When they walked towards the factory, on the way, near the pond they answered the call of nature and washed their faces; then joined with the other coolies who were strolling to the factory.

The coolies, when they entered the factory greeted the foreman and the supervisor, Jimmy (an Englishman) of the factory though they had not responded to them. The women and children were sent to the shed in the ground floor where the preparation of cotton was done. Munoo and Hari were allotted near the giant machines. Hari instructed Munoo how to move the handle of the machine as well as instructed that he had to immediately make a knot, if the thread in the machine got cut. He was thrilled to do the job because, the machine was doing everything and he had to just move the handle. The only strain was that he had to keep his eyes on the thread.

By noon, he was tired of the job because it was very hot. He looked at the others and found they had removed their shirts while on work, so he too removed his shirt and continued his work. Suddenly, a gust of hot wind threw his shirt on a conveyer belt which tore it into tatters. Munoo ran to get it and was warned by the other coolies that his life would be lost if he did that.

During the lunch break, Hari and Munoo waited for Lakshami to bring food for them. Then, they came to know that, the little boy of Hari and Lakshami had grazed (fed into the machine) his right arm by ignorantly touching the belt of a machine in the spinning shed. Hari was granted leave to take his son to the hospital. Anyhow, the supervisor cursed Hari for not working full day on his first day of work. As an employer, they did not take up the responsibility of providing medical care and did not feel bad about the sickness of the coolies, but were worried about the loss of work in the factory.

Munoo worried about Hari because he had to carry the little boy on his shoulder to the doctor in the city. He felt bad that he had brought misfortune to Hari. He believed his father died after his birth, his mother also died, Prabha faced misfortune and Hari in the same row. He cursed himself as an ominous person. Munoo noticed there was a wrestler, Ratan, among the coolies, whom the supervisor himself was scared to argue with; whereas the same supervisor would ill-treat the other coolies. Munoo wished he would grow as a wrestler and a strong man. He also had some determination to buy certain things – black boots, a watch and chain, a polo topee, shorts, a tunic and all the paraphernalia of the sahibhood. He wanted to shatter his identity as a coolie and desired to become a master. Ratan, the wrestler, from Punjab got himself introduced to Munoo and they became friends. In the evening, Munoo went home along with Lakshami and her kid. Munoo felt pity for her. The afternoon of Saturday was a half-holiday for the coolies. Hari had to bring his son to the hospital to dress the wound of his son. Lakshami and Munoo too joined Hari to have a look at the bazaars of Bombay.

In the waiting room of the hospital, Hari and the other coolies sat down in a corner of the verandah where there was no fan. Munoo found the inner room had some empty space on the bench and it had a fan too. So, he went and sat in a corner of the bench but he was immediately insulted by the nurse to get away and to get seated among the other coolies who were sitting down. It was an insult to Munoo, so he walked out through a passage and the other coolies might not realise what an insult might be because they were used to these kinds of insults. When they were in town, there was heavy rain. They waited for two hours and moved towards their cottage after being drenched completely. They were sheltering under the palm trees and noticed that hundreds of other workers whose huts had been damaged and

washed by the monsoon were gathering in the darkness. Ratan came forward to help Munoo, Hari and his family as their hut was totally damaged. Hari was a little hesitant to go with Ratan because, Ratan was a drunkard, but Hari had no other choice, as he had no place to stay, but to accept the accommodation in Ratan's place.

Ratan took them to a three-storied tenement, where he was staying in a room on the third floor. Ratan accommodated Munoo and Hari and his family in a room where another family was sharing. Hari had to pay five rupees as monthly rent for that room which was a little costly, but quite comfortable than the previous hut. The two hundred houses shared common latrines of five which was cleaned by one sweeper. Ratan got the privilege of getting his latrine cleaned daily by the sweeper. Sometimes, those who stayed in the building might not prefer using the latrine, but went to the pond and washed themselves.

The next day, when they went to the factory, they saw the foreman who was beating and kicking some of the coolies harshly. These coolies, who lived in the Sahib's Lane, had lost all the belongings along with the washed away huts and they were being punished by the foreman. The Sahib, instead of feeling guilty for providing damaged huts for money out of his greediness and not feeling pity for the coolies, was ill-treating them.

The foreman claimed that there was no water in the hut and Hari justified that there was water everywhere. He was about to hit Hari and Munoo defended Hari, by saying Hari was true. The foreman tried to hit Munoo but was defended by the wrestler, Ratan. Ratan threatened the foreman and said the whole area was filled with water and he rescued them all. He also warned that he had no right to beat the coolies, even if he was the authority. The foreman decided to take revenge upon Ratan and withdrew.

Later, Ratan explained how the coolies were organised in his previous work place. He worked at the Tata Steel Works at Jamshedpur along with fifty thousand workers. When their wages were cut, they went on strike and later the company agreed to their terms and conditions. Ratan was actually a coppersmith by birth. When he joined the steel factory he thought his father's coppersmith furnace was cooler than the heat at the Jamshedpur furnace. There was heat everywhere for a whole acre of the factory. There was no holidays and twelve hours shift system and

at times, when someone did not turn up, one had to continue for twenty-four hours in the factory and it happened once, Ratan had to stay in the factory for thirty-six hours. He left the factory because he had personally hit one of the betrayers who were responsible for the case won by the factory owners against the workers. Moreover, he did not like the job and so he left. Munoo and the other coolies believed that soon Ratan would be taken revenge here too soon.

On the day of pay, Hari was paid only twenty rupees for all the five including Munoo. The wages was cut for the borrowed money, one month rent for the hut and interest for the borrowed money and also for wastages and damages caused during their work in the factory. Hari was disappointed and gave ten rupees to Munoo where Munoo refused to get it and finally he agreed to get five rupees. When Ratan's turn came, he stubbornly waited for his full wages to be paid. He was excused for damaged clothes and for coming late, but Ratan denied and insisted them to pay twenty rupees and he got full salary and only then he left the place. Ratan also insisted everyone to join the Labour Union so that nobody can cut their wages. The men of the grocer hit the coolies on the way for the borrowed grocery items and interest. Hari can only pay five rupees as the rent and he was beaten by the men for not paying the full amount and Ratan rescued Hari saying he would pay the rest later. After paying five rupees rent for the tenement, Hari was left with two rupees and Munoo with three rupees. So they had decided to join the Union.

Munoo and Ratan spent their leisure hours together. During weekends, they roamed around together. Though Ratan had the habits of drinking and smoking he was a sweet person. He once brought Munoo to the dancing women to entertain him.

As it had been expected, the revenge was taken on Ratan. One day, he was informed that he was discharged from his duties. He was about to attack the foreman for passing the message. The Union did not respond to Ratan. Later, two English officers from the Union promised that his complaint would be taken care of. The English officers surveyed the scenes and worried about the hygiene and comfort of the coolies and he encouraged the coolies to go on for a strike to get their proper wages and to get better lifestyle. The coolies were afraid that the children have to suffer without food during the strike so they did not brave it.



The President of the All India Trade Union Council was persuaded by Sauda, Muzaffer and Jackson to make representations to the Sir George White Mills on behalf of Ratan. The letter sent by the commission was not responded; instead, they were preparing a new circular to worsen the situation of the coolies. There will be no work for the fourth week in every month till further notice and no wages will be paid for that week, but the management will provide a substantial allowance. They did not anticipate any protest from the coolies' side because the only threatening person, Ratan, was chucked out of the factory. Three men in-charge of the factories were against the Unions which supported the workers.

When this announcement was made, the coolies pleaded the foremen not to cut down their work for one week. Munoo, on that evening, braved to enter into the supervisor's bungalow to ask Ratan should be taken back. When he jumped inside, over the compound wall, he found Nellie, the wife of the supervisor Jimmy was waiting on a chair in the garden of the bungalow. She called her husband thinking that Munoo, the worker had come to meet Jimmy. Jimmy, at a distance, misunderstood that Munoo came to kill him, so he threw a bottle over Munoo's head and Munoo moved away so that the bottle broke after falling on a wall. Nellie was frightened mistaking that Jimmy was trying to kill her as there was a heated argument went on between the two a few hours earlier. So she threw a tea pot to defend her from the attack and shouted loudly seeking the attention of the policemen saying, Jimmy attempted to kill her. He confessed the policemen that she wanted to leave him and it was not safe staying there.

The coolies of all the factories were shocked by the news from their greedy masters that their wages were fairly cut for the upcoming months. Along with the support of the Trade Union, they gathered in the ground to listen to the speech of the Union President. Some of the coolies vented how they walked bare foot after toiled hours together in the factory and the masters wore shoes and travelled by cars. Some of the coolies spoke out openly about their survival without food and pending interest to be paid for the borrowed money.

Lalla Onkar Nath, the President of the Union addressed the workers gathered there. The speech supported the workers and so favoured to go on for a strike and the payment was promised to be received from the employers. The clever masters of

the factories spread poisonous idea in the minds of the workers. They had this policy of divide and rule. They provoked the Hindus by making them to believe that the Muslims kidnapped the children of the Hindus and sold. This kindled a religious riot among the workers. They believed the fake news and the whole Bombay city was torn into pieces with the commotional religious riot. The workers attacked each other and everywhere blood shed was seen. Munoo too was attacked in the riot and found fainted. The volunteers admitted him and took care of him in the camp. After he resumed from his illness he had no guts to go back to the industrial colony to know the situation. He heard some of them saying the problem was solved, but he decided not to go back, until he was sure about the situation. He recalled the horrifying moment, the heaps of dead bodies filled with blood. Through the conversation of two policemen, he understood that getting back to normalcy was not at all possible because that might develop into an All-India Hindu-Muslim conflict. While walking on the road, he heard gun shots at a distance and after a while it receded. He decided with determination not to go back and he walked further.

When he was inattentive and walked further, not caring the honking sound of the car, he was hit by a car. He fell down and fainted. An English woman, Mrs. May Mainwaring came down and checked his pulse and found than he was alright. She did not want anyone to attack her for hitting Munoo by her car; otherwise, they might kill her. So, she instructed the driver to drop Munoo inside the car and they left from Baroda to Shimla. Mrs. Mainwaring actually wanted a servant boy to help her household things, so she thought that she can make use of Munoo without his knowledge or willingness, and he was appointed as a servant boy to an English lady who was going to stay in Shimla.

### **Chapter – V**

Munoo got back to his consciousness by the time the motor car crossed the outskirts of Bombay. He was mentally and physically sick due to the traumatic experiences of the Bombay communal riot. He thought himself as a failure man. He thought of Hari and Ratan and worried about them. For Mrs. Mainwaring, a fifteen year old boy Munoo was the need of the hour to do her menial jobs. Mrs. Mainwaring was from an old Anglo Indian family, which served in the military of the East India Company during the English wars of conquest in India. Her father William Smith

was a sergeant in the Monroe infantry. Smith was married to an English woman and the couple spot the only child May. After May, May's mother left her father for another man. So May was looked after by the wife of a Catholic missionary and went to the Convent in Shimla. Though she pretended England as her 'home' when she was with her friends, her grandmother's root insisted her inner mind that her home was India. As she had been with the English friends all the time, she wanted to erase her Indian identity by getting married to an English man and to settle in England.

May fell in love with a young German photographer, Heinrich Ulmer and she married him to get her identity as 'pukka' (perfect) English root. Unfortunately, Ulmer was lost in the war as he had to be in concentration camps for years. She got two kids, an elder daughter (Penelope) and a younger son (Ralph). She managed to get a teaching job in a children's school by pleasing the Education Minister. Then, she had pleased many men to keep her job and she became an object of attraction to men. Once, a Persian captain in the Nawab's army, Aga Raza Ali Shah, also a poet, showed his interest to May and insisted divorce from Ulmer and married her.

May's second husband Aga Raza Ali Shah loved her very much, but her longing to the English identity did not evaporate, so she had acquaintance with an Englishman, Guy Mainwaring, and made him to believe that he was the father for her third pregnancy. So, Guy Mainwaring married May after she got divorce from Shah. Finally, Guy found that May's third baby Circe was born to Shah but not to him. Anyhow, he liked May, so he let the issue that the third baby of May was not his own child. He was shifted to Peshawar and May stayed in England with her three children. Whenever Guy called May to stay with him in India she excused that she had to take care of her children. When she cannot give any excuse to him and so she planned to let the elder children in the boarding school and would stay in Shimla, a cooler place in India during summer. After dropping her children in the boarding school, when she was traveling to Shimla with her little one Circe, it was where she met Munoo in an accident and thought that Munoo would be helpful to her. So, she let him in the car without getting his willingness.

On the way to Shimla, she asked Munoo to buy sweets, fruits and other things and had given hundreds of instructions to him. Then, when the car ascended through all the hair-pin bends, Munoo got a new view of landscape that he had not seen so

far. The sight of stray houses on the slopes reminded him of his own home. When he was driven down to Annandale in a rickshaw by coolies, he was very happy at his heart and he felt he was secure that he might not go into the world of the coolies.

Munoo was not sure of his exact duties when he became the Memsahib's, May servant. He had to stay with Ala Dad in the servant's quarter of the bungalow where May was staying. The servant's quarter had a kitchen where the food for Memsahib was cooked by Ala Dad. Munoo prepared tea for Memsahib and got assurance from Ala Dad that the tray was kept in order and served it up to the Memsahib's bedroom.

May was a little irritated by her disturbed sleep at night because of her little kid Circe, and so she was cursing the child and forced her to do her routine and the child appeared to be disobedient and wanted everyone's attraction. Munoo swept the sitting room and the verandah and liked the place for its chillness and greenery. After Munoo cleaned the bedroom, May asked him to clean his hands and she manicured his nails. She admired him, at the same time, was rude towards him while getting jobs done. She immediately sent him down to bring her breakfast.

Ala Dad, the Khansamah (the cook) was very punctual. That was the reason May liked him very much. When he purchased things like grocery, fruits, and vegetables, he got handsome commissions. This helped him to run his family and to provide better education for his children.

May planned to have dinner with the Stuart family down the hill. So, she called Ala Dad to serve them at the Stuarts. She called a rickshaw which was usually pulled by four coolies to carry her down the hills to the Stuarts. Unfortunately, Munoo was used as the fourth coolie to pull the rickshaw to the downhill. Rickshaw pulling was a difficult task for the coolies and one needed to be trained when they were working on the hills. Munoo struggled a lot to manage and anyhow, the other three coolies were kind towards Munoo and they shared the weight of the rickshaw so that Munoo can be comfortable while pulling the rickshaw. Climbing the slope and getting down the slope was difficult with the rickshaw. They crossed the Mall and reached the Devico's restaurant where she planned to have dinner with Mrs. Stuart.

Munoo had fever when he came back after his first day's work as a rickshaw coolie. He felt his legs were breaking with fatigue all the way back. Mrs. Mainwaring was very concerned and took care of Munoo like her own son. She made him to sleep on the bed in his kid's room. Major Marchant, the Indian-Christian doctor visited to take care of Munoo's health.

When Munoo's health recovered, he switched over as a servant boy and rickshaw coolie again. Apart from sweeping and dusting the bungalow and running errands for the Memsahib and the Khansamah, he drove the rickshaw as a fourth coolie whenever his mistress went shopping, or took the fresh air each day. Munoo was used to the job and he was happy that she trusted Munoo than the other coolies. So, he was given a whole leg of chicken and double roti and other remains of the tiffin.

After the trip he became very tired and his back seemed stiff. At times, when he spat, his spittle was red. He did not bother about it and continued his work. Mohan, one of the rickshaw coolies warned Munoo about his health and said Munoo might have got consumption (tuberculosis). Munoo too realized that the disease was worsening without knowing what consumption was. Mr. Mainwaring stayed with Mrs. May Mainwaring in the bungalow for a week and went again to Peshawar for his work. After Munoo's fever on the first day, Major Marchant became acquainted with the Memsahib and their meetings became regular either in her bungalow or down the hills.

Munoo, while dropping the messages for Memsahib, down the hill, wrote a letter to Ratan so that he can help him. On seeing the worsened condition of Munoo, Mohan advised Munoo to go back to his land at least to save himself. When Munoo met Mohan and other coolies in their shelters, they were compassionate towards him and advised him to get away from the Memsahib because, she was using him as a servant as well as a coolie without any pay; as well he had to take care of his welfare as his health condition worsened. Mohan also handed over a packet of fruits to Munoo and advised him to eat some fruits and milk to gain healthy body.

On Fridays, the day of the dance, the Memsahib usually dressed up well and went to the dance party. Munoo along with the other coolies pulled the rickshaw. The journey was from her bungalow to the Hotel Cecil and to the Viceroy's

residence. Munoo envied the neatly dressed small sons of Maharaj, who were going into the dancing hall. The discussion among the coolies revealed that the Sahibs and the Mem Sahibs had spent lavishly for their dresses. The coolies also teased the formal dance party because sometimes they met people, whom they did not want to meet in the party and at times, they pretended that they happily enjoyed the party, though they had differences.

During the dance party, when the coolies were waiting outside, Munoo looked tired. Mohan asked Munoo to sleep for a while and Munoo protested that he was alright but he coughed continuously and spat out mouthful of blood. Mohan was worried and was angry with Munoo for his negligence in health because he had already warned about his health. Soon, they had taken him home and the Major examined him and told his health condition was critical.

The Health officer ordered that Munoo had to be removed and segregated in a three-roomed hut on the slopes of Chotta Shimla where there were two other coolies suffering from consumption. Mohan took care of Munoo. May visited Munoo with fruits and took care of him but stopped it later, when the Major warned her that she would be segregated from him.

Munoo was torn between the fear of dying and the hope of living. He received a letter from Ratan that the Trade Union had settled all the issues that affected the coolies and he invited Munoo to come to Bombay to join his work in the factory. Munoo wanted to go to Bombay and he began to feel stronger every day. Another attack of haemorrhage tortured him and weakened him and grew his fears. He underwent the mental trauma due to his ill health. Mohan's words and his warm touch gave boost to Munoo's hope of getting well. Unfortunately, in an early morning, he died leaving all his dreams and hopes behind.

#### **5.1.4. Major Themes:**

Mulk Raj Anand's *Coolie* has varied themes of pre-partition modern India. The theme of hunger, starvation, poverty, degradation, class discrimination, racial relations, capitalism, industrialism, communalism, and other such themes exist in the novel. This novel is a social tragedy caused by human cruelty, greed, selfishness, poverty and exploitation.

#### **5.1.4.1. Child Labour:**

Munoo, the protagonist of the novel was portrayed as the child labour from the beginning of the novel. He was given the job of a domestic servant for minimal wages. He was denied his basic education due to poverty in his village. He moved to the town and worked as a servant. It was not the case of Munoo alone; he could see many other boys of his same age toiling as domestic servants in the rich households of the town. The children were denied of their basic rights, essential needs but were tortured under the monster-like masters. They were ill-treated, exploited and not fed well too. The one-day life of Munoo itself showed how horrible and humiliating it was to be the child labour under a dominant master. Not only in the town of Sham Nagar, when Munoo went to Prabha's factory, he along with a few boys worked in the factory, which again reflected that child labour in India was common in those days. Though Prabha was at least kind enough to the boys who worked in his factory, nobody worried about employing children in the factories; or they were bothered about ill-treating them and exploiting them. Similarly, when Munoo landed in Bombay, he again joined as a labour in the factory. There were many children under ten year working in the factory for meagre wages. When the child labour was injured, no concern or care was shown from the employer's side. Finally, when he reached Shimla, Munoo was compelled to be a rickshaw puller as it was insisted by the memsahib, May. All the sufferings and humiliations underwent by Munoo as a child labour was intolerable and inhumane too, which brought him tragic death at the end.

#### **5.1.4.3. Poverty:**

The sufferings of Munoo started with his poverty. His mother ground the hand-mill hours together to feed his little brother-in-law Daya Ram and her son Munoo and died of poverty. Munoo had to abruptly stop his education to evade his poverty. Even after toiling all the years, the poor still remained poorer and poverty became the symbol of poor. Munoo questioned himself, why some rich were richer even if they did not do any work and spend lavishly; and why some poor after all the years of struggle die of poverty. This became a common symbol when Munoo journeyed from Kangra to Shimla. When Munoo was fed by Parbati, Prabha's wife, he recollected how he had eaten a similar meal long back in his native place. Prabha's parents died of poverty and Prabha himself was struggling for food then. Prabha

became a bankrupt man and was cursed by his partner that he should die like his own parents. It was never encouraged when a poor man gets into a better position and there were social evils which pushed him back to poverty. Many of the rich people cannot stand with when the poor prosper. Similarly, the pathetic situation of Hari forced him to make his young kids as child labour. Even after all the family members of Hari are put in the factory as labour, he cannot provide the basic needs as well as nutritious food for the family

#### **5.1.4.2. Misery of Coolies:**

The coolies everywhere were shown in different attires but without proper food. The appearance itself showed them that they were coolies. But nobody pitied them but took for granted as slaves. Ganpat in Daulatpur beat any coolie he wanted. In Daulatpur city, the coolies fought among themselves to get the job from the master as there was a long queue and were ready to lift weights heavier than themselves. The wages paid to the coolies would never suffice the hunger of a family. The scenes portrayed in Daulatpur as well as in Bombay revealed that many coolies did not have a shelter to sleep nor did they have any home to stay but to sleep anywhere on the roadside. They were many times mistaken as thieves and beaten for no sin. They were not treated as dignified souls even if they earned their own bread. They were not given respect by the shop owners even if the coolies were paying money for the purchased items. If a coolie was beaten for no reason in inhumane way, nobody cared it but the other coolies took care of him but dared not question anyone.

#### **5.1.4.4. Caste Discrimination:**

The strong aversion towards the low class community was portrayed through some of the characters in the novel. The Bibiji in Shamnagar was very specific that Munoo should not enter into her house because he belonged to a low birth. Munoo ironically noted that she was not hygienic as they were used to be in the hills. She also told Munoo that the dishes served to the Muslim friends of the Babu should not be used by them. So, she had separate dishes for serving. Further, she never allowed Munoo to eat on a plate, because she did not want to use the same plate used by the family members. He was not allowed to play with the children of the Babu because he belonged to a lower caste by birth. All these humiliated Munoo very much.



#### **5.1.4.5. Racial Discrimination:**

The story was set in colonial India. The impacts of colonization were seen very much in the novel. Throughout the novel, it is evident that the native had a great reverence for the English men. To work under the British was considered as a privileged one. The uncle of Daya Ram also exhibited himself as an English servant in his uniform. When an Englishman visited the Babu's house, it was treated as if a great personality visited them. The English were treated as the superiors and the natives as the slaves to them. It was considered great if anyone had good connections with the English people. Sir Todar Mal in Daulatpur became famous because he had good relationship with the English people. The common man was scared of Todar Mal, because nobody wanted to get into unnecessary trouble. In Bombay, the coolies were beaten and ill-treated by the Englishmen, the authorities of the factory. The coolies were proud to work under the English masters than the native masters because there was a notion that the English were viewed as the superiors. Overall, the natives had the opinion that they had to work as slaves for the English to avoid punishment.

#### **5.1.4.6. Industrialism:**

After the Industrial Revolution, many factories and industries in India advanced in many ways except the ways in which the workers were treated. The Trade Unionism in England had its role in India too, to show concern on the welfare of the workers. The coolies in the market of Daulatpur had no proper system to get into works. They were paid meagre amount as there was a queue to take up the work for cheaper wages. As there was no regulation in the system, it benefitted the rich than the workers. Even the workers in the factories suffered a lot as they were exploited by longer working hours without rest and were paid less by the greedy rich masters.

Therefore, the novel *Coolie* can be read in various perspectives as Mulk Raj Anand had imprinted the social issues of his contemporary period in the novel.

#### **5.1.5. Character Sketch - Munoo**

Munoo was introduced as a boy of fourteen year grazing the cattle. He was portrayed as if he was negligent about his aunt's call to come back home. Actually,

he was interested in his studies and playing with his friends in his village. His aunt's call was to leave the village to work as a domestic servant in the town which he did not like at all. As a small boy, he can not protest that he was not ready to work; moreover he had no parents to express his ideas as they were. That was the reason he felt all alone all the time. Though he had met many in his journey, he was not attached to anyone except Prabha, Hari and Ratan.

Munoo longed for true relationship, affection, love and care. As a coolie and orphan, he was denied a compatible life and so he became the victim of exploitation amidst all the social evils. He was interested in his studies; he remembered everything he studied in his school, let it be science classes or history classes. He was brilliant to connect the places which he studied in his history classes.

Munoo wanted to be a dignified person. He was not ashamed of being a coolie but the way the coolies were treated made him sick. Once, he was asked to get up from the bench of a hospital, when he was seated among the other patients. He was shown a corner in the hospital to sit and wait for the doctor. He was greatly humiliated by the incident. In another incident, when he bought soda he was treated very badly in the shop and literally he was chucked out of the shop. He ran away from the shop out of humiliation. He questioned himself, why even after paying for the soda, he was not allowed to relish the taste of the drink and why he was not allowed to sit on the chair and why he needed to run away like a thief. Usually, the coolies accepted their inferiority status and never thought about dignity. Munoo was exceptional; he questioned everything and wanted to be a dignified man when he grew up. He understood, only the dress mattered a lot and so he wanted to buy new clothes and shoes to change the attitude of the people.

Munoo wanted to work hard and to earn money to become a master who was more privileged. He wanted to be an honest boy and he never tried to steal anything to achieve his goal of being a dignified person. He had stolen some mangoes to feed his temptation; otherwise, he had never touched anybody's money or possession. Whenever he escaped from a place, he did that empty-handed; he wanted to earn his own money. That was the reason he became furious and was really hurt, when everybody exploited him.

Munoo was intelligent. When he had to acquire job in the grain market and the vegetable market in Daulatpur, he played tricks. He spoke to the ladies in an impressive way to get their weights carried to their homes and got his pay for it.

Munoo was a mentally stronger person. He did not give up his ambition till his death. Even while lying down on his death bed, he hoped that he would recover and get back to his work in Bombay. He worked with enthusiasm and easily adopted into the new situation, even if it was a difficult one. There was a stronger Munoo inside him which questioned all the social atrocities that he had come across in his life.

Munoo was bound to love. When Prabha fell sick, he and Tulsi decided to work in the markets of Daulatpur to feed Prabha and his wife. The other servants of the pickle factory left Prabha during his bankrupt days, but Munoo firmly stood with him, though he had no other hold in his life. He supported Prabha and his wife with his wages whole heartedly. When Hari's wife Lakshami was worried about his sick son, he was sympathetic towards her.

Munoo was a spirited person with enthusiasm and energy. He always wanted to be a happy boy and was ready to work, but he was exploited and killed by a disease unfortunately as he was poor and penniless in the end of the story. Though it appeared to be his disease which killed Munoo, it was actually the social evils which brought tragic death to him.

#### **5.1.6. Questions:**

1. Write an essay on various themes used in the novel *Coolie*.
2. Discuss. Munoo is not a well-developed character.
3. Write an essay on the relationship between the English and the natives during the British rule by using the novel.
4. Write an essay on "Munoo as a victim of tormented soul of poverty".
5. Compare and contrast the characters Prabha and Ganpat.
6. Illustrate "Coolie" is the reflection of modern Indian society.
7. *Coolie* is a novel of communism. Explain.
8. Write an essay that *Coolie* is a replica of Indian socio-political history of the contemporary period.

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