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1.1 INTRODUCTION

Neela Padmanabhan wrote the novel *Thalaimuruaigal* at the end of 1960s, setting it twenty-five years earlier. It is translated as *Generations* in English. It narrates the story of generational change and conflict. It is a story of how a boy grows up to take charge of family which followed traditions well. It is a many branched plot. The root of the story depicts the life of a single community – the Tamil-speaking Chettis of Eraniel town in the Southern-most part of India, Kanya Kumari District, on the border of modern Kerala.

1.2 UNIT OBJECTIVES

- To understand the uniqueness of Neela Padmanabhan's contribution to literature
- To make them appreciate and admire tradition depicted in 1940s

1.3 INTRODUCTION TO AUTHOR

- To understand the uniqueness of Neela Padmanabhan's contribution to literature
- To make them appreciate and admire tradition depicted in 1940s

1.4 INTRODUCTION TO AUTHOR

Neela Padmanabhan was born in 1938 in Trivandrum, Kerala into a bilingual milieu. He is one of the most distinguished South Indian writers. He has published 14 novels, eight volumes of Short Stories and three collections of essays and poems. He is an engineer by profession. He writes a vibrant, racy, realistic language close to everyday speech both in Tamil and Malayalam. His books have been translated into nine Indian languages, besides English and German. He has won National Sahitya Akademi Award for literature for the novel *Ilai Udhir Kaalam (Autumn)*.

1.5 A Note on the novel

Generations is an intricate tale. But it is simply told. The reader feels that he feels relaxed in the hands of a master who has used the language meticulously to delineate myth and ethnic consciousness. The effect on the readers is like being led into the cave where time and space have been compressed. He picturises the background of the novel. The readers feel that they are taken into the world of his delineation. All the characters feel alive before the readers. The narration comes from the author-protagonist. The novel nurtures tradition. It is also attempt to redress injustice. It makes one's struggle to get way from the tradition.

Check Your Progress Questions

1. *Generations* begins with the bell toll of the _____ temple.
2. Unnamalai Aachi is infected by elephantiasis because of bathing in the river _____.

1.6 CHAPTER-WISE SUMMARY OF THE NOVEL

*Generations - Neela.
Padmanaban*

16.6.1 Chapter 1:

Notes

When the novel begins the grand old lady named Unnamalai Achi is applying oil on her legs to get relieved off her pain, after immediate wake up in the dawn (morning). Nagar Pillai is her only son, called as Dorai, married to Kuttiammai. Their children Diravi and Visalam are seen sleeping. Unnamalai Achi is the active lady performing the daily household activities from morning to evening though she is old. She thought of asking cow dung to plaster the front yard to the head shaking old lady called Ekki, as she has very small quantity.

In the mid December, it was a cold climate. In the distance, informing the first puja of Singa Vinayaga temple, the temple bell tolls. It reminds people of spiritual urgency. The houses were old-fashioned. There was no electricity supply in those days to the houses. The house is located in the end of the street. On hearing the toll of the bell from the Singa Vinayaga temple, Unnamalai Achi gets up and says, "O Lord, Singa Vinayaka, my God". It is customary for her to say so. Then she opens her eyes, seeing through her palm fronds, as she feels it is auspicious to do so.

In her younger days, she had the habit of bathing in the river Valli. As a result, she is infected by elephantiasis. Her leg had grown bigger with the succession of lymphatic fever. Everyday she rubs oil in it. She is strong and thick, due to the unceasing work.

Diravi is her grandson. With her, he too sleeps on the verandah. She insists him to read his books. Diravi is reluctant to get up as he feels cold. She has long and scanty hair. On her forehead, she had permanent discolourations smudges of ash. She has flaring nostrils on her nose. There were small pox marks on her face also. He is reminded of 'the shrunken pickled mango' whenever he saw his face. He questions himself the reasons for Achi wearing white clothes and not the blouse like his mother's sister's.

Diravi's father is a forty-five years old man. There was frustration and defeat on his face. Unnamalai Achi proudly boasts saying, Dorai does not have her feature, body. As her son was named 'Nagru Pillai' after her grandfather, she calls him 'Dorai'. After getting up, Nagar asks about Diravi's getting up and asking him to read.

Unnamalai Aachi says, ‘The child feels the cold. Poor fellow. Let him sleep a little more.’ The older women and men sleep outside, the younger ones of the house rest, staying in the deep inside. The maidens are expected to reply without opening the door. If they had to open the door, one of the three leaves of the house had to be opened. People from the outside can get the glimpse of the ankles of the girl within. The girls in the interior can darken their rooms and make their anklets invisible in the darkness. The latches of the interior doors were six inches thick. Young women are kept in the safest place.

Kuttiamme who took care of the ten year old Visalam, comes out with utensils of various kinds, pots and pans darkened soot, to clean. Dipping the coconut coir into the ashes, she begins to wash them meticulously. Unnamalai Aachi beats betle leaves, nuts in a rhythmical pattern of sound, in the ears of Diravi. Then she takes a small bucket from the corner of the courtyard, takes the cowdung. Mixing the cowdung with the water, she opens the outer door. The cold wind attacks the inside of the house like the sharp needles.

1.6.2 Chapter 2:

Unnamalai Achi is plastering the front yard with cow dung. In the meantime Kuttiammai started her household activities and her husband gets ready for his work. Diravi wakes up and started studying at the front yard where Achi is doing her work. Diravi’s doubts such as beliefs and truth are clarified by her usually in this morning time only. Diravi now comes with a doubt that there has been no snake bite in their community. Achi said that it never bites or hurts the chettis – Seven towns’ people as their home deity is Odupparai – Goddess of Snake. She added the seven towns names are Eraniel, Pazhavadia, Pappanapuram, Parakka, Midalam, Kolachal and Tiruvancode. Originally these seven towns people were form Kaveripoompattinam. Diravi confused and exclaimed Kaveripoompattinam! Achi started explaining in detail besides doing that cleaning work. Visalam also joined with Diravi to listen the story.

Check Your Progress Questions

3. To Kaveripoompattinam King, a friendly king presented ____.
4. The daughters dipped the corals and thread in ___ to string the corals.

There was a king in Kaveripoompattinam. A friendly king presented some corals to the Kaveripoompattinam king. The king wanted to string corals

to beautify his queen. He challenged the people to string the corals. No one was able to string it. So he gave it to chetti – a businessman. He brought to this corals to home. The daughters Thangamme and Thayamme saw the father's worst situation. They asked their father about his condition. They were very clever. They had helped him by dipped the corals and thread in jaggery and arranged them in a row near the ant's place. During the night time, the ants had passed into the corals and strung it into a chain. The Chettiar astonished and gave to the king. The king wanted to marry those girls. But Chettiyar did not want to marry them with a king, having his society in his mind. He locked the girls under the house and he too died in that place feared by the King. A curse came upon the place and the chettiyar people moved from there to reached Eraniel feared by the king. They spread gradually nearby the seven towns with the idols of Singa Vinayaka and Nagamma. Diravi's father chided Achi not to narrate the story or any things during the study time.

1.6.3 Chapter 3:

After the sun rise the people in the town started the work as men to the field, ladies to the pond and river to fetch water. There was a character named Koonangani Pillai – Unnamalai Achi's brother is blaming his first wife Ponamu Achi that not plastering the front yard. Ponamu Achi looks young even though she is 50 years old, Unnamalai Achi asks her to get up early to do the work. Daily she wants to do before Unnamalai, but Ponami Achi is not able to do so. Also Unnamalai Achi asks about his brother's second wife Ananji Pillai Achi who is sleeping inside. Ponamu Achi says that if the given to Ananji Pillai Achi, she will angry like anything to her. Unnamalai leaves the place not to create anymore mess between them.

While Diravi and Salam are studying, a fifty year old man approaches Diravi's father to see. Diravi asks the man to sit in a place and he goes to call his father. Kuttiammai enquires about his coming here. He says that he is a worker working under Sevantha Perumal and he asks Nagaru Pillai to come along with him, to Puthan Street to see his son in law- Sevantha Perumal and his mother Papatthi. Kuttiammai fears of her daughter Nagammai unaware of reason. Nagammai is elder sister to Diravi and Visalam. Diravi is now fifteen years old and Salam is 10years old. Nagammai is just one and half year elder than Diravi. Nagu Akka is married to Sevantha Perumal just six months ago. Her mother in law is Papatthi a cruel lady. Nagaru Pillai is about to go Kurunthancode instead he decides to go along with that man to see Papatthi. Diravi is very much concerns about his sister.

Check Your Progress Questions

5. Give the name of Papthi's husband.
6. How old is Diravi when Nagammai is separated from her husband?

When Diravi entered the house of Nagu Akka, he understood that great things had happened there. His father sat sorrowfully in the house. He noticed his sister Diravi weeping harder in the kitchen. Papthi was shouting at his sister, "... If it had been anyone else he would have immediately put you out of the house and closed the door on you.... he, poor innocent fellow, waited six months, six long months...who knows what sin you committed in your last birth? As a result of that sin you are this way now..." Diravi does not make any sense of that old woman's 'throaty mutterings'.

Diravi's father angrily shouted saying, "Is this a town where no one cares for justice? Will no one listen to the injustice of it? To do harm to a woman is a great sin; it will not go unrequited; evil, great evil, will befall the person who harms a woman." But the brother-in-law cleverly asks him to take her to a lady doctor and examine. Nagu questions himself, 'Why should Papthi and Sevantha Pillai insist that my father take Nagu Akka back home?' 'Why should Thangamme and Thayamme die, instead of marrying the King and living happily thereafter?', Thangamme and Thayamme characters from the story narrated by Unnamalai Aachi. He questions himself, whether she can be given in marriage again with someone else.

After reaching school also, Diravi is obsessed with the occurings in the life of his sister. He thinks of Papthi. She had driven her sick husband away from her house. Kannu Pillai, the father lives under the care of his mistress Krishna woman. Because of some disease, Kannu Pillai has swollen face, contracted, wrinkled and dirty fingers. As it was contagious, he was driven out. Diravi does not remember about his eldest sister's marriage as it happened few years ago. He remember's Nagu Akka's marital life only as it happened only six months ago. It is Papathi who comes forward to give his son Mookan Alias Sevantha Perumal in marriage to Nagammai. Diravi's family does not have good opinion about Papathi's family.

Papathi is a woman to be feared. She and her son has driven her husband from their house, possessing his property. She is evil. They are worried about the father's disease also. But they decide to give her in marriage

to him for the only reason giving her to a rich family. Dorai also does not have good opinion about Papathi's family. He says,

But she is a bad woman, not to be trusted. Her words may be sweet but her actions will bring bitterness. After the wedding she might take it into her head to demand this and that – how can we give her anything without the wherewithal for it. The boy's father suffers from an incurable disease. How can we be sure that the son also will not suffer from it? That is why he's still single though he is rich.

But finally Koonangani Patta, who was ten years older than Unnamalai Aachi arrives. He is Aachi's brother. He convinces everyone in the family saying, the eldest daughter lives in poverty. If Nagu gets married with Mookan, she will live happily with enough to put into her belly, with good husband for many years. Nagammai Akka also feels happy on hearing her marriage proposal.

1.6.5 Chapter 5:

In the meantime Diravi recollects the memory of Naga Akka's marriage with Sevantha Perumal. Diravi is not able to say clearly Sevantha Perumal name as Sivanantha Perumal. Nagaru Pillai put much effort to make his daughter marry him. He went to Thengapattinam to see astrologer. The astrologer calculated and stated that it was a rare match. The marriage arranged soon by Nagaru Pillai.

Check Your Progress Questions

7. What is the name of Papathi's brother?
8. How many sovereigns did Papathi demand from Nagaru Pillai?

1.5.6 Chapter 6:

Odiyan Pillai is the brother to Papathi who is at Midalam. Papathi consulted with him for the marriage of Sevantha Perumal with Nagammai. Papathi demanded much dowry form Nagaru Pillai for marriage, as some old lands which will yield five kottais of paddy, gold jewels worth 30 sovereigns, a cash of 2000 rupees. She also demanded to bear the marriage expenses and other items such as vessels for domestic use. Milk Fruits and Sweets to distribute among the townsfolk, and many items. Nagaru Pillai is not able to please them instead he offers the land with 4 kottais of paddy, 2000 rupees in

cash, 500 rupees for the wedding ceremony. All these amount cost about 6500 rupees. For clothes and other such things he added 1500 rupees to offer Papathi.

1.6.7 Chapter 7:

The Wedding ceremony arranged in a grand manner. First the wedding feast made. The pandal pole planted ceremonially, Saris, clothes and dhotis are brought for the wedding couple. Thali also melted in gold for the bride. Pillows and Satin mattresses are brought for the couple. The wedding place arranged with flowers and hung the flowers over the place.

1.6.8 Chapter 8:

Diravi's classmate Sasi is introduced in this chapter. Sasi is a Nair boy who speaks Malayalam at home. Sasi's grandmother Amminikutty Ammachi called Diravi to talk about Koonangani Patta. Amminikutty Ammachi is the mistress to Koonangani Patta where Kishankutty Nair and Bhargavi born to them. Kishankutty married to Thangammai and they has a son Sasi. Amminikutty Ammachi called Diravi to carry a message that she wanted to see Koonangani Patta immediately.

1.7 ANALYSIS OF THE NOVEL

The novel *Generations* centres around the dilemma of the individual who is faced with two needs – one is to nurture is tradition by redressing an injustice that receives sanction in that tradition and another one is to make one's life independent of the tradition which suppresses till the end of one's life. The novel describes the life of young Diravi who is the descendant of a clan of small trader-farmers of the Chetti caste. They had migrated from Tamil Nadu to the state of Travancore many centuries ago. They have imbibed socializing values. Diravi too can get the glory of his tradition through the stories of his grandmother. By sticking to the age-old virtues and values, they lead a proud life with chastity and honour. This novel depicts their livelihood, their beliefs, their habits, customs and rites.

Diravi has become very sensitive and observant, after witnessing the rejection of his sister along with his parents and grandmother. He endures that insult which moulded his character. Even amidst many characters, the portrayal of Diravi stands unique. He realizes that the materialistic background does not determine one's character, whereas the person's cast of mind and behaviour have its impacts on the character of that person. He admires his

grandmother's dynamic nature and positive attitude towards life, even with the lifelong widowhood and poverty.

Diravi's grandmother Unnamalai Aachi is an active woman. She is afflicted with the disease of filarisis i.e. elephant leg. But she is not brought her down. She works hard all day. She narrates stories to her grandchildren. She delegates all her sorrows to God. She has cherished beliefs with which Diravi can get a different perspective towards life. He too learns to cherish life, through her brought-up. It is she who lets the children know of the sacred life of Chetti women who have been sacrificed for the sake of chastity.

The descendants of Chetti women i.e. the sisters of Diravi, are the fulfilled wife and mother, another sister of his has turned out to be a discarded wife. There are some aggressive women portrayed in this novel, Papathi, who is the rich mother-in-law of Nagu, has driven out her sick husband. Thaiy, drives out her husband as he lost all his money.

1.8 SUMMATION

The author has narrated many lyrical episodes which are still there in the collective consciousness of the Chettis. Diravi awakens with the implications of double standard of sexual morality. The caste panchayat is supposed to guard the identity and honour of the group. But it pleases only the rich Sevantha Perumal. Unnamalai Aachi everyday goes to sleep leaving to the will of God. Diravi feels the necessity for meaningful action. He is aware of the conflicts and contradictions. He does not forget the causes for his community's cherishment. He is weighed by the sense of doom. Due to the strike of the calamity, divine retribution is brought. It brings out the possibility of freedom and peace. The author has brilliantly and effectively narrated it. The novel ends where it begins with the delineation of Singa Vinayaka, the deity of Eraniel Chettis.

1.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

QUESTIONS:

1. Singa Vinayagar
2. Valli
3. corals
4. jaggery

5. Kannu Pillai

6. Fifteen

7. Odiyan Pillai

8. 30 soverigns

**1.10 ANSWER EACH OF THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS
IN TWO SENTENCES:**

1. Why makes Diravi link the stories of Thangamme – Thayamme with Nagammai?
2. In what way, Diravi voices forth the author's views?
3. How does the structure of the house reflect in protecting the women at home?
4. Write a note on Unnamalai Aachi's affection for his grandson.
5. Write a note on the custom of naming the child with grandparent's name as shown in 'Generations'.
6. Write a note on the reasons for Kannu Pillai being driven out of his own house.
7. Describe the appearance of Unnamalai Aachi.
8. Bring out Diravi's concern for his sister Nagammai as revealed in 'Generations'.

**1.11 ANSWER THE FOLLOWING IN A PARAGRAPH
EACH:**

1. Trace how Diravi admires Unnamalai Aachi.
2. What does Diravi's admiration for Unnamalai Aachi reflect?
3. Narrate the injustices done to Thangamme and Thayamme.
4. Why did the Chettiyar give his two daughters in marriage to the King?
5. Why does Diravi's family hesitate to give Nagammai in marriage to Mookan?

6. Assess the role played by Papathi in ‘Generations’.

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1.12 ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS IN AN ESSAY EACH:

Notes

1. Explore the traditional values as described in ‘Generations’.

2. Bring out the roles played by women in ‘Generations’.

3. Trace the role played by Diravi in ‘Generations’.

1.13 FOR FURTHER READING

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UNIT II GENERATIONS *Neela.* ***Padmanaban***

Notes

Structure:

2.1 Introduction

2.2 Unit Objectives

2.3 A note on the Author

2.4 Chapter-wise Summary of the Novel

2.4.1 Chapter 1

2.4.2 Chapter 2

2.4.3 Chapter 3

2.4.4 Chapter 4

2.4.5 Chapter 5

2.4.6 Chapter 6

2.4.7 Chapter 7

2.4.8 Chapter 8

2.4.9 Chapter 9

2.4.10 Chapter 10

2.4.11 Chapter 11

2.4.12 Chapter 12

2.5 Alys of the Novel

2.6 Summation

2.7 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions:

2.8 Answer each of the following questions in Two sentences:

2.9 Answer the following in a paragraph each:

2.10 Answer the following questions in an essay each:

2.11 For Further Reading

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Notes

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Generations delineates how Diravi prepares himself consciously and unconsciously. He prepares to fight for his sister's interests. He judges his sister's interests. It reflects the actual struggle for gender equality. Nagu does not talk of women's status in the novel. In this novel, very few men characters realize the injustice done to women. Diravi does not play the role of social reformer. But he tries to defend his sister. His chief characteristics are brotherly chivalry. Without sentimentalism, he handles his theme convincingly.

2.2 UNIT OBJECTIVES

- To make the students understand the brotherly chivalry of Diravi
- To understand the status of women in India

2.3 A NOTE ON THE AUTHOR

Neela Padmanabhan, one of the most eminent writers of South India, has published 14 novels, eight volumes of shortstories and three collections of essays and poems. He writes with a vibrant and realistic language. His language is close to the everyday conversation both in Tamil and Malayalam. His fame reached, when his works have been translated into nine other Indian languages and English and German.

2.4 CHAPTER-WISE SUMMARY OF THE NOVEL

2.4.1 Chapter 9:

The description of Koonangani Patta's childhood is presented in this chapter. Koonangani Patta wore a nose ring for ten years to fulfil his parents' vow. In those days nose ring is worn by a girl or boy child to show that the child born to the parents after a very long period. Koonangani Patta also born in the same way that their parents offered a long period of prayers to get a child. He was pampered by his parents as he was born after a very long time.

He was not interested to go to school, instead he loved a Nadar Christian teacher Eli and became fond of her.

2.4.2 Chapter 10:

The parents much worried of their son Koonangani. To have a good life his father gave him the outdoor duties to pick the coconuts in the grove. An affair started there also, he met Ammukutty, Bhavani's daughter. His father refused to marry Koonangani to Ammukutty This Ammukutty only Amminikutty ammachi who is Sasi's grandmother.

2.4.3 Chapter 11:

In this chapter Nilapillai aunt who is the daughter to Koonangani Patta and Ponamu Achi. She is the aunt to Diravi, a widow. Her husband Hariharaputra died of small pox and she has a five year old son named Chidambaram. Diravi witness a immoral relationship of Nilapillai aunt with a teacher. His name is Korami who is also a widower.

Check Your Progress Questions

1. Koonangani's father went for outdoor duties to give ____ good life.
2. How was Diravi's husband died?

2.4.4 Chapter 12:

There is a crowd gathered in the house of Community President, Velu Pillai. Nagaru Pillai is very furious and Koonangani Patta is also there with Nagaru Pillai. Nagaru Pillai stated that Nagu's case to the president in the following manner:

“They have married a girl and are seeking to spoil her life six months later. How can a woman live without her husband? What will happen to her? This is a crime against womanhood which they have to expiate and suffer for. It is a grievous sin. This is an action that will bring shame to the whole town.....”

But no one listens to him. Even Nagaru Pillai asks the dowry to be returned. But the cruel lady refused by saying that it was spent for Nagu to feed and fill the belly.

2.4.5 Chapter 13:

Nagu Akka does not able get a solution for her problem even the intervention of town trustees. Kuttalam is friend to Diravi, a most important character in this novel is introduced. Kuttalam belongs to lower caste. A quarrel occurs while Diravi and his friends are playing a game using sticks. In the fight Ambalavanan, friend to Diravi hurt the latter by talking Nagu Akka's problem. Kuttalam beats up Ambalavanan after listening the talk. This scene leads Diravi move close to Kuttalam.

There is another serious element happens in the story that Sasi's aunt Bhargavi get marries a coconut climber who is from Nadar Community. In this happy life Bhargavi's husband Chellan Nadar met with an accident by breaking his leg while climbing the coconut tree. So Bhargavi seeks the help of Amminikutty Ammachi to her secretly. Seeing them Diravi feels sorry for his state that Chellan Nadar who is brother-in-law to Sasi is better than Diravi's brother-in-law Sevantha Perumal.

2.4. 5 Chapter 14:

The unpleasant situation of Koonangani Patta is described in this chapter. He realizes his mistakes by the treatment of his son. He insulted his father and treated him badly. Koonangani has the guilty that he forced his father to go away from home and brought early death. He tolerated the sufferings inflicted by his son of the wrongs done to his father. Another one character introduced in the chapter is Kolappan uncle who supports his wife Thai Aunt in all cases disapproving his mother.

2.4. 6 Chapter 15:

Papathi is already a cruel character and she behaves very rudely to her husband Kannu Pillai by driving him out of the house. Papathi and Sevantha Perumal let out him and he is sheltered in Krishna Atha's place. Kannu Pillai is afflicted with leprosy. She nurses him well. Kannu Pillai curses his son for his ill-treatment towards him. He heard of Nagu's matter and he persists Nagaru Pillai to file a case against his family members. He is ready to appear in court to overthrow his son and wife. But Nagaru Pillai is indecisive in this issue. In between Papathi returned some vessels to Nagaru Pillai.

Check Your Progress Questions

3. Who supports his wife and disapproves his mother?
4. What is the name of Diravi's eldest sister?

2.4.7 Chapter 16:

Diravi is very much concerned about Nagu Akka. Eventhough Diravi's eldest sister, Unnamalai Akka's seemantham or first pregnancy ceremony is arranged. So Unnamalai akkas' seemantham never takes place.

2.4. 8 Chapter 17:

To hide Sevantha Perumal's impotent, Papathi crucially arranges a second marriage to her son with a teen age girl Vadivu who is only 18 years old daughter to Ekkimatan Pillai and Bhommu. When Papathi suggested this marriage to her parents they accepted her proposal. Because Vadivu's parents blessed with 10 children. The marriage takes place secretly in Vellimalai.

Nagaru Pillai takes Nagu to leave her in husband's house. Sevantha Perumal act cruelly towards Nagu. He brutally beats her, makes her to starve and throws food on her face. Eventually Sevantha Perumal brings her back to her mother's house. He leaves her by calling, "this person who is neither a man nor a woman.

2.4. 9 Chapter 18:

In those days the delivery takes place in the home itself with the help of the old ladies in the home. They are experienced in delivery and handle even complication in the deliveries. Unnamalai Akka's also delivers a baby in the home. The child brings happiness in Nagaru Pillai's family. Many rituals take place related to the child birth in first few weeks. The most important ceremony is touching of the pot of water ceremony to purify oneself. A letter received from Unnamalai's husband after a month to return his wife with the child. So Unnamalai akka happily leaves the home.

2.4. 10 Chapter 19:

Time flies. Diravi writes the SSLC examination. Diravi feels the importance of his responsible role in the home. So he thinks to get a government job.

2.4.11 Chapter 20:

The Chetti people in the seven towns offer prayer to the family deity Odupparai and Goddess Nagarammai. As per the customs and traditions they prepare Kozhukkatai to offer the goddess. At the same time they heard a rumour that Ponamu Achi's daughter Nilapillai aunt is missing with her son Chidambaram. It is also noted that Korami teacher is missing. There are

rumours and gossip that Nilapillai aunt is already carrying Korami teacher's child.

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2.5 ANALYSIS OF THE NOVEL

Notes

Through *Generations*, Neela Padmanabhan has given the voice to the Tamils who live in Malayalam-dominated Kerala who live there for generations. It deals with the life of the Chettiyars of Eranial in Kanyakumari District, which is situated on the border between Tamil Nadu and Kerala. The Chettiyar community was originally a prosperous mercantile community. But they befall as it is demanded by their tradition. They fall into poverty due to their strict adherence to the rituals and traditions. Women are yoked to do domestic work only. They spend their life breeding and bringing up their children.

Check Your Progress Questions

5. Name the food that is offered to their family deity.
6. Which district people's life is depicted in this novel?

The society in which they live, is the one which considers barren woman as an anathema. But the doctors do not assure that she is a barren woman. The society treats a fertile woman Diravi as barren. Even when the doctors oppose this assumption, Sevantha Peruma, Nagammai's husband does not wish to take her back. The woman's sorrows do not find an ending. She was given in rich to him as he was rich. Eventhough his mother is known for her harridan and father driven out of the home due to the leprosy disease affliction, Nagammai is given in marriage to that family. The grandmother's wise decision is the cause for the marriage between Nagammai and Sevantha Perumal. As they could not find the better bridegroom, the girl could not be kept at home for years, they decide to give her in marriage to him. It is narrated, "one should not neglect prosperity when it is offered – we should not kick it away." But Nagammai's story ends tragically.

The young man called Kuttalam is ready to get married with this abandoned woman. But the cunning and malignant man Sevantha Perumal succeeds in killing him. He killed him with the fear of losing his dignity, if Nagu marries and gets a baby because of him, the society will understand that

the fault is with him. This novel contains many tragic incidents. This is one such example to show that it is a somber novel. Neela Padmanabhan reflects through this tragedy, the tragedy of his people. It is the voice of his collectivity which does not accept change. The author understands the necessity for change. The remarriage for the abandoned wife is the necessity, the author comes out with this revolutionary idea. Vinayaka Peruma, the community trustee does not agree to his wish.

Vinayaka Perumal threatened them saying if they try to give her in remarriage, their family will be excommunicated. But Diravi is very firm with his intention of giving his sister in remarriage. So he makes preparations for the remarriage so that his sister can start a new life. The novel ends with Diravi, Nagammal and their parents moving away from Eraniyal to Shencottah. It is narrated: "There were no families belonging to their community in Shencottah. It would be a good, new beginning. He need be afraid of no one in Shencottah." To lead better and happier life only, man has formed communities. But the community itself has turned to be a deathtrap, as in the case of Kuttalam who faces death inside the well). In order to survive and be happier, one needs to rebuild one's life by going on exile only. This reflects the universal experience.

Thalaimuraigal, Padmanabhan's very first novel relates to three generations. In the words of Kamil Zvelebil, the Tamil scholar from Czechoslovakia, it is "a fruit of painstaking study as of artistic intuition and inspiration" and "an important and highly interesting novel, chiefly in the creation of a number of lively figures, in the development of intricate narrative structure and above all, in the skilful dealing with the setting." It describes the panorama of the history of a particular community. In a rural backdrop, he presents the interplay of men and women characters. Through them, he recalled the forgotten age. With his candour, skill and subtlety, Padmanabhan has evoked with sympathy and accuracy. Diravi is the most memorable characters of Padmanabhan. He rebels against the shackles of age-old conformity and quits the village to lead a better life for his sister.

2.6 SUMMATION

Neela Padmanabhan delineates Diravi's dilemma in the novel. His employment of words, images, and anecdotes display Diravi's development. It shows her great imaginative power. It is presented realistically. The social change that took place in India is narrated in this novel.

2.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS:

1. Koonangani
2. Small pox
3. Kolappan Uncle
4. Unnamalai Akka
5. Kozhukkatai
6. Kanyakumari

Notes

2.8 Answer each of the following questions in Two sentences:

1. Describe the custom involved with the baby born after a long time.
2. Write a note on untimely death of characters affected with diseases in the novel.
3. How does Unnamalai Akka's husband communicate his wife, after her delivery?
4. What makes Diravi decide to get a government job?

2.9 ANSWER THE FOLLOWING IN A PARAGRAPH EACH:

1. Discuss how Sevantha Perumal treats his wife.
2. Bring out the relationship between Papathi and Kannu Pillai.

2.10 ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS IN AN ESSAY EACH:

1. Trace how Diravi's nature gets moulded by the surroundings.

2.11 FOR FURTHER READING

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Notes

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UNIT III GENERATIONS Neela. *Padmanaban*

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Notes

Structure:

3.1 Introduction

3.2 Unit Objectives

3.3 Chapterwise Summary of the Novel

3.3 .1 Chapter 21

3.3 .1 Chapter 22

3.3 .1 Chapter 23

3.3 .1 Chapter 24

3.3 .1 Chapter 25

3.3 .1 Chapter 26

3.3 .1 Chapter 27

3.3 .1 Chapter 28

3.3 .1 Chapter 29

3.4 Analysis of the Novel

3.5 Summation

3.6 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions:

3.7 Answer each of the following questions in two sentences:

3.8 Answer the following in a paragraph each:

3.9 Answer the following questions in an essay each:

3.10 For Further ReadingFor Further Reading

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Padmanabhan is considered to be the bright star up in the firmament of literary writings in India. His works indicate his awareness of the political, social, and economic events that take place around him. Their impact on the people and his concern for the people get reflected in his presentation of modern men. He is gifted with the natural and effective style. He writes with ease, clarity and force. He has keen eye for the idiosyncracies of speech. The novel describes how the rites strengthen bonds and establish hierarchies of power. They create both creative and destructive energies. The bride Nagammal undertakes household tasks, Salam attaining puberty, Diravi's oldest sister getting blessed for delivering the first child, rejoicing baby's first morsel of solid food, death ceremony of Unnamalai Aachi are depicted well in the novel.

3.2 UNIT OBJECTIVES

- To make the readers understand the rites of Indians
- To make them assess the hierarchies of power
- To appreciate the style of the author

3.3 CHAPTERWISE SUMMARY OF THE NOVEL

3.3.1 Chapter 21:

Many incidents take place in Sevantha Perumal's house. Vadivu has the power and influence in the household. She gives her husband and Papathi nightmares. One day Kuttalam happens to see Sevantha Perumal. He beats up Sevantha Perumal. The family feels happy after hearing Diravi's success in the SSLC examination. Diravi passed his examination in the second attempt. He is the first person in the family who passed in SSLC. Diravi's father asks him to keep away from Kuttalam. He has the opinion that Diravi only had arranged to bang up Sevantha Perumal. There is a ceremony planned in Nagar Pillai's house that Salam has come of age.

3.3.2 Chapter 23:

Diravi gets a job in a private school as a teacher after his SSLC examination. He borrows Rs.1000 from the town trustee Velu Pillai using his house as collateral security. Koonangani patta left alone after Ponamu Achi dies. His second wife Ananji Pillai and her son move to Nagercoil. There is no

one to look after Koonangani Patta. Here the author points out “one cannot escape from his fate.

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3.3.3 Chapter 24:

Diravi receives his appointment order from Karingal Government School. Moses is one of the senior teachers in that school who becomes friend with Diravi. Moses moves friendly with Diravi. Moses' wife Rosammai is a doctor at Neyyar. He suggests Nagu Akka to examine by his wife. In course of time, Sevantha Perumal's father Kannu Pillai has gone to the Sanatorium at Noorandu. His mistress Lakshmi sold all her belongings to look after him. Diravi juxtapose the love of the mistress with the treatment given by the wife of Kannu Pillai, Papathi. Kuttalam opens a shop in the market place to sell Eraniel lace. Diravi meets Kuttalam and discuss about Nagu Akka and he says Diravi that Sevantha Perumal's manhood known to Vadivu and her domination over the family. Diravi thinks deeply for the effective solution for his Akka's problem.

Notes

Check Your Progress Questions

1. In ____ attempt, Diravi passed the SSLC exam.
2. Where was Diravi appointed?
3. Kulalamangai gets married with _____.

3.3.4 Chapter 25:

Diravi is in love with Kulalamangai. There is a discussion of Diravi's wedding with her is going on. But Nagar Pillai is not interested in their relationship. He denies to give Diravi's horoscope to the girl's family. But Kulalamangai wedded with “Symbalan” Thangappan who is the son of Ekkiammai. One day Nagu becomes unconscious and it is noted by Diravi. Diravi feels this as the best opportunity to take her to Dr. Rosammai to be examined. Dr. Rosammai says merrily that Nagu Akka is fertile, and that man Sevantha Perumal is an idiot. She says he has tortured Nagu Akka and given her fainting fits to hide his problem.

3.3.5 Chapter 26:

Kuttalam is fine with his shop and he looks after his father. Diravi approached angrily to Sevantha Perumal who is not in the least remorseful. He

is very stubborn in his deed. Diravi reveal the truth that Sevantha Perumal's manhood and Nagu Akka's fertile by as per Dr.Rosammai's report. Sevantha Perumal does not give away. Diravi gives a week time to Sevantha Perumal. Diravi meets him after two weeks who is returning from the workshop. Already he had asked his Nagu Akka to throw the thali away. Diravi challenges that he would marry her Akka to a man and make her to bear the child. Sevantha Perumal threatened by Diravi that he would expose the truth that he is a "eunuch". Sevantha Perumal leaves the scene immediately after Diravi informs him. Diravi thinks Kuttalam will be the right person to marry Nagu Akka.

3.3.5 Chapter 27:

Diravi asks his father to arrange Salam's marriage with Bhagavati Appan. The dowry of rupees 7000 is given to Visalam's marriage by transferring the property including the house and lands. Diravi unfolds the matter of Nagu Akka's remarriage with Kuttalam. Everyone agrees with Diravi's opinion including Nagu Akka.

3.3.6. Chapter 28:

Visalam's marriage is arranged. Unnamalai Achi is in the death bed condition. Eventually she dies, "A ripe leaf from the book of life had fallen to the ground".

3.3.7 Chapter 29:

The 16th ceremony is performed after Unnamalai Achi's death. The news of Sevantha Perumal is missing is heard. But he comes back as a madman. It is unknown whether he was actually go off as a mad or only pretending to do so.

3.3.8 Chapter 30:

On Friday Salam's wedding takes place. Diravi is transferred to Senkottai from Karingal. There is a festival at Sollamatan temple. Sevantha Perumal is seen in uncontrolled excitement, behaves wildly and jumps into a well, out of frenzy mood. Vadivu seeks the help of Kuttalam. After a couple of hours Kuttalam is taken off from the well dead. Sevantha Perumal though is alive and sent to Oolampara Mental Asylum in Trivandram. Diravi moves with the family bidding farewell to Eraniel which did not give them any comfort, love and peace.

Check Your Progress Questions

4. Who confirms Diravi that Nagammai is fertile?
5. To which place, Diravi is transferred?

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Notes

3.4 ANALYSIS OF THE NOVEL

The novel *Generations* describes the immigration of a family, a particular caste. Within southern country, the family gets uprooted and migrated. Young Diravi is a descendant of a clan of small trader –farmers of the Chetti caste. He has imbibed socializing values from his grandmother’s stories which begin to vanish in his age. Even though the entire family cheats on the daughter Nagammai who is married into a wealthy family: Paphi, the mother-in-law of his sister’s cruel nature and cunning and selfless son-in-law Sevantha Perumal who dismisses one wife to marry another, she is not allowed to have non-functional marriage by marrying another man. It is the another side of the traditional society.

Diravi is observant of his sister’s rejection, being insulted along with his parents and grandmother. He becomes extraordinarily sensitive also. They have adhered to the age-old virtue of honour and chastity. Chettis like all true Tamils like pride with themselves. They look only at their stuff of their lives – their livelihood, their beliefs, and habits, customs and rites. Eventhough the novel has many characters, Diravi is presented with much liveliness. He is a dynamic natural creation. He is of the opinion that a person’s cast of mind determines his or her behavior. He is amazed at his grandmother Unnamalai Aachi’s lifelong widowhood and poverty did not delete her energy.

Unnamalai Aachi is described in detail. She has vibhuti-smearred forehead and huge earlobes with their dangling ‘paambadams’ (large gold ear-ornaments in a cluster of geometric shapes, which are worn with pride by elderly women of the southern districts of Tamilnadu). She has ‘elephant leg’ afflicted with filariasis. She has the soul of her community. She works hard all day long. She finds pleasure in assisting and advising everyone around her. She tells stories to her grandchildren, and sleeps soundly. She delegates all her sorrows to God. Diravi appraises life with her cherished beliefs and misgivings.

Unnamalai Aachi narrates the story glorifying women how they have sacrificed their lives for the sake of her chastity. Their descendants are Diravi’s

sisters – one is fulfilled wife, another one is discarded wife and a third girl is a child.

Aggressive women are also depicted through the portrayal of Papathi, Nagu's rich mother-in-law who has sent out her sick husband, and Thaiyi, the wife who leaves her husband because he lost his money. Diravi's father makes lavish gifts to his daughter's marriage, given to her mother-in-law. Kuttalaam is driven to defy the community. Koonangani Paaa grow with suffering Kolaapan lose his dignity, became bankrupt and disgraced.

Generations deals with the life of the Chettiyars of Eraniel in Kanya Kumari District, on the border between Tamil Nadu and Kerala. Originally it is a prosperous mercantile community. The Chettiyar families have now fallen into poverty due to adherence of rituals which demanded tradition. Women are yoked only to do domestic chores. They spend their lives only by breeding and bringing up their children. Even when the doctor assures Nagammal and her brother Diravi that she is not barren, Nagammal's husband, Sevantha Perumal, drives his wife away and refuses to take her back. Women continue to exist in

Check Your Progress Questions

6. Papathi and ___ are two aggressive women in the novel.
7. Who comes forward to marry the abandoned Nagammai?

the sorrowful state. Nagammal had been given in marriage to Sevantha because he was rich. Even though his father was driven out of the house for having leprosy disease.

The grandmother's wisdom has made them take this decision. As the girl could not be kept unmarried at home for longer period, it should not be kicked away. Nagammal's story has a tragic end. Kuttalam is ready to marry the abandoned girl. The malignant Sevantha manages to kill him, as he has the fear of going with her new husband and her new-born child. Neela Padmanabhan uses the tragedy of Nagammal as an image for the tragedy of his people. Diravi, the narrator-hero, would like to bring a change in the system.

The novel concludes with Diravi, Nagammal, and their parents going away from Eraniyal to Shencottah: "There were no families belonging to their community in Shen cottah. It would be a good, new beginning. He need be

afraid of no one in Shencottah." Man has always formed communities to achieve a better, happier life of togetherness. But in the past, community itself has turned out to be a death trap (symbolically indicated by the mysterious death of Kuttalam inside the well) .To survive in this world, one must exile oneself and rebuild one's life on the foundations of one's memories.

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Notes

3.5 SUMMATION

Thalaimuraigal, Padmanabhan's very first novel (1968) is summarised and rendered into English under the title 'The Generations' by that eminent Tamil writer and critic Ka Naa Subramaniam. He has created a number of lively figures, in the development of intricate narrative structure and above all, in the skilful dealing with the setting. Viewed from any angle, Padmanabhan is a bright star up in the firmament of Tamil creative writing.

3.6 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS:

1. Second
2. Karingal Government School
3. "Symbalan" Thangappan
4. Dr. Rosammai
5. Senkottai
6. Thaiy
7. Kuttalam

3. 7 ANSWER EACH OF THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS IN TWO SENTENCES:

1. How does Sevantha Perumal react when Diravi shows the report of Dr.Rosammai?
2. Give an account of Visalam's marriage.
3. Why does Sevantha Perumal come as a mad man on the 16th day ceremony of Unnamalai Achi's death?

4. "A ripe leaf from the book of life had fallen to the ground". What does this refer to?

3.8 ANSWER THE FOLLOWING IN A PARAGRAPH EACH:

1. Bring out the episode of Diravi exposing the truth about Sevantha Perumal.
2. Compare and contrast Kuttalam with Sevantha Perumal.

3.9 ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS IN AN ESSAY EACH:

1. Write an essay on Diravi's observant role turning into the decision-maker.

3.10 FOR FURTHER READING

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UNIT IV SUBARNALATA- *Ashapura Debi*

*Subarnalata - Ashapura
Debi*

Sturcturre:

Notes

- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Unit Objectives
- 4.3 Introduction to Author
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- 4.6 Analysis of the novel
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- 4.8 For Further Reading
- 4.9 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions:
- 4.10 Answer each of the following questions in Two sentences:
- 4.11 Answer the following in a paragraph each:
- 4.12 Answer the following questions in an essay each:
- 4.13 For Further Reading

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Subarnalata is a Bengali novel by Ashapura Debi. It is the second book of Ashapura's trilogy. The first novel of the trilogy is Pratham Pratisruti

and the last one is Bakul Katha. In these books Ashapurna Debi presents a socio-cultural documentary of West Bengal. It presents the pictures as seen through the eyes of women characters who are strong, sensitive and capable of criticizing the changes that take place around them. In the novel, we see the accounts that cover three-generations of changes in Bengal society. The novel carries the voice of the Bengali Middle-class which is in transition. The changes which are registered by the women characters are: the movement from the village to the city, from the joint family to the nuclear, from the illiterate child-bride to the single, professional woman. The novel tells us how these changes affected women. It also tells us how these women were, in a way, responsible for these changes working from within the socio-cultural system.

4.2 UNIT OBJECTIVES

- To make the learners understand the anguish of imprisoned soul
- conflict between tradition and modernity

4.3 INTRODUCTION TO AUTHOR

Ashapurna Devi is one of the important authoress in feminist literary tradition particularly in Bengali literature. Her literary works are a milestone in feminist ideology. The women's space had been portrayed well in her later novels like "Pratham Pratishruti-Subarnalata-Bakul Katha" trilogy. There is a transformation in her approach towards women identity from traditional submissive image in early novels to progressive image in later novels. Women characters in her trilogy assumed a greater height as they have been made active agents of social change rather than passive absorbers. The novelist had weaved the story of the struggle for freedom of women along mother-daughter line in order to intensify the struggle for emancipation of woman from orthodoxy.

4.4 A NOTE ON THE NOVEL

Ashapurna Debi talks about *Subarnalata* in these words: "Apparently, *Subarnalata* is a life story but that is not all. *Subarnalata* is the story of a particular time, a time that has passed, but whose shadow still hovers over our social system. *Subarnalata* is a symbol of the helpless cry of an imprisoned soul . . . Sociologists write down the history of a changing society, I have merely tried to draw a curve to depict the change. *Subarnalata* was published in 1966. It is a novel with several women characters. It focuses several women-centred themes like marriage, women's education, equality of the sexes and so

on. It is a novel that mounts a silent but strong protest against the silencing of women by the patriarchal society. The concerns of Ashapura Debi are about the freedom of the country, the freedom of women and individual freedom and their inter-connection.

*Subarnalata - Ashapura
Debi*

Notes

Check Your Progress Questions

1. *Subarnalata* focuses on ____ centered themes.
2. When was *Subarnalata* published?
3. She dreamt of having a ____ in her house.

4.5 CHAPTERWISE SUMMARY OF THE NOVEL

4.5.1 One

The novel begins with a very suggestive line: "Subarnalata knew nothing of this. She had started life with the load of her mother's sins on her own young head." We see her lying on her death bed. She recalls everything. Her life has been one of "the torment of failure." She did not think of her youngest child, a seventeen year old daughter. After her death that child would be helpless in a merciless world.

The daughter is seen looking at the verandah where the body of Subarnalata is laid. After the body is removed .the verandah becomes empty. But the empty verandah makes the girl think about the cruelty of the elders who refused Subarnalata the freedom to have a verandah of her own. She dreamt of her house being built with a verandah from where she would see the world outside. But, unfortunately for her, she had to live a life of quiet imprisonment. Subarnalata was married when she was just nine years old. Her mother-in-law, Muktokeshi and her four sons decided to build a new house. She told her husband, Prabodh (the second son of Muktokeshi) that she had plans about the house. She wanted to have a room of her own with a verandah. She told her husband about her dreams. He said that the elders in the family would not entertain the idea. He, however, gave her a false promise that a verandah was being constructed. When Subarnalata approached her mother-in-law, Muktokeshi, to go and see the house, she refuses. She is told that the priest must be consulted to decide on an auspicious date. Moreover, women were not supposed to visit the house as men do. When Subarnalata argues Muktokeshi says something which throws light on the character of

Subarnalata: "Do stop...arguing all the time. You would be a lot easier to put up with if you didn't have this infernal habit of questioning everything. it's alright for the men." These words also show the oppressive male domination of society within which a sensitive woman like Subarnalata is located. We are also told that Subarnalata used to get books secretly for reading. If anyone caught her in the act of reading stories, novels, books she was sure to be thrown out. But in the absence of any human company and a source of comfort, the book was her sole companion and only companion.

4.5.2 Two

There is a description of the family moving in to the new house. Two second-class carriages are hired. This is because the statue of Lakshmi was being shifted. If anyone touched the statue it would be desecrated. So the stingy Muktokeshi hires two carriages. We also get to know that the women are pure. But the men "wont to visit all kinds of places" have a questionable purity.

Subarnalata hoped that "this was a new beginning. She had left all that was old and decayed behind her. In her new home, new room and new verandah, she would turn her face to light and joy. Darkness would have no place in her life.' When she enters the house she looks for the verandah. It is not found. Neither is it found in the ground-floor nor in the two upper-floors. She is very upset, and very angry with her husband for lying to her. He treats the matter light-heartedly. This only adds insult to the mental injury that Subarnalata has suffered. In her anger and frustration she asks to be given the smallest and darkest room in the house. This was her way of taking revenge on her husband. We also get to read the "duties" of the Man in such a male-dominated society. "Their duties were simple — raise the children, get them married, then perhaps in one's old age, go and .visit holy places. And the biggest duty of all was to keep the women under control. One's own mother had to be respected and feared, it was true. But one's wife? All one expected from her was total obedience." The reader is told that Subarnalata's mother had left her husband and children. She did so because, her mother-in-law refused to send her to school and give her an education. That spirit continues to glow in Subarnalata. That is why "Subarnalata wanted to lash out at the injustice she saw everywhere."

Check Your Progress Questions

4. What is the name of Subarnalata's mother-in-law?
5. Who told lie to her, regarding the availability of the verandah in the new home?

*Subarnalata - Ashapura
Debi*

Notes

4.5.3 Three

Subarnalata has a conversation with Biraj. She becomes familiar with Muktokeshi's children. The latter has four sons: Subodh, Prabodh, Prabhas and Prakash. There are four daughters: Susheela who is called Bordi; Subala called Mejdi; Suraaj called Shejdi; and Biraj called Raju. Subarnalata jokes that the last two sons could have also been given rhyming names: Abodh and Nirbodh. Meaning, "without sense" and "foolish". Biraj is irritated and brings her mother, Muktokeshi. She talks to Subarnalata harshly. Subarnalata also replies fittingly. Muktokeshi punishes her by getting Prabodh to sleep alone. Actually, Subarnalata feels greatly relieved to sleep alone. On the contrary, Prabodh feels punished by his mother's action. He arranges to meet Subarnalata in the attic in the afternoon.

4.5.4 Four

Subarna plays a practical joke on her husband. She makes him wait in the attic for hours. Subarna, then, draws Biraj into a game of hide-and-seek. Biraj knocks on the door thrice as earlier arranged by Prabodh with Subarnalata. Then, suddenly, the door unbolted and Prabodh peeps out. Since Biraj did not expect him there at that time, she was terrified. When Muktokeshi returns she scolds Subarnalata. Her frustrated husband gives her a beating in the night. But she refuses to be tamed by these actions.

4.5.5 Five

It is the time of the birth of Subarna's first child. Umasashi brings rags that are dirty. Subarna is irritated. Muktokeshi who comes to know of the incident scolds Subarna. She has her labor pains. Ganamani, the dai, does the midwifery. They attend to the birth of the child. It is a girl. Muktokeshi is dispirited. She says, "After all this, what do we get for our pains? A girl! It's just my luck!" At that time, Subarna thinks of her own mother's words: "Don't neglect your child, Subarna,...a girl or a boy, it makes no difference at all Each is a gift of God."

4.5.6 Six

The discussion turns to the marriage of Biraj. Muktokeshi is getting increasingly concerned. Muktokeshi is concerned that Biraj is getting old. She is Twelve or Thirteen. Muktokeshi has maintained for the last three years that Biraj is Twelve. Her sons don't offer any helpful suggestions in the matter. They think about the huge expenses that the marriage will invite. Muktokeshi's oldest daughter, Susheela, comes up with a proposal: suitable boy, right age, right education, wealthy family, handsome too. But only problem — they demand a heavy dowry: furniture, jewellery, and 300 rupees. Everyone is upset by the terms. Soon the bell in the kitchen is heard ringing. Susheela, brings the news that Subarnalata has agreed to give Biraj her jewellery. Prabodh is terribly angry with his wife for taking such a decision. Eventually, when the boy's people arrive it is discovered that the jewellery is missing. Word gets around that the culprit could be Subarnalata herself. Soon the matter reaches the ears of Subarnalata. She confronts Muktokeshi who spreads this kind of story. She confronts her in the hall in the presence of all the other men. Muktokeshi is outraged. But she is unable to face Subarnalata. Subarna is angry and is with a steely resolve. Subarna asks Prabodh to be brought there. He is taken aback by what Subarnalata asks him to do. She asks her husband to touch his mother's feet and swear that he had not stolen the jewels. Prabodh shouts and screams and refuses to accept the challenge thrown by Subarna. However, the jewels are soon discovered in the box. Everyone forgets to ask who took the jewels. Subarnalata attempts suicide by hanging from her saree. She is saved and revived. No one understands her humiliation. She is scolded for being selfish. Only Biraj, when taking leave, says: "Forgive me for all I've said and done to hurt you, Mejo Bou. It's taken me this long to realize how good you really are. You're no less than a goddess!"

Check Your Progress Questions

6. Subarnalata tells jokingly that Suraj and Biraj can be named as ____ and ____.
7. Who comes with the marriage proposal for Biraj?

4.5.7 Seven

Mutktokeshi marries off her sons Prabhas and Prakash though they are unemployed and penniless. She does not see any reason in Subarna's criticism

that it was a ridiculous move. Prabhas marries from a wealthy family. His wife is Giribala. Prakash's wife, Bindu comes from a poor family. Muktokeshi tries to create an enmity among the daughters-in-law so that she can control them. Subarna fights these tendencies of Muktokeshi to the best of her strength. Susheela's husband Kedarnath realizes that "No one appreciates Mejo Bou (Subarna) . . . She is one in a million." The reader is also told of the changes that Subarna brings to the house: "She had introduced many- new things, which had been unheard of. She bought a newspaper everyday, she made sure all the children — including the girls — learned to read; above all, at the time of childbirth, she had started to produce clean sheets and towels. . . . People mocked her, ridiculed her, berated her, chastised her. Subarna crashed through every barrier, and always got what she wanted."

4.5.8 Eight

Muktokeshi was leaving for the holy city of Puri to visit the temple of Jagannath. Puri is by the sea. Subarna had always dreamt of seeing the sea and drowning in its beauty. So when her eldest brother-in-law, Kedarnath came, she asked him to persuade Muktokeshi to permit her to visit Puri. He makes a recommendation on her behalf. Muktokeshi is angry and scolds Subarna for being close to Kedarnath. Subarna is irritated by one of the daughters-in-law. She slaps her in front of Muktokeshi. So when Prabodh returns, Muktokeshi gives him the details. His lack of judgement makes Prabodh beat and harass Subarnalata. But when she appears unmoved by his show of violence he gives up. Soon his sexual desire for Subarna overcomes him. And after three children he sleep,do with her yet again. Subarnalata "could hardly walk out in the night, or anything . . . So she gritted her teeth once more, and suffered in silence."

Check Your Progress Questions

8. What is the name of Prabhas' wife?
9. Muktokeshi's visit to _____ made the family face financial crisis.

Muktokeshi returns from Puri. She brings with her the third daughter Surazi. The latter's Husband is posted at-Cuttack. He is a senior officer. Muktokeshi wants to show Suraaj to everyone. She is modern and quite free with men. She is neither tradition-bound nor inhibited. She even dresses and

lives like an English woman, a "Memsahib." She is pregnant again after the birth of the first child which took place ten years ago. Suraaj finds the house oppressive. She also finds Muktokeshi quite intolerable. So, she who came to stay for a few months decides to leave immediately. When Suraaj leaves, Muktokeshi tells her sons about the financial burden she had invited by going to Puri and bringing Suraaj home. To make up the loss the sons are advised by Muktokeshi to send their wives to their respective homes. All the daughters-in-law agree to go to their homes except Subarnalata. She was once refused permission by Muktokeshi to go and visit her father. That was a time when she badly, wanted to see her father. She was told by Muktokeshi that her father was an undesirable man and that it was below their dignity to associate with him. Now, that very same Muktokeshi has asked the sons to take their wives home.

Subarnalata exposes the hypocrisy of her Mother-in-law. Muktokeshi feels insulted and summons Prabodh. He tries to please his mother by punishing his wife before his mother. He then arranges a carriage to take Subarnalata to her father's house. The children are not sent along with her. When the carriage pulls away, the children scream but Susheela takes them into a room.

4.5.10 Ten

Subarnalata comes to her father's house. There, one meets her father, Nobokumar Banerjee who is in his fifties, his daughter Sudheerbala, her daughter Aunno, Sadhan, Subarna's brother who is a lawyer, and another brother who works for the Railways at Varanasi. Subarnalata does not talk to anyone. Sudheerbala invites her in. But Subarnalata does not pay heed to these shows of hospitality. She goes to the room upstairs. Sudheerbala gets upset about the developments. She waits for her husband, Sadhan to return. He soon returns from court. He is surprised to see someone in the room upstairs. He is irritated that that person has not drawn her saree over her head. It is unbecoming of decent women to appear so. He is told by his wife that the visitor is Subarna. He also does not appear pleased to receive Subarna. He asks his daughter, Aunno to come down with Subarna. There is a conversation between Aunno and her Aunt. Aunno finds her Aunt beautiful and bright. When they come down Nobokumar asks Subarna why she left her husband's home. She replies that she was thrown out.

The meanness of the in-laws and the meaninglessness of domestic life are captured in the words of Subarnalata. When her father suggests that she must apologize and go back to her husband's house, because it is her "real"

home, Subarna replies: "Real home"? . . . What is real about it, tell me? It's more than a house of cards, as far as I can see. One word from them and I was out on the street, wasn't I? And you expect me to go back there." When Sudheerbala brings sweets Subarna stands up shouting that she does not want the sweets but wants to go back instead. When her father and brother protest she bangs her head against a wall and weeps. She feels insulted and betrayed. All for no fault of hers. Both father and son grab her and drag her away from the wall. Aunno watches the scene with fear and dismay and amazement.

4.6 ANALYSIS OF THE NOVEL

Subarnata is the protagonist of the novel. She belonged to a time when it was taken as an offence if women even stepped out of the house. It was then unheard that a mother could wish to educate her daughter and not agree to get her married at a very young age. Even more bare search indicates the search of his mother.

Subarnalata's mother is humiliated when her father refuses to let Ambika into her house. Subarnalata's daughter wonders at this. The wife can get power in the house, only when she attains old and becomes matriarch like Muktakeshi. In the mind of Satyavati, women's freedom was bound to education. Subarnalata also has the same attitude. Her childhood memories of her mother are associated only with her school. From her mother's letter, it is evident that her interest in her childhood is the same. Schools and studies symbolize independence for women. Knowledge is the symbol of freedom for both men and women. Knowledge of the outer world is a step towards freedom.

Subarna's life situations presented in the novel are really based on Ashapura Devi's personal experiences. She has taken stories and events from the life of contemporary women around her. In the view of Ashapura Devi, Subarna is an emissary from the world. She herself had dwelt in as a child. She represents an age which has witnessed the helplessness of women locked within four walls in the city. Subarna, the daughter of Satyabati, is fashioned in the same metal, She has grit and determination.

In the early part of the novel, Subarna came to know only derogatory comments about her mother who had left her family only to go on a pilgrimage. But nobody understand the enormity of Satya's distress and frustration. Nobody knows the reason why she left her place. But the readers realize that the flame that was alight in Satyabati, keeps burning within Subarna, and it sings anybody who tries to attack her.

Subarna had to struggle and fight at every step. She herself could not adjust to the narrow-minded and insensitive attitude of her in-laws. She continues to protest and rationalize with people around her. During her labour pain also, she is forced to fight with Muktakeshi, her mother-in-law, for some clean sheets. The reader experiences Subarna's excitement and enthusiasm of having baranda which her husband assured her to be built, when their family house is built.

Subarna searches her balcony running to the first floor of the house. Instead, she just faces many more walls. She ran to the second floor and terrace, but finally understands that verandah had not been constructed due to the lack of funds. She became furious and she expressed her anger to her husband. Then, she convinces herself saying, her sons would build a house with a balcony for her to avenge the insult of their mother. Her vow after humiliation as follows:

God, you shall be my witness, I will build a nice house with a baranda, I will, I will, I will. When my sons grow up and become self sufficient, I shall avenge this insult" Then the authorial voice intervened, "But what about her previous oath? Hadn't she said that if the house didn't have a balcony she would not even stay there! Alas, wife of a Bengali household, oaths were meaningless for her."

She does not get appreciation for any of her deeds. None in the family understands her. She does not have an outlet. She manages to control her emotions. With fear and criticism only, she manages to lead her life within that family. Even her husband does not pay heed to her repeated requests to have verandah so that she can get the glimpse of the outer world in order to broaden their mind. She feels that there is no space for ventilation in the house. There is no moving of the air in the house. None understands how she feels helpless within the four walls of the house. She needs to have fresh air by sitting in the verandah.

From the depths of rural Bengal, Ashapurna Devi has dragged us into the heart of the city, but then the city does not spell freedom. Inside Subarna's house, the air stands still, stagnant, timeless. But Subarna yearned for a breath of that fresh air, that contact with the outside world which was full of promise, the promise of freedom. The claustrophobic ambience of her in-laws' house was like a steadily tightening noose around her neck.

Ashapura depicts in her novel the dissolution and disintegration of the feminine sensibility in marriage. It denotes a collative neurosis which shatters the identity of women in our male-dominated patriarchal society where women longing for love and security are driven mad or forced into suicide. It is the alienated self's frantic and frenetic struggle for a socio-psychic release from the drab reality of existence in order to find a voice and a vision.

According to Gopa Mazumder, in her English translation of *Subarnalata* "Their duties were simple—raise the children, get them married, then perhaps in one's old age, go and visit holy places. And the biggest duty of all was to keep the women under control. One's mother had to be both respected and feared, it was true. But one's wife? All expected from her was total obedience."

Ann Foreman considers women's alienation profoundly disturbing because women experience themselves as fulfillment of other people's needs: "Man exists in the social world [.....] for the woman, however, her place within the home [.....] the effect of it is on even more oppressive form." Men seek relief from this alienation through their relations with women; for women there is no relief. For these intimate relations are the very ones that are the essential structures of her oppression, Within the claustrophobic airless confines of the family house, Subarna found an ally in a young relative, a boy called Dulo. Dulo supplied her with books which widened the windows of Subarna's mind, helped her to satiate her unquenchable thirst for knowledge. Dulo used to bring these books from the collection of an enigmatic person called Mallikbabu, whom Dulo quoted often: "Until our womenfolk get emancipated and self sufficient, the sorrowful state of our country will not change for the better"

When Dulo recounted the discussions about the crisis of the country held at Mallikbabu's place, a shiver went down Subarna's spine. These words were right after her heart. They echoed her emotions, her fears and her frustrations. But a chance of encounter with Mallikbabu led to a calamity, with fingers being raised at her fidelity. One more window of Subarna's soul got shut and screwed closed permanently. During the outbreak of plague in Kolkata, hordes of people left the city to escape its clutches and took refuge in the countryside. Subarna was sent to her husband's younger sister Subala in the countryside. During this visit, she encountered Ambika, a free soul, somewhat eccentric, distantly related to her sister-in-law. Ambika epitomized all that was lacking in the men in her family. He was deeply aware of what was going on in the world around them, was clearthinking and rational and displayed a

sensitivity that Subarna had always yearned for. When Ambika teased her about her detective-like interrogation, she retorted without any hesitation whatsoever: “Who else but us women would understand the pangs of slavery? We serve even the servants”

She visited Ambika’s house in search of poems, in search of books and was amazed at the collection she stumbled upon. The strong nationalistic feelings conveyed in the poems composed by Ambika brought tears to her eyes and at the same time enraged her. In Ambika’s words, echoing the spirit of nationalism, Subarna found an echo of the pain and suffering endured by all womenfolk — “their lack of independence, their silent sufferings, their pains and frustrations as the downtrodden beings.”

In *Subarnalata*’s anguish Ashapurna Devi has captured the anguish, helplessness and frustration of thousands of women. They lived in a world where women were not supposed to dream of any independence. They were born to provide, to suffer, to sacrifice and then to drown into oblivion. After bringing up her sons with what she thought was the right kind of education, they disappointed Subarna and offered no help in the education of the two young sisters Parul and Bakul. She had tried to bring up her sons but they turned out to be more like their uncles, carrying deep within them that disdain towards women that were a marker of the father’s side of their family. In fact, all they offered their mother was the standard taunt and disdain that women were traditionally being subjected to. When Ambika was released from the jail and came to Kolkata to meet Subarna and her family, he faced tremendous insult. Subarna tells him:

As it is, the sins committed during previous births have led to my being born as a Bengali girl, and further sins have thrust me in this household of ‘saints’. What more do you expect? Actually it is you people who should be saluted, you who have neglected your personal welfare, and have made an effort to dispel the shame of the country.

Subarna wrote about her experiences, her dreams, her expectations, her desires, and her sufferings. She has expressed them in the form of writing. The inexperienced publisher and his lack of editing led to a disaster, and the volume which could be the harbinger of some kind of emancipation. But it became a thing of ridicule. It results in the aspiring author face embarrassment.

Being frustrated, towards the end of the novel, Subarna lit a fire on the terrace and the hungry fire devoured all her literary endeavours. All her imagination, creations, her dreams and her individuality are burnt with her literary endeavours. She withdrew herself from all mundane activities. She became apathetic and bade farewell to the world. The fire is lit out as she realized that her efforts have all failed. Her sons have grown up to be sensitive human beings. All her agony, her seclusion was clearly upheld in the voice of Bakul, the only person who carried forward her dream and vowed never to let it die or be forgotten. At the end of the novel, she says,

Mother, dear mother. I shall find all your writings that were burnt out and lost. I shall find all those writings that never saw the light of the day. I shall convey to the sunlit earth the tale of the silent trauma of the world of darkness.

Ashapurna's trilogy covers the past, present and future as the texts situate themselves within the immediate past of the late nineteenth century. Marginalization and resistance are represented through the dominant voices of resistance as Subarnalata and Subarnalata's daughter Bakul.

4.7 SUMMATION

Subarnalata is the second of Ashapurna Debi's trilogy. The novelist is against silencing of women. Her original thoughts are based on her own personal experience and her analysis of the position of women in the society. It deals with the feminist questions in the Indian context. In Subarnalata's mind, the freedom of women, individual freedom and freedom of the country are interconnected.

4.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS:

1. Women
2. 1966
3. verandah
4. Muktokeshi
5. Her husband
6. Abodh and Nirbodh

7. Susheela
8. Giribala
9. Puri

4.9 ANSWER EACH OF THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS IN TWO SENTENCES:

1. Write a short note on the broad-mindedness of Subarnalata.
2. What happened during the hide-and-seek episode?
3. Why did not Sadan have good opinion about Subarnalata?

4.10 ANSWER THE FOLLOWING IN A PARAGRAPH EACH:

1. Describe the humiliations faced by Subarnalata.
2. Explore the reasons and consequences of Muktokeshi's decision of sending the daughters-in-law to their parents' homes?

4.11 ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS IN AN ESSAY EACH:

1. Assess the character of Muktokeshi.
2. Discuss the humiliations encountered by Subarnalata.

4.12 FOR FURTHER READING

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Debi*

Notes

UNIT V SUBARNALATA

Notes

Structure:

- 5.1 Introduction
- 5.2 Unit Objectives
- 5.3 Unit Structure
- 5.4 Introduction to Author
 - 5.4.1 Other Major Characters
- 5.5 Characters in *Subarnalata*
 - 5.5.1 Eleven
 - 5.5.2 Twelve
 - 5.5.3 Thirteen
 - 5.5.4 Fourteen
 - 5.5.5 Fifteen
 - 5.5.6 Sixteen
 - 5.5.7 Seventeen
 - 5.5.8 Eighteen
 - 5.5.9 Nineteen
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- 5.13 For Further Reading

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Subarnalata is the second of Ashapura's trilogy. Subarnalata is the daughter of Satyavati. It narrates how women are affected by the change in the Hindu middle class in transition, from village to the city, from the joint family to the nuclear family, from the illiterate child-bride into a professional woman. It also shows how women are part of the reasons for the change. With this introduction, Ashapura Debi introduces *Subarnalata*. It narrates the story of

the time that has passed. It symbolizes the helpless cry of an imprisoned soul.

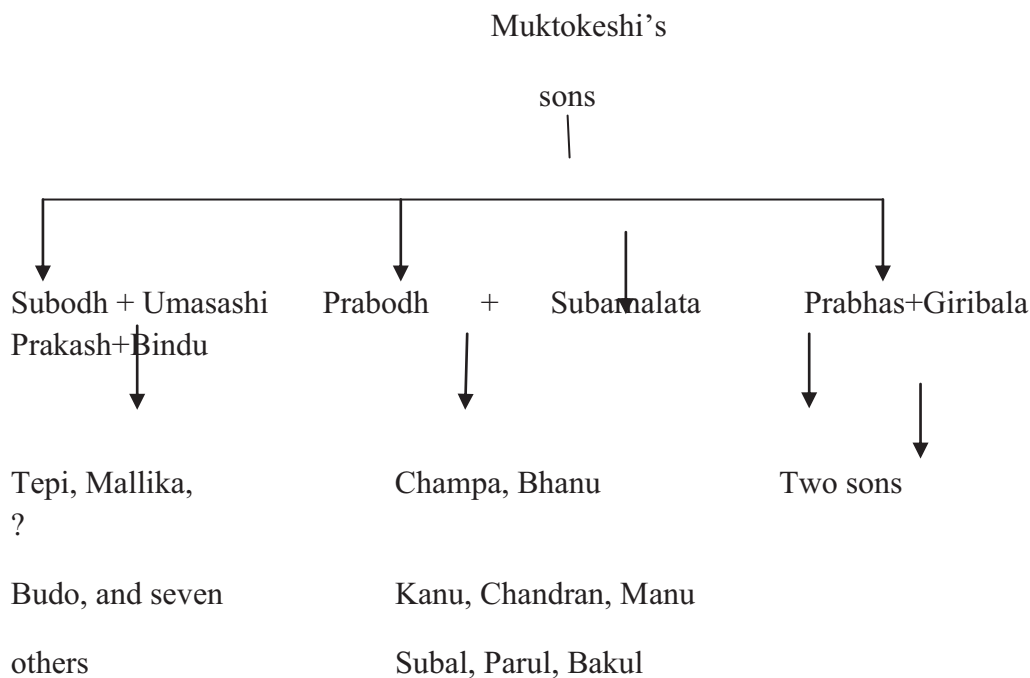
5.2 UNIT OBJECTIVES

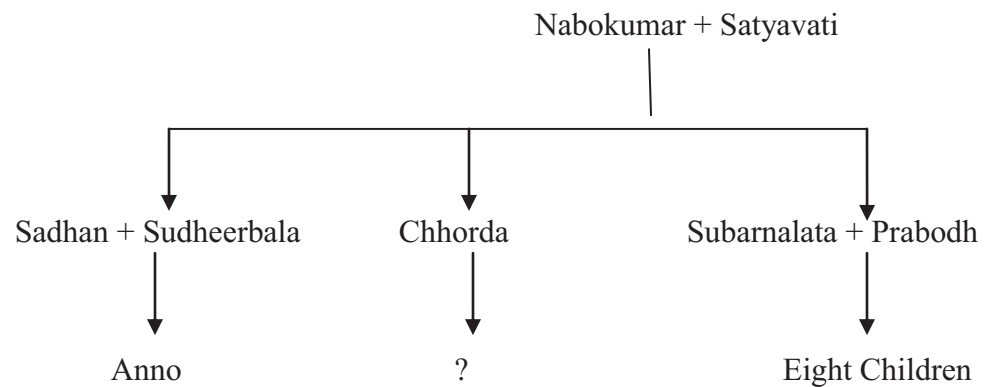
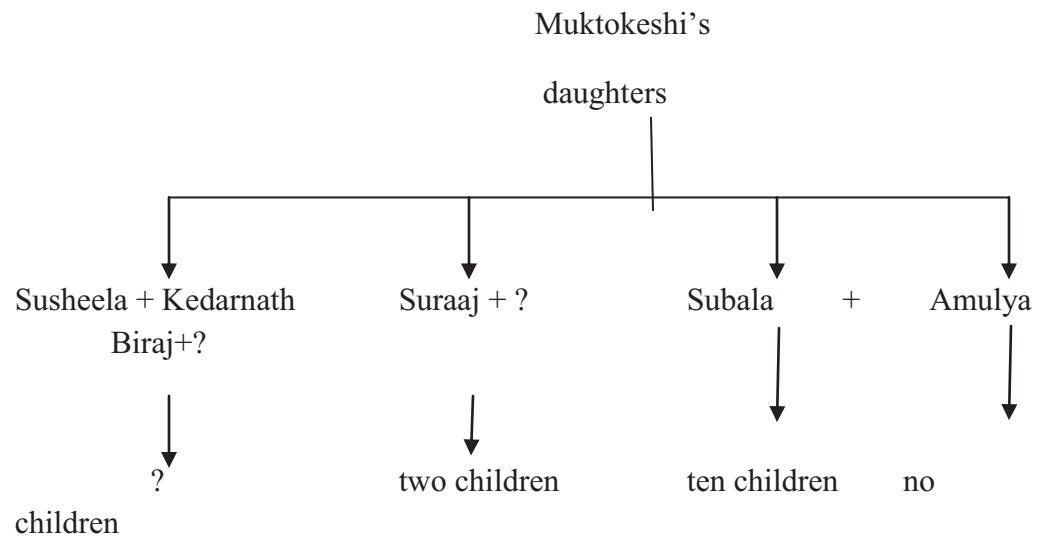
- To make the learners understand the anguish of imprisoned soul
- conflict between tradition and modernity

5.3 INTRODUCTION TO AUTHOR

Ashapura Devi is one of the eminent authoress in feminist literary tradition writing in Bengali. Her writings are milestones in feminist ideology. There is a transformation in her approach towards women identity from traditional submissive image in early novels to progressive image in later novels. Women characters in her trilogy assumed a greater height as they have been made active agents of social change rather than passive absorbers. The novelist had weaved the story of the struggle for freedom of women along mother-daughter line in order to intensify the struggle for emancipation.

5.4 CHARACTERS IN *SUBARNALATA*





5.4.1 Other Major Characters

Ambika: Muktokeshi's daughter, Subala's cousin by marriage

Hemangini : Muktokeshi's cousin

Jayavati : Subarnalata's friend.

Related to Muktokeshi's family by marriage

Jogu : Muktokeshi's nephew (brother-in-law)

Shaymasundari: Muktokeshi's sister-in-law(brother's wife)

5.5 CHAPTERWISE SUMMARY OF THE NOVEL

Subarnalata

Notes

5.5.1 Eleven

The men in the family spend their time playing cards. On holidays neighbours too join in. It was on such an occasion that Nobokumar brings Subarea back. They are not allowed to apologize or explain. The sons of Muktokeshi disgrace and insult her at the doorstep. The neighbours are also made witnesses. The scene ends when Muktokeshi asks Subarea to come in without making any more scandals. That night Prabodh was in for more surprises. Subarna swallows all the opium left with Muktokeshi. It is not sufficient to end life. The doctor is brought after a heavy payment. Everybody is irritated that Subarna should give them so much agony. Even Subodh who, usually, takes Subareas side is irritated and he comments that these actions are prompted by the novels and stories she reads.

It was Susheela's nephew, Dulo who brings Subarna, novels, books, magazines and journals secretly. Subarna reads the books in the room that is used as a storeroom. It opens into the alley. The books are from a rich man named Mallik Baba. A mutual respect grows between. Mallik Baba and Subarna. Dulo understands this and brings Mallik Baba to stand in the alley. He then asks Subarna to appear at the window so that she can see him. Subarna catches a glimpse of the man. She is, at the same time, shocked at the action of Dulo. Unfortunately for her, Prabhas returns from court early on that day. He sees Mallik and Dulo. He also sees Dulo giving certain things to Subarna. He suspects a secret love affair between Subarna and Mallik Baba. He is unable to beat the rich man. So he shouts at him. He then turns to Dulo and beats him. The neighbours too join in. Subarna who is unable to bear the scene rushes and rescues Dulo). She also shouts at the men and calls them "butchers!". Muktokeshi asks her son, Prabodh to "kick her [Subarna] to death as punishment for entertaining "a lover."

Check Your Progress Questions

1. How do the men in the family spend time?
2. Who brings Subarna novels and magazines without others' knowledge?

5.5.2 Twelve

Muktokeshi visits her sister-in-law, Shyamasundari. Her son, Jogu has locked her in the kitchen. He has a case in the court against his mother. She wants all her relatives evicted from their land which Jogu's father had given her. Jogu wants to allow his relatives the occupancy of the land. So Jogu files a suit against his mother. Before Jogu goes to the court he touches his mother's feet for her blessings. As Shyamasundari refuses to bless him he locks her up in the kitchen.

When Muktokeshi comes to visit Shyamasundari, the latter tells her that Subarnalata could have been happier if only she did not have a mother-in-law like Muktokeshi. This is in fact the statement of Muktokeshi's own son, Subodh. He has told Jogu a number of times the same statement. This news comes as a shock to Muktokeshi.

Prabodh, on his part wants Subarna to swear by the name of Kali that she would stop reading books. He also wants her to swear that she would not get involved with another man. She asks him to swear by touching the head of their child that he would give up gambling as it was a sin. Prabodh agrees to do so. However' the games of cards still go on in the household.

5.5.3 Thirteen

Haridasi, the servant maid is given clothes for Durga Pula. She refuses to take the clothes as they are made in England. She tells Muktokeshi about the boycott of foreign clothes. She also tells Muktokeshi the babus in the house wore "blinkers", they were blind to the reality outside. Subarnalata who hears this conversation is struck by the words of Haridasi. She understands that everyone in that house wore "blinkers." She decides to teach the members a lesson. So she collects all the new clothes and burns them. The children celebrate the symbolic boycott of foreign clothes. Prabhas who appears on the scene is horrified. He is rebuffed by Subarnalata. Everyone takes her for a crazy woman. Subarnalata is beginning to feel the pregnancy of yet another child. She already has six children. Prabodh had tricked her the seventh time with apan. He claimed that it had medicinal effect. She waits to show her anger when he himself arrives there to collect an extra pack of cards. There is a heated exchange of words between husband and wife. Subarna understands the nasty hypocrisy of her husband.

5.5.4 Fourteen

Jogu informs Muktokeshi that there is a puja in his house. His mother has won the case. He has come to invite them. Muktokeshi decides not to go. She orders everyone to stay indoors. Subarnalata defies her and goes to the puja with three of her children and Haridasi. Shyamasundari prepares food for them. They return at 10 pm. The doors are closed as a sign of punishment. Mrs. Basak, the neighbour, offers help. Subarna firmly but politely refuses her help. The children and Subarna spend the cold night outside the house. In the morning when the door is opened for the milkman, the children enter one by one. Subarna who has fallen unconscious is carried inside. She is revived by the doctor. Subarna scolds everyone for showing their attention which was, actually, out of the embarrassment in facing the neighbours.

Check Your Progress Questions

3. Who locked Shyamasundari in the kitchen?
4. Who comes forward to help Subarnalata and her children, when they are not allowed to enter?

5.5.5 Fifteen

There is an epidemic of Plague. The whole city of Calcutta is reeling under the dreaded disease. People are moving to villages and remote places where the disease has not affected. On the suggestion of Subodh, Subarna and her children are sent to Chapta. She spends the happiest days of her life in Chapta. She stays with Subala and her affectionate husband, Amulya. She is also pleased to make the acquaintance of Anulya's brother, Ambika. She is, in fact, thrilled to meet a person like Ambika. He is versatile, creative, talented, well-read, a revolutionary who is active in the freedom struggle. Ambika is a strong supporter of the Swadeshi Movement. There is an intellectual relationship developing between Subala and Ambika. Prabodh becomes restless at home. He is, in fact, jealous of Subarna. He is certain that she would come close to Ambika.

5.5.6 Sixteen

Subarna begins to see new things. Phuleshwari, Subala's mother-in-law is embroidering a pattern (a "kantha") of the baby Krishna and his mother Yashoda. When Subarna asks her why she weaves the pattern, she is told that it

is meant for her great-grandchild. Subarna is struck by the love Subala gets from her mother-in-law. Subarna also joins in the domestic chores like cooking. When Subarna asks Phuleshwari about her pastime of embroidery she complains the threads are not easy to get. The Swadeshi Movement outside the house, and Ambika the freedom fighter inside the house have made it impossible to use the English threads. She asks Subarna if she has any thread. Subarna goes into the room, she tears her saree and gives the threads to Phuleshwari. At home, the sons are alone. They feel let down without their mother, without their wives and even without the servant-maid, Haridasi. They are annoyed and find it a bitter struggle. They are saved by the arrival of Jogu, their cousin, who cooks for them. Jogu asks why they had allowed their mother to go. The sons feel ashamed and admit the selfishness of Muktokeshi. She has fled the place fearing death. Prabodh suddenly thinks about Subarna. He fears that she may have already taken a liking for Ambika. He decides to bring her back. For this reason, he decides to visit her without giving any notice of his coming. He wants to spy on her.

Check Your Progress Questions

5. Haridasi is the ____ in the house.
6. Which movement goes on at that time?

5.5.7 Seventeen

"Subarnalata was blissfully unaware of her husband's feelings. She was spending her days in a different world — a world she had often dreamt of, she didn't know could actually exist. In this world people laughed and joked and worked in harmony. No one tried to subdue or oppress. No one was under any pressure to prove their might." Subarna compares herself with Subala. The difference is much. She even felt jealous of Subala. Subarna has a long and ongoing conversation with Ambika about the freedom movement. She also expresses her desire to join the movement. But all the fire goes out when Ambika reminds her of her family, her husband and the domestic commitments. However, Ambika advises her to engage herself in the educating of other women. That would, indeed, be a great contribution. Ambika also expresses his admiration for Subarna. They discuss Subarna's mother who instilled a sense of dignity and independence in Subarna. Subarna also takes an interest in Ambika's poetry. Amulya and Subala become anxious and a little

uneasy to see the closeness between Subarna and Ambika. They fear the scandal that this relationship would create in the village.

5.5.8 Eighteen

Subarna's children: Kanu, Bhamu, Chandan, Parul and Khoka feel the place to be heaven. They taste "complete freedom for the first time in their lives. There was no uncle or aunt or grandmother here to scold, yell and punish." Subarna also joins them. She, then, asks Kanu to take her to Ambika's place. Kanu accompanies her. Ambika is surprised and a little embarrassed to meet Subarna in his house. It is in a state of disorder but the huge stock of books in the house thrills Subarna. She requests him to read his poetry. She is overwhelmed with joy to listen to his poems because they are not only about the freedom of the country but also about the freedom of women which Subarna so thirsts. It is at that time, that Prabodh enters the room. He is angry with both Subarna and Ambika. He calls his wife "immoral." He does not spare Ambika too. Subarna is hurt and pained to witness the scene. She feels terribly humiliated.

5.5.9 Nineteen

The children are unhappy to return home. Subarna is still hurt. Amulya and Subala are unable to persuade Prabodh to stay. He is stubborn. The bullock cart arrives and they leave in that. Amulya puts a bundle in the cart. He asks Prabodh to keep it till he takes) it away later. The bundle, actually, contains the magazines and journals and books and the poems of Ambika. He had bundled them so that Subarna could read. Prabodh is shocked when he reaches home. Everybody brings back his wife and children. Muktokeshi also returns with her daughter. Prabodh is unable to make up with Subarna. He tries to placate her by and eggs. She firmly refuses. When Prabodh leaves, she opens the bundle to find the poems of Ambika. She is moved to tears. She asks: "Oh God, . . . how many times must I be hurt and humiliated before you are done with me? Did I really do anything to deserve this?"

5.5. 10 Twenty

Subarna gives birth to her seventh child. Everyone is not happy. The child is not in good health. So Subarna attends to it. She is unable to come out and attend to the domestic chores of that big household. Her sisters-in-law, Giribala and Bindu insist thAt Subarna comes out and cooks that day. They even complain to Prabodh. Prabodh is angry because he has to leave his game of cards. He tries to raise his voice with Subarna. But when Subarna stubbornly

refuses he leaves. Then, Umasashi does her share of the work. Muktokeshi is angry that Subarna does not come to the kitchen. When she is about to make a scene Jogu appears with a servant. When Muktokeshi tries to send the servant away, Subarna steps in to declare firmly that the cook was necessary and that it was her decision to engage the cook. For the first time Muktokeshi's authority is challenged in that house.

5.5.11 Twenty One

It is the time of the double-wedding in the house. Subarna's daughter Champa and Umasashi's daughter, Mallika are getting married. Shyamasundari is invited for the discussion. On that day, an incident takes place in the house. Subarna is seen beating Giribala's son. She rains blows on the boy. When they enquire it is learnt that the children were playing. Giribala's son dresses as a British police officer. He then beats another child who plays a swadeshi. This is the reason for the anger of Subarna. She becomes livid with patriotic rage. The women of the house, in their fear of Subarna, even consider reporting the matter to the police. They decide against it because of the marriages that are to take place. Subala is unable to come to the weddings from Chapta. Two tragedies also take place. One is the death of Phuleshwari. The other is the arrest of Ambika. In this manner Muktokeshi's household pulls along. The saga of the sufferings of Subarna continues.

5.7 ANALYSIS OF THE NOVEL

Ashapura Debi is a much acclaimed writer. *Subarnalata* depicts the pain of an imprisoned soul. Women are presented as victims and victimizers, sisterhood, woman's identity, self-expression and silence. It is in 12 parts. It comprises of 58 chapters totally. While translating, the novel is abridged into 41 chapters totally. Debi has shown the family as the setting in her novels. Rebellion and passion within the family is the setting of her novels. There are convulsions to disturb the peace and harmony. Finally the old order is restored to the family.

Subarnalata begins her life in the household of Muktokeshi. She is the woman of strength, virtue, courage and confidence. She has concern for others. Muktokeshi is a widow with four sons and four daughters. Subhodh, Prabodh, Prabash and Prakash are the sons. Susheela, Suraj, Subala and Biraj are her daughters. She wishes to explore the truth of life. Subarnalata begins her quest for self. She aims to get rational pleasure in her life. Her definition of life arouses curiosity in Muktokeshi. Her search for her selfhood is in sharp

contrast to old values of traditional society. But she gradually influences all the members of the family.

Subodh and Prabodh build one house with their earnings. Subarna wishes to have one verandah and staircase to the terrace so that she can enjoy admire and enjoy the outer world. But she is allotted only the dark room. But she does not regret it. Her nobility is highly adorable. Her conversation with her husband as follows:

“Why are you so stupid, Mejo Bau? Why did you have to take this room?”

Subarna replied, “Does it matter?” someone had to!” He was rendered speechless.”

She convincingly says that the room had a window to roadside. Though that window, she can borrow books from her relative Dula. Her wide reading strengthens her character. She is a voracious reader.

Subarnalata is truthful and impartial. There is no selfishness in her character. She reduces her family expense so that Muktoskeshi can go for tour. She is forced to send letter to her father Nobokumar. She opposes the baseness of her father and brother. Nobokumar misunderstands her as it is his nature to be so. They think that she is a burden to them. They meet her after five years in sorrow. She is hardened by the inhuman world. She respects her father. In his last moment, he prays for her forgiveness. Her action shows that she does not forgive him. After his death, she refuses to observe his shradha, as he did not deserve it. But she respects her matron when she becomes ill or dies.

Subarnalata ignores the age-old beliefs, rites and rituals of praying for good health and wealth to husband. When Subarna is invited by Giribal, she refuses to go. The dead motehr’s letter to her is the suitable document to be called the modern feminist document, demanding gender-equality. Subarnalata unfolds the letter and reads the following lines:

My dear Subarna,

A sheet of water began cascading down her cheeks. Subarna tried to read the blurred words through it, making no attempt to wipe her tears.

My dear Subarna,

You must feel the same surprise as one would feel to see a person rise from his grave and hear him speak. And you must think. "What is the purpose of all this? Was this really necessary?"

I, too, have often thought the same thing, ever since the day I left you to your fate. I have thought of writing to you almost everyday, and then wondered what purpose it might serve. Now, I know why I hesitated. It was shame that held me back. I am thoroughly and utterly ashamed of my conduct. What I did to you does not merit forgiveness.

I have almost reached the end of my life. Truth stares me in the face, and tells me how wrong I was.

....

Having met women from various classes and strata of society here in Varanasi, and having talked to them. I have come to one conclusion. If a woman can stay on in her home, and yet attain fulfillment, that is what counts. There is no need to leave the confines of home to achieve one's goal. I know it is not easy. To find a path where no one has walked before, to swim against a powerful current, to speak when no one dares open his mouth calls indomitable courage. How many of us have it? One is also bound by ties of love, in one's supreme role as mother. Most men are aware of this, and do not hesitate to take advantage of this weakness.

Yet something tells me one day this great gulf between the sexes will close. The battle will be over, and the entire race of womankind will be free. All I hope for is that the women of future generations, who are born without shackles, in a world full of light and joy, will spare a thought for the women of today, who are striving and fighting to come out of darkness. May their sacrifice never be forgotten. May their struggle never be belittled.

After reading her mother's documents, she writes her story depicts heroic life. On reading the first page of her story, her children laugh at its mistakes and her feminine pain. So she burnt it without a trace of it. As she is

living in a male-dominated world, she becomes ill. She does not consult doctor also. She utters 'Forgive' in her last breathing. Does that mean she forgives others or is she asking for forgiveness for creating trouble for her husband? Ashapurana Debi's concern for society is exhibited in this novel.

5.8 Summation

Subarnalata is the protagonist of the Ashapurana Debi's first novel *Subarnalata*. She is the focal point of our attention from the beginning till the end of the novel. It deals with the story of Subarnalata Devi. She has created history by revolutionizing silently in the man-woman relationship. Her action, thinking, words reflect her concern for the society. There are abundant comic scenes interspersed in the novel.

5.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

QUESTIONS:

1. playing cards
2. Dulo
3. Jogu
4. Mrs. Basak, the neighbor
5. maid servant
6. The Swadeshi Movement

5.10 ANSWER EACH OF THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS IN TWO SENTENCES:

1. Why does Jogu lock Shyamasundari in the kitchen?
2. What is the punishment given to Subarnalata going out with her children for attending puja, against the order of Muktakeshi?
3. Why did Prabodh decide to visit Subarna, without giving notice, when she stays with Ambika?
4. Why was Ambika arrested?
5. Why does Prabodh call his wife 'immoral' when he meets her at Chapta?
6. What does the bundle that Ambika give Subarna contain? What is her reaction she unbundle it?

5.11 ANSWER THE FOLLOWING IN A PARAGRAPH EACH:

1. What are the promises that Prabodh wants on his part from Subarnalata?
2. Why did Subarna feel happy at Chaptta?
3. Bring out the character of Ambika.

5.12 Answer the following questions in an essay each:

1. Assess the character of Prabodh.
2. Subarnalata's humiliation and oppression as portrayed in *Subarnalata*.
3. Justify the title of the novel *Subarnalata*.

5.13 For Further Reading

Debi, Ashapura. 1997. *Subarnalata*. Chennai: Macmillan.

Sen, Nobanetta Dev. 1997. "Introduction." to Ashapura Debi's *Subarnalata*. Chennai: Macmillan.

UNIT VI COCOON -*Balachandra Nemade*

COCOON -Balachandra
Nemade

Structure

Notes

- 6.1 Introduction
- 6.2 Unit Objectives
- 6.3 Introduction to Author
- 6.4 A Note on the novel
- 6.5 Summary of the novel
- 6.6 Topics that Pandurang touches in the narrative
- 6.7 Alienation and Quest for Identity
- 6.8 Summation
- 6.9 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions
- 6.10 Answer each of the following questions in Two sentences
- 6.11 Answer the following in a paragraph each
- 6.12 Answer the following questions in an essay each
- 6.13 For Further Read

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Bhalchandra Vanaji Nemade occupied a significant place in Bombay literary life in the 1960s and is at the center of the Marathi canon today. His novel, *Kosla* was titled *Cocoon* by Sudhakar Marathe who translated the novel into English. This novel is a landmark in Marathi fiction. It is a fictitious autobiographical novel of one Pandurang Sangvikar, a youth from rural Maharashtra who studies in a college in Pune.

6.2 UNIT OBJECTIVES

- To make the learners understand Nemade's contribution to Marathi literature
- To make them assess the theme of the novel

- Pandurang's values of life as depicted in *Cocoon*

Notes

6.3 INTRODUCTION TO AUTHOR

Bhalchandra Vanaji Nemade was born in 1938. He is a Marathi writer, poet, critic and novelist. He has brought a new dimension to the world of Marathi literature. He has received Sahitya Akademi Award and Jnanapith Award, the highest literary honour in India. He was awarded the Padma Shri also.

6.4 A NOTE ON THE NOVEL

Bhalchandra Nemade is the author of six novels, ranging from *Kosla* (1963) to *Hindu* (2010). He has also published two collections of poetry and several substantial books of criticism. He occupied a significant place in Bombay literary life in the 1960s and is at the center of the Marathi canon today. His novel, *Kosla* was titled *Cocoon* by Sudhakar Marathe who translated the novel into English. This novel is a landmark in Marathi fiction. It is a fictitious autobiographical novel of one Pandurang Sangvikar, a youth from rural Maharashtra who studies in a college in Pune. It is based on Nemade's own life in his youth. It made departures from the romantic day-dreams, pseudo-idealism, the linear narrative modes, the crude reader-oriented notions of heroism and artifice that were the qualities of Marathi fiction.

It was Bhalchandra Nemade who broke out of the formalism and modernism of the 50's and 60's with *Kosla*. His novel is a strong response and a reaction to the crisis of cultural consciousness of Maharashtra. The novel opened up new narrative possibilities of form and meaning and thus changed the direction of both literary taste and fictional tradition in Maharashtra. The novel *Cocoon* or *Kosla* does not have a plot or story in the traditional sense. It is best described as a narrative without a story or plot. It is dedicated to the "ninety-nine out of hundred." It unfolds using the First Person narrative mode. It covers the life of the central character, Pandurang Sangvikar, who is twenty-five years old.

The narrative is divided into six parts. The first part deals with the childhood of Pandurang and his school education in Sanvi, a village in the Khandesh region of Maharashtra. The second describes the first two years of Pandurang's college life in Pune. The third part is a succession of events that cover about two years of his undergraduate life. The fourth part shows that the educational life of Pandurang turns out to be a failure. He has to repeat his examination. The last two parts deal with Pandurang's life in the village after

Check Your Progress Questions

1. In which language, the novel *Cocoon* has been written originally?
2. It is an autobiographical work about _____.

he returns from Pune. The six sections capture with an accuracy of detail the life of Pandurang in the village. This attention to detail is paid to show the contrast in the experiences of the central character in the city and, later, in the village.

Though the novel does not have a regular plot, it does have a structure. The structuring principle of the novel is based on the passage of historical time. The historical time moves from the tradition-based life in rural Maharashtra before Independence to the modernity of the post-Independence period. Without a story the novel appears to be a loose record of events and incidents that form the experience of Pandurang.

6.5 SUMMARY OF THE NOVEL

The episodic narrative presents a retrospective life story of the un-hero-like hero, Pandurang. Pandurang is so described because his actions, his character and his motivations do not have any bearing on the movement or structure or organization of the novel. All one gets by way of biographical information about Pandurang is that he is the son of a well-to-do farmer, he spends his life in the village of Sangvi till his high school. He does not seem very happy with his life in the village. His memories of the village are melancholia and heavy. We come to know that his father was an authoritarian person.

Pandurang suffered at the hands of his father. He is the victim of patriarchal authority. This makes him seek emotional compensation with his mother and sister, Mani. He is greatly attached to his mother. His mother and sister were his emotional anchors. He does not get from them all the comfort against patriarchal power, the hypocrisy, the false notions of respectability. He sees all around him fraud, sham and fakery. Nothing around him, is genuine, sincere and consistent except the blue sky above. He goes to Pune to do his collegiate education. He expects that would be easier to bear. But he finds to

his utter dismay that the city has its own devilish ways of oppressing the individual. So his life in the city is better described as traumatic. He is unable to rise up to or satisfy the middle-class ideals and morality which pervade the life in the college.

At first, he makes an effort to conform to the standards set by others. He participates in a number of activities. Then he realizes the hollowness in this kind of play-acting and shamming. He even finds his teachers hollow and empty. So he spends his time in diversions. He goes with his friends on wild-wanderings and hill-climbing expeditions. He works as the Secretary of the Hostel Mess hoping to be of some use to others. But this noble venture backfires. He finds himself cheated and he gets caught in an embarrassing financial crisis. This train of mental agonies goes on lengthening.

Of all the happenings the most painful one for Pandurang was the moment when he receives the news that his dear sister Mani has passed away. After this incident he visits the caves at Ajantha and Ellora. He finds that the sense of death and meaninglessness only increases and does not decrease. After a second attempt at his BA examination, Pandurang decides to get away from the city of Pune. He returns to his village. He is not optimistic about any comfort being offered by the village. He was, earlier, disappointed by his village. However, he develops a close friendship with Giridhar. His relationship with Giridhar is the only hope and source of comfort for Pandurang.

Check Your Progress Questions

3. Pandurang Sangvikar is a victim of _____.
4. Who were Pandurang Sanvikar's emotional anchors in his childhood?

Giridhar is an ideal and genuine human being. But Pandurang understands that Giridhar is too good for him. He realizes that how much so ever he tries he would not be able to match the idealism of Giridhar. When he looks around him he finds that the world has remained unchanged. The same meaninglessness, the same hypocrisy, the same insincerity, the same hopelessness remains. It is in this condition that Pandurang decides to adopt a philosophy for his life. It is a philosophy of acceptance and affirmation. But his philosophy of acceptance is based not on the positive aspects of life. It is a

choice made in the spirit of black humour. He decides to accept everything in life that is essentially negative. The novel comes to an end at this point.

To actually understand the novel one has to have an idea of how the events are organized. Then one understands that even with a number of incidents, events, characters, there is no connected narrative for the reader. The novel opens with a tone of friendliness. It opens and continues to move in the First Person. The central character introduces himself: "Me, Pandurang Sangvikar. Today, for instance, I am twenty-five years old." Then he suddenly appears to get serious and says, "Honestly, there's only this thing, worth telling you." But for the next three-hundred pages Pandurang Sangvikar does not say anything in particular.

Pandurang keeps rambling from topic to topic, situation to situation, reflection to reflection, and regret to regret. He talks about his family background, his inability to do well in exams, the people he met and did not like well, the chances in life, the inability to grow are all the things he line up in the narrative. He narrates them one after the other, without any strict order or logic, in the manner of a grand confession. From time to time he breaks the narrative to warn himself that he must not confess much. "Beyond this I will not speak of any private matter about my home. For one, a person who tells such things usually happens to be a fool, and the listener is usually, for instance — a crook." But after that he lapses into a long confession which he leaves off without closing or apologizing for doing so. Pandurang tricks the reader into expecting some very important information when he declares, "Now, for instance, an introduction to myself" But after talking about the way he slept as a child, or the dreams he would see he breaks the conversation.

Pandurang also simply escapes the hold of the reader at the end of a narration with, "whether it was real or part of a dream, I don't remember exactly." The novel moves on like this till the weight of doubts and confusions take the shape of questions in the mind of Pandurang. He finds that others have managed to lead normal lives because they did not trouble themselves by looking around for meaning. He says:

For my sake many terrific things have already taken place in this world. Because of that things became smooth. Precisely. Whoever invented Law and Order? Moreover, for whom? Who is chiefly responsible for the invention of language? At least, for Whose sake? Who devised, somehow or other, this thing we

call 'home'? Everywhere else too, who set up the custom of marriage? More or less for whom?"

Notes

With this kind of structure, the reader will be disappointed if he/she expects a connected story. The loose structure of this narrative suggests the state of mind of Pandurang. It also suggests the state of the world in which he is located. He doesn't find any connection between one event and another, one experience and another, one relation and another. He just picks one isolated event, or experience or relation, comments about it and leaves it at that. So Pandurang is not a participant-character. He is a commentator-character who is mentally removed from the life he is describing. This makes him an alienated, rootless person who suffers a philosophical estrangement from life.

Check Your Progress Questions

5. In which tone, *Cocoon* opens?
6. What does the loose structure of the narrative reflect in *Cocoon*?
7. Pandurang is not a participant – character, but a _____

The reader observes that Pandurang makes honest and sincere attempts to establish contact with the village, with the city, with people. So he is not a person who is an escapist. But when he decides to get away from the hollowness of life by accepting all the harsher realities, he is behaving like a sage doing penance. His sense of alienation does not make him bitter about life. It only makes him more sober and guarded in his approach to life. This is in contrast to the earlier life of sentimentality and enthusiasm which he showed in living.

6.6 TOPICS THAT PANDURANG TOUCHES IN THE NARRATIVE

- His prosperous family background
- His father's authoritarian nature and greed for money.
- His attachment to his mother.
- Rats and the plague they caused which killed his grandpa and two aunts and one uncle.

- The exams at Nasik.
- Life in Poona where he spent six years.
- Life in the college – First day.
- Taking charge of the hostel room.
- Making friends with Suresh Bhatpat.
- Thinking about his house – in a sentimental mood.
- Tambe who wrote letters to his mother in verse and who aspired to win the Nobel Prize.
- Tambe who put Vivekananda’s words on the wall: “Awake, Arise and Stop Not Till the goal is reached!”
- Another friend, Madhukar Deshmukh who wanted to study arts but took science on his father’s insistence.
- Mausi begins to sulk so the frequency of visiting her becomes less.
- He calls his mother’s letters “calamity” for then he would sit down and write long replies.
- Life in the College and in Poona with some “Genuine Poona chaps” like Rege, Jog and Chavan who were back-benchers and fun-loving fellows.
- The picture of the “naked woman” in Suresh’s room
- The tricks played by Ichalkaranjekar who wrote “shirt, trousers, even shoes all in sparkling white.”
- The trick played on Ichalkaranjekar by Chakrapani.
- The friends teasing Pradhan.
- The relations with senior students who were bookworms.
- Getting along with girls in the company of Suresh.
- Learning to swim from Suresh.

- Encounter with a teacher who turns out to be ill-read.
- Room next to Ichalkaranjekar and its impact on his life.
- Rape of a girl by Rama: an incident recollected from childhood.
- Ichalkaranjekar's escapades with girls.
- Pandurang's efforts to learn public-speaking.
- His notes on the Sanskrit and Marathi professors.
- Arranging talks, variety programmes, inviting speakers and such campus activities.
- The occasional "brooding over home or the future."
- Entertaining two girls in his room when he was not properly dressed.
- Keeping the accounts of the hostel – mess.
- Showing the accounts to Dr.Paranjape and then to Keskar.
- The financial mess that Pandurang finds himself in.
- Decides never to take up such responsibilities.
- Not being prepared for the exam.
- Friendship with Joshi.
- The torture of sitting for the exams.
- The decision to commit suicide.
- Deciding against suicide.
- Going home.
- Travelling to Poona by passenger train.
- Choosing History on the insistence of his Nana.
- Friendship with Patil.
- Friendship with a rich classmate, Mehta.

- Reading E.M.Forster and D.H.Lawrence on the advice of Mehta.
- Verma, the brightest boy in the history class.
- The cat that had drunk up the milk yet again, the third day in a row.
- Finding History unmanageable, chooses Marathi and English.
- Spending money-less days listening to the stories of valour of the body-builder type of student from Satara called Kalya.
- A terrible dream of the hideous magician who cast a spell on everything twisting things out of shape.
- Koddam gets “some scholarship because of his caste.”
- Unable to go home for Diwali holidays he decides to read.
- The friends eat up the Diwali sweets brought from Sangvi.
- Mahadevan, a “gentlemanly chap.”
- About his hostel mate, Subash and his mental illness.
- Death of sister Mani (also called Manutai) at the age of five.
- The way the four sisters are treated at home.
- More about Mani and the reasons for her death.
- Father decides to demolish the house and build a new one on that site.
- A visit to the caves at Ajanta.
- The house is getting constructed.
- Life in the village is becoming more and more suffocating.
- Mountain climbing and trekking in places like Karli caves, Vetal temple, in the company of Suresh and Pandya.
- Cultivating the friendship of Professor Gune who had praise for his performance in the exams.

- Comes to know from Gune about Aristotle's *Poetics* and the classics in Marathi literature.
- Relationship with Dr.Gune breaks when Pandurang finds him a petty man with shallow mind.
- Meetings with Rami, the studious girl.
- Spending time in the library.
- Quarrel with Suresh, feels isolated.
- Conversations with a friend, Khanolkar.
- Reflections on the village, home and the climate.
- Last meeting with Rami.
- Back in the village finds a change in his father.
- Writes a diary from July 1 to April 25 of the following year.
- Via Sangvi comes to Mumbai.
- Wandering in Mumbai.
- Meeting with Mother's cousin.
- Beginning to understand the importance of money.
- Has to be under medical care for one year.
- Meets a new friend, Pai.
- The friendly meeting with the young woman Bundi and listening to her tales.
- The new hobby of insulting old friends when he meets them.
- Fed up studying for repeating the exams.
- This time manages the exams well.
- Nali, the youngest sister is put in school.
- Brief accounts of the other sisters: Jai, Mani and Sumi.

- Sending their peanuts for shelling to the mill of a Marwadi.
- The village disputes in which his father was called to arbitrate.
- About the open spaces in the village.
- Some stories about buffalo bulls told by Popat.
- About a mad-man who had been named “Jaihind.”
- The co-operative bank in his taluka.
- On the men and women in his village.
- Meeting with Giridhar – the idealist.
- Brief note about Tapiram, the leper.
- The conversations, arguments, discussions with Giridhar.
- End of the affair with Giridhar.

6.7 ALIENATION AND QUEST FOR IDENTITY

Indian novelists in English used the genre novel to explore the human situation. They reflect on the question whether the inner life of man is the same as the outward appearance. Men feel that they become stranger in their own lives. The man cries due to his loss of identity and roots. They become victims as they are caught up between illusion and reality. Man’s personality is decided by the influence of forces from outside. He fails to say what he feels. He leads his life as he sees his own life. He dreams life as it should be. Man, in the manifolded relationship with others, with the universe and with his own self, he sees himself.

With Joyce, Sartre, Camus, Nathaniel West, the problematic world of crisis gets its reflection in the writing. The contemporary writing is dominated by the concept of alienation. It shows how the individual faces estrangement in the social condition. Their estrangement is evident in their socio-psychological condition. The concept of alienation is pervasive in the modern novel. In the 1960s only, this concept entered Indo-Anglian novel. In many novels, themes like purposelessness of life, isolation, despair, deep anguish are dealt.

The human predicament is discussed by many Indian writers. Kamala Markandaya, Dilip Hiro, Anita Desai have portrayed human predicament in

their works. They project how the human relations do not have place in this world.

Notes

6.8 KOSLA: A STUDY IN ALIENATION

Kosla (Cocoon) is the first novel written by Bhalchandra Nemade in Marathi. Sudhakar Marathe translated it into English under the title 'Cocoon' in the year 1997. It raises the storm of reactions in the literary circle of Maharashtra. Critics expressed diametrically opposite views in the novel. It is considered to be a trendsetting work. It narrates the growth of anti-hero. It is about his failure to grow in the cultured society.

Nemade's *Cocoon* shook the foundation of Marathi literature with its theme, tone, and technique. It does not contain the hero in the established term. This novel has the un-heroic hero. He framed new words and sentence structures. He gives new meanings to the old words and terms. With him, a separate stream called Nemedist writing emerged. In such a way, he has influenced the scenario of Marathi literature in the last forty years. *Kosla* is the beginning of that influence. Chandrashekhhar Jahagirdar says, "It was only *Kosla*, which responding as it did to a crisis in the cultural consciousness of Maharashtra that opened up new, native possibilities of form and meaning and thus sought to change the direction of both literary taste and fictional tradition."

Before the publication of *Kosla*, Marathi literature had the following feature: the presentation of typical middle-class Brahmin family to educate and entertain the readers. Its main intention is to glorify the cultural past. It criticizes the social customs like Sati, child marriages and so on. It is nostalgic in its character. With historical and mythological characters only, most of the works of art were written. Neo-literates are getting attracted by the romantic love stories with melodramatic love stories. Intertextuality is the most important concern for them, than interfacing literature and life.

By taking new theme, technique, language and style, Nemade has attacked the very foundation of Marathi literature. It does not glorify the hero. It has unheroic-hero. By employing new words, phrases, the author sets up a new pattern. Even the old words carry new meanings. It does not have the plot. It is episodic. It holds many events, memories and numerous characters. Sudhakar Marathe says, "It has a plot without a plotline and character without precedent."

Pandurang is a young boy from Sangavi, which is the name of the village in the district called Jalgaon in North Maharashtra. He is admitted in the college named Fergusson College in Pune. He is very enthusiastic initially but gradually he feels disenchanted from the first day onwards. He feels that people he has come across has two faces – one public, another one private. Everybody has two faces: his uncle, aunt in Pune, the hostel rector and his friends. To the public eye, they appear to be simple, honest and very concerned. But in the deeper self, they are cunning, malignant and has ever-ending ego.

Pandurang feels distressed by the behavior of his professors outside the classroom which is exclusively in contrast with their behavior in the classroom. Outwardly, they have learned faces, but inwardly their selves are hollow. He feels disturbed by the hypocritical nature of his relatives and friends. Then he develops the habit of distancing himself from such hypocrites.

Pandurang decides to relate himself to the life and so he actively took part in college activities. He takes the role of mess secretary. He distanced himself from the elders, by associating himself with the peer group. He decides to regain his relationship with them. But it has disastrous consequences. He is accused of stealing the funds. His reputation is spoiled and he faces financial crisis. He expected that his friends will assist and support him, at this time. But they too disappoint him.

Pandurang is forced to return to his own village as he has failed in the final examinations three times. He shuts himself into a cocoon. The villagers also do not allow their boys to mingle with him. People talk ill of him as he has faced many misfortunes and failures in his life. The end of the novel has the following lines: “Each one’s fortune years without fail remain before one. These et cetera, cannot be acquired. So the question of losing them is not really for instance valid.”

The term ‘alienation’ refers to man’s alienation from his metaphysical purpose of existence. Human existence is characterized by the sense of alienation and aloofness. *Cocoon* depicts Indian version of alienation. Gangadhar Pati criticizes saying, “*Kosla* was the first novel of its kind to bring the theme of alienation in Marathi Literature.” The theme of the novel is that Pandurang wishes to lead an authentic life but he is denied of that. He feels alienated as his vision of life is totally different from the actual life around him. Accompanying his uncle, he leaves his village to continue his studies in Pune.

Pandurang's uncle is admired by everyone in the village for his flawless character. But in the city, he smokes cigarettes throughout the night. This shock shakes him. His uncle and aunt in Pune advise him to study and live up to the expectations and wishes of his father. He is asked to choose History, as it is an easy subject. With minimum effort, he has get maximum opportunities. Due to the dual nature of people, he gets separated from them which becomes inevitable.

Pandurang feels that his own father lacks certain human characteristics. He is shocked at his father's continuity of his construction of his own even when his own daughter faces untimely death. The only reason for the construction of the house at the time of his daughter's death is that he has already paid the masons their wages. He is fed up with his family's practical attitude towards life, during the marriage ceremony. The marriage ceremony takes place immediately after Mani's sudden death: "At the time of this wedding everyone in the family was rejoicing jubilantly. Even mother. When I heard moher laughing away loudly, I would feel like asking her - And what of Mani's death?"

To provide good quality of food, Pandurang becomes in charge of mess secretary. For some months, everything goes quite perfectly. As his examinations are approaching, he decides to focus on his studies. So he hands over the money to Vaidya, the hostel mate and the cook Ramappa. But they steal the money. Because of their embezzlement of the funds, he decides to borrow additional money from his father. His father shouts at him for depleting family money. He says, "...my daddy has purchased me - he can no longer be father. He is my owner."

Pandurang's vision of life undergoes a change because of the rude shock he has received. He was cut off from his father, relatives, professors and friends. Mani's death makes him understand the philosophy of life and death. He wishes to commit suicide. He decides to lead a life of celibacy. He returns to his college after his failure in the examinations thrice and turns himself into a cocoon.

The novel begins with Pandurang departing from the village and ends with Pandurang's re-entry into the village. There is a transformation in his character. In the beginning of the novel, he is a man with buoyant youth. He becomes a self-alienated being in the end of the novel.

Nemade's interpretation of alienation theory finds expression in the native context. His visit to the Buddha images at Ajantha caves and his diary

throw light on alienation concept of Nemade. Buddha's preachings are in sharp contrast with the reality of life. He compares his own sorrow with the sorrow of Buddha. "Before this image. On its face a suffering beyond measure- indeed, immeasurable. This suffering at once expansive and infinitesimal cannot be grasped between one's fingertips. It is a sorrow that whirls round and round. Even to drink sorrow one needs to cup palms of sorrow. It is possible to measure this desert – vast sorrow by my cowrie-sized sorrow. Mine are circumscribed little woes."

Cocoon symbolizes voluntary preparation for one's temporary shelter. It is to protect one's self from the hypocritical society. The reason for his alienation is his love for life. He wishes to lead genuine life. He wishes to be true to his self. His self is disintegrated due to his integrated self.

6.8 SUMMATION

Cocoon or *Kosla* deals with the psychological, sociological and historical dimensions of Maharashtra. It suggests the impact British colonial rule had in the socio-historical orientation of Indian Society. It exposes the tragic change in the mentality of the Maharashtrian middle class which was, originally, a product of the British rule in India.

6.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS:

1. Marathi
2. Pandurang Sangvikar
3. patriarchal authority
4. mother and sister
5. friendly tone
6. Pandurang's state of mind
7. commentator -character

6.10 ANSWER EACH OF THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS IN TWO SENTENCES:

1. What makes Pandurang decide to adopt his philosophy of life?

2. How does others manage to lead life without meaning in life, in the view of Nemade?

3. Why does Pandurang leave his village?

6.11 ANSWER THE FOLLOWING IN A PARAGRAPH EACH:

1. What makes Pandurang lead a cocooned life?

2. Examine the character of Pandurang as mess Secretary.

3. How does the dual nature of the college professors, relatives, and friends affect Pandurang?

6.12 ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS IN AN ESSAY EACH:

1. *Cocoon* is a study of alienation. Substantiate.

6.13 FOR FURTHER READING

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*COCOON -Balachandra
Nemade*

Notes

UNIT VII UNARMED -*Rajee Seth*

Notes

Structure

- 7.1 Introduction
- 7.2 Unit Objectives
- 7.3 Introduction to Author
- 7.4 A Note on the novel
- 7.5 Summary of the novel
- 7.6 Analysis of the novel
- 7.7 Summation
- 7.8 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions:
- 7.9 Answer each of the following questions in Two sentences
- 7.10 Answer the following in a paragraph each
- 7.11 Answer the following questions in an essay each
- 7.12 For Further Reading

7.1 INTRODUCTION

Rajee Seth is an eminent writer in Hindi Literature. Her work has been widely translated. She has unveiled the turbulence that simmers beneath still facades. She has crafted her work expertly to expose deep insights of the human condition. Her novel 'Nishkavach' has been translated into English as *Unarmed*. In this novel, even when she has used male protagonists, woman becomes the focal point. It is to show that women even though in the background, gets victory in their individual struggle. She has pointed out, how women can find loopholes in the patriarchal structured society. The title of this novel 'Nishkavach' means 'without protective armour'. It means that women are armed with tradition, whereas men are unarmed. So in the changing way of life, women can survive in both traditional and modern society.

7.2 UNIT OBJECTIVES

- Appreciating the craftsmanship of Rajee Seth
- Assessing deep insight of human condition as conveyed in the novel

Notes

7.3 INTRODUCTION TO AUTHOR

Rajee Seth was born in the year 1935. She is a shortstory writer, novelist and a poet. She has won several awards for her contributions to Hindi literature. Even in the translated work, the author's strong presence can be felt, cutting across the translation. The author is present throughout her work with her reflexive voice. She is the author of eight collections of short fiction and two novels, *Tatsum* and *Nishkavach*, which was translated into English as *Unarmed*. Besides fiction, she has written poetry, critiques, and essays. She has won many awards, including the Hindi Academy Samman, Anant Kumar Shevade Award and the Bhartiya Bhasha Parishad Award.

7.4 A NOTE ON THE NOVEL

Unarmed is a Hindi novel by Rajee Seth. It has been translated into English by Raji Narasmihan. It is a novel which deals with the theme of 'schism'. That is, the novel deals with the divided minds of men and women. This theme, is central to the fiction of Rajee Seth. This division is caused by the clash between the ideal mind and the real mind. The characters who are fixed in real-life situations struggle to realize their lives as ideal possibilities. Since, reality is always a stranger force than the ideal, there is a tension in the character between resignation and fortitude. There are two narratives in this novel. Its original title in Hindi reads *Nishkavach*: "without armour". In the first narrative of the short novel, the central character is seen in a meditative mood. He is a person whom "Aloneness does not bother." He says that "Apart from Bhaskar in Allhabad and Basu in Delhi, I have no friends."

Check Your Progress Questions

1. From which language, the novel *Unarmed* has been translated?
2. What is the original title of the Hindi version of 'Unarmed'?
3. What does 'Nishkavach' mean?

7.5 SUMMARY OF THE NOVEL

The narrative opens with the central character seated by his window, taking in the ambience around him: the Shiva temple, the bungalows, the vines, and creepers, the river and so on. He is preparing for competitive exams, "seated bolt upright on... [a] wooden chair, dozing and walking, reading and making notes." And he is also meditating about his sister, Neera. His life has not changed much. But her life has been "fleet-footed .., — a life that has run and leapt, taken in its long jump three whole stages of growth." That is, she has changed from child to mother through a growing woman.

The central character tries to imagine, "what would she be feeling?" But he is unable to understand her feelings completely. She is now married to Raman for a year and a half. And within this period she is in the state of full pregnancy.

The woman, Neera came into the life of the central character abruptly. She was his aunt's daughter. So, in a sense, they are brother and sister. They have grown together since they first met, when the central character was still in his seventh or eighth class. He was unable to understand the treatment he received at the hands of his parents. As their son, he did not enjoy any privileges. But as an adopted child, Neera enjoyed a privileged life. The central character says, "She [Neera] drank the shower of my mother's motherliness upon her with open relish."

After his MA and Law examination when he returns home he finds Neera grown up: "Fleshed, rounded, quick of temper." His mother had told him that "girls matured early and overnight became fit for marriage." He asks her about marriage. She does not seem very enthusiastic about it. Neither does she think it is unnecessary. He then asks her about her mother, who is his aunt. She tells him that her mother is now like a stranger to her. She does not feel any bond with her mother any longer. She finds his mother more affectionate. But then, an aunt is an aunt. When she opens her heart to him, he feels a sense of closeness towards her.

The next piece of information is about Neera's operation. A huge tumour like mass had to be cut off her breast. His mother spoke in an angry tone. She was angry with Neera for thinking like the modern women. This happened because of her refusal to breast-feed the child. Then the central character's thoughts go to the past when they were studying in school. She was a pleasure-loving, book-hating girl. She liked to dress neatly and wear fresh

make-up all the time. Then lie on the bed and stare at the ceiling. He was a book-lover who read extensively.

The reader gets a picture of the central character, as well as that of Neera's. He feels "trapped between the brute reality of examinations and the beckoning of . . . [his] dreams,..[He] lived in the house but not really in it." Neera, on the other hand, "kept herself untied and free-flowing, as though in readiness for a happening, a miraculous happening."

It is in the Fourth Segment of "Narrative One" that the name of the central character is mentioned for the first time: Vishaal. In this section a very interesting character is introduced. His name is Basu. Basu is a character whose personality contrasts starkly with Vishaal's. He is adventurous, spiritual, full of energy and life. He is an extrovert. On the other hand, Vishaal is more bookish, withdrawn and an introvert. Vishaal makes the distinction between Basu and himself: "I was unformed, restless. He [Basu] was fully formed, whole and self-possessed." Vishaal wonders why such a man as Basu would want a soul mate. He thinks of Basu when Neera tells him that instead of reading books, she is going to spend the time playing chess with Basu

Notes

Check Your Progress Questions

4. What is the name of the protagonist?
5. Which subject does Vishaal's father recommend him to study?
6. Vishaal's father is a victim of _____

Vishaal then thinks of his option of History for the IAS examination. It was a choice made at the behest of his father. He is amused that his parents trust Basu more than they trust him. Basu is their mouthpiece. When they want any serious matter to be conveyed to Vishaal, they do so through Basu. The reader also gets to know Basu better. To the question what he really wants to do he replies, "Just what I please. Precisely why I don't allow anyone to enter my space. Just think. All these things — I mean love, home, tenderness, and all the rest of it — how spineless and sissy they make a man." They are at the dinner table. Vishaal, Basu and Vishaal's parents.

Vishaal's father suddenly becomes serious about India's history. He is a victim of the Partition. The pain of that history still rankles in his heart. Vishaal understands this pain. His father says that the enemy is still the British. He says that they have given us political freedom. But with the same stroke

they have left us mental slaves. He is pained to see Indian's of Basu's and Vishaal's generation unable to see that the British are a "civilized enemy." He says, that the "civilized enemy's attacks are also civilized, subtle. It was this historical consciousness and pain that made Vishaal's father insisting on Vishaal choosing History as one of his optional subjects.

Vishaal continues his meditations on Basu. Basu was not studious or disciplined like him. But he had a strong will and could do anything if he but put his mind to it. He took electronics at the IIT. He soon merged with the atmosphere there. Then there is a mention of Basu's passion for Western Music which he played on Vishaal's stereo. Vishaal's father disliked pop music and called it "cultural bastardy." So the songs would be played only in his absence. Basu would tap his feet and then dance to the beat. He would even drag Vishaal during the dances. Vishaal remembers how Neera would also be standing by the wall, enjoying the music, tapping her feet. On one occasion, she comes away from the wall, to the centre of the hall and dances with grace and beauty. This amazes Vishaal Basu and Neera dance in an "exultant togetherness." Vishaal felt "a flood of mutuality was flowing from one to the other, making me [Vishaal] an outsider in my own eyes."

After that incident of Neera dancing with Basu, Vishaal becomes more sensitive to her changes. He finds her "more vivacious than ever. She was flowering outside herself." And he "was the sole witness to this state of hers." He then goes to the market to buy comics and thrillers with a view to giving Neera excitement and joy. But when he, finally, opens the packet, she is pleased but tells him, "I don't like books, I like human beings." Days go by. Vishaal comes to know of the closeness that has developed between Neera and Basu. First, he confronts Neera with, "Don't you know that mother would not like this at all?" Then, Vishaal confronts Basu with "This can't go on." He tells Basu that Neera is "too young" and "without understanding." Basu replies that those words are "exactly what drives her mad."

Check Your Progress Questions

7. Which subject did Basu choose at IIT?
8. To whom does Vishaal advise, so that the concened person can change his / her attitude?

Vishaal is made to realize the sense of importance denied to Neera. He realizes that he has made a futile attempt to protect Neera. Vishaal realizes that a distance was beginning to be created between Basu and himself. He was also beginning to feel the same pain of distance with Neera. He was finding it increasingly difficult to establish lines of communication with either of them. He was not able to recover the state of mind he lost with Basu. He was unable to establish any reasonable state of contact with Neera. He was feeling pulled from two sides: his intentions and his sense of reality. Vishaal is reading by the night-lamp. Neera is in bed. He then draws the chair close to her so that she could be advised. He tries to persuade her that her "semi-vagabond life" would ruin her if she chooses to marry Basu. But all along the conversation "she was putting herself on level with Basu, bonding their different clays." This attitude of hers angers Vishaal. "With love, with fondness and a brother's intimacy" he wanted to set her life straight. She refuses him stubbornly. Vishaal felt at the end of their conversation, "How foolish mother was, trying to give her a home."

When Vishaal's mother comes to know of the developments between Basu and Neera, she asks him to entertain his friend outside their house. It is an unheard of norm in that house. Then Vishaal suggests that they could inform Maasi, (Neera's mother). Vishaal's mother tells him about Maasi's past and about her helplessness. She was a single woman in a small town like Hathras. When she was a pregnant woman, she was robbed by her husband who then deserted her. Ever since, she has had to depend on others. Very slowly she has recovered from her personal tragedies. These days she maintains her sanity by being the headmistress of a junior school. Her husband Pratap reduced her to this state. That was also the reason for the psychological tensions between Neera and her mother.

The matter of Neera's closeness to Basu is still known only to Vishaal and his mother. They do not want Vishaal's father to know about it. He would be severe on Neera. Then Vishaal decides to confront Basu during the class. During the conversation Vishaal is told by Basu: "I know, I know, I understand." Basu goes on to describe Neera's personality. He says, "Look, Vishaal, Neera is very bold. This boldness could be her undoing. I fear it. There is so much she wants. She wants constant attention, constant praise and patting on the back, as though she is not a human being but a package of injuries." When Vishaal tries to reason Basu offers more perceptions about Neera. He says, "she has no faith in anyone ... She wants to test everything herself." It is this attitude which makes even Basu "a participant" in Neera's experiments with life. He understands it.

When Vishaal presses him to marry Neera, he evades the proposition. He refuses to consider the offer. Finally, before parting, Basu gives Vishaal a piece of advice regarding the way Neera has to be handled. He says, "Leave her be Let her find her own depth. If she breaks out on her own she may touch shore." Basu even confesses that he is waiting to get out of Neera's life "without hurting her." After this incident, Basu has a greater freedom in the house. Vishaal feel the bond between Neera and Basu has become stronger. His expects him to that p an end to this shameful show of closeness.

Vishaal is confused. He wants the affair ended. But his weakness to come to terms with the reality is actually enabling the lovers to enjoy a free hand in the household. One day when Vishaal returns from the library he finds his mother anxious and angry. She asks him to fetch some medicines from the druggist. She repents for allowing Neera to remain alone in the house with Basu. Mother also declares that Basu would not come to their house for a long time to come. There is a suggestion that Neera has committed a serious pre-marital misadventure. When Vishaal meets Basu again, he is made to understand the latter's helplessness.

When Basu does not show up for many days, Neera becomes very impatient. She even gets bold enough to ask Vishaal for Basu's hostel address. Then, one day, when Neera and Vishaal were preparing to go to the club for a game of badminton, Basu appears. The emotional change in Neera gives Vishaal an idea of her dangerous passion. He sees in her eyes a liking and a demand that cannot be easily broken. Vishaal also understands that Basu, under the circumstances, cannot but be helpless when caught in the passionate grip of Neera. Then, all on a sudden, Neera receives a marriage proposal. It comes from a prosperous business family of the Chawla's. They are on the lookout for a sophisticated, well-bred and outgoing girl for their son, Raman. They first see her in the club playing badminton. Then they see her at the dance with Basu. The pair out-dances every other pair. And when Mrs.Chawla wants to know if Neera and Basu were in love, Vishaal's mother quickly denies any such idea. She even goes to the extent of glorifying Neera, which quickens the decision of the Chawlas to marry their son to Neera. Mother entrusts Vishaal with the task of preparing Neera to face the Chawlas. She urges him to talk Neera out of her hopeless affair with Basu. After the numerous scenes he has seen between Neera and Basu, he is not optimistic about his success. He manages to make just one attempt at conversation with Neera which, predictably, becomes abortive. He is unable to discuss her marriage with her He is disappointed. But the following day, he is equally surprised at the composure, the grace and tact with which Neera entertains the Chawlas and

their relatives. She is also "sizing up" Raman, the groom-to-be. Vishaal is unable to understand this magical transformation. He suddenly feels sympathetic towards Basu.

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Vishaal is in for a few more surprises. Only a couple of days after the Chawlas' visit, he hears Neera mention "Romi." It is her shortened nickname for Raman Chawla. She is seen dressing, excited about the prospect of going out with Raman. She appears to Vishaal to be suddenly beautiful. She is very healthy, full of passion and eagerness. She asks Vishaal to either send away Basu with some excuses or just tell him the truth about her engagement to Romi. Vishaal is unable to comprehend the speed with which Romi has taken Basu's place in her mind.

Neera returns at twelve o'clock. Romi had taken Vishaal's scooter and promised to return it the following morning. She looked very radiant and full of happiness. Then after she changes into her nightgown, there is a sudden sadness on her face. When Vishaal mentions that her mother's decision too was necessary, Neera dismisses the Idea saying that her mother had washed her hands off her. Then, Neera asks if Basu has come. Vishaal tells her that Basu had come but he could not give him a proper reply. At the end both Neera and Vishaal retire for bed.

Early in the morning, Neera wakes up expecting Romi who was coming to return Vishaal's scooter. He is told by Neera that a man can be understood in two meetings. It is a curious situation for Vishaal. All along he wanted to separate Neera and Basu. But, now, when his mother and Neera herself want him to do that lie finds himself powerless and weak. He then understands the reason. He "could not bear her rank defection and floor-crossing. How then could Basu?"

Vishaal had to tell Basu the news of Neera's marriage. Basu is shattered. He realizes that Neera was avoiding him as if they had never met. He is pained not so much by the fact of the marriage as to what he has lost. He has lost his convictions. He is "destroyed" by Neera. He asks Vishaal, "where would she have got a guinea pig par excellence like me? . . . She wanted to test her own power. I was necessary for the experiment." After some awkward moments they part. That is their last meeting. Then, mother asks Vishaal to send a telegram to Maasi. Neera and Raman have clicked as a couple. The marriage can be formalized. Vishaal goes to Basu's not find hostel to soothe his feelings. However, he does not find him in the hostel. On returning home, he finds that Neera has just returned from a date with Raman.

She has prepared "Kheer" for mother and father. He actually feels sick but when he is offered the kheer by Neera he too melts in the flow of emotions. Vishaal meets Basu for the very last time in the hostel room. He had been wandering the previous night without purpose. His eyes are red with lack of sleep. The ashtray is overflowing with stubs of cigarette. He is lying on the cot staring at the ceiling when Vishaal enters the room. He quickly changes, empties the stubs into the basket to appear cheerful. Actually, Basu is putting up a brave effort to control his feelings. He is fighting to overcome the great devastation caused by Neera. And Vishaal is pained to see his "alter ego" suffering like this.

To Vishaal, Basu is a rock, a strong man. He cannot bear the sight of such a man disintegrating before his eyes. After an emotional exchange of words they take leave of each other. After some time Basu drops out of college. After a lapse of two years Vishaal sees Basu's photo in the Indian Express leading a cycling expedition from Kashmir to Kanyakumari.

Vishaal returns home feeling tired, feeling dizzy and sick. His mother appears worried. He goes and lies down on the cot. After some time Neera comes and stands at the doorway. She knows that he has gone to see Basu. She wants to know what Basu has said. Vishaal is tempted to hurt Neera with words. But what she says shocks him. When Vishaal tells her of Basu's reaction that she is "cruel; selfish; a cheat, that [she] . . . had deceived him, used him, destroyed him," Neera replies calmly: "He will forget. Just as I am forgetting. Fast." Then, she goes away. Vishaal sits up. He "thought she was the oldest of us. She was the far-sighted one. Much, much more mature than the two foolish and hallucinating friends. Well-versed in the arithmetic of this world." This brings the reader to the end of Narrative One of the novel.

In Narrative Two of *Unarmed*, Vishaal is in America. He tries to evaluate his life as an expatriate: He is able to get a distance from home which gives him insights. He is able to see the worth and value of relationships He is even made aware of the burden of relationships. He suffers the weight of his mother's closeness to him. Her letters in broken-English actually make him sick. He wants to be cut off from the pulls of relations and the attendant duties.

Then there is the relationship with his wife Martha. He does not like her. He does not hate her. Yet he finds the relationship a necessary evil to pull on in life. It is much more preferable for Vishaal for being tied to his mother's apron-strings. One can also read about the cross-cultural discourse taking place. When Vishaal leaves the letter to fall on the floor, Martha, during

cleaning says, "This is not India, Mister, where wives slog for husbands the whole day long. Take care of your letters yourself."

We also read about Vishaal's friend, Vaseem. He is to marry Nusrat who is in India. He has not yet seen the girl. So he is thrilled. He exchanged letters with her. He is on cloud nine. One day, she sends him her photo. That shatters his heart. He is terribly disappointed with what he sees. His illusions and dreams about Nusrat are broken.

During this period, Vishaal makes a comparison between life in India and that in America. He sums up his evaluations in the following manner. He says: "It is a difficult thing that our centuries old habit of wrapping ourselves with high fault in talk keeps ugly realities under cover. Here they are frank, accept things openly. Faced with a tight situation, an Indian falters, flounders, and finds himself caught between the wish to say yes, and the vain thrill of saying no. We think one thing, do another. Result, life – long dilemma..."

Vishaal confronts Vaseem with the choice of the Muslim. He says that, if Vaseem can't go on with the relationship, he could say, "Talaq, Talaq, Talaq: Vaseem's response throws light on Vishaal's own dilemma. He says everybody is guilty of "carrying on a secret debate within." Vishaal too is caught in the debate "whether to hange on to Martha or to ditch her." Vishaal reflects on this reaction of Vaseem. He says, "I do not know if Martha is a curse or a blessing to me."

He talks about the dilemma in greater detail: of being caught between two worlds. Or, rather, of being caught between two women. He is unsure of whether he is thinking right or wrongly. He says, "If I see things through Maa's eyes, I become even more confused. And in trying to gether my own vision, away from the dislikes of Maa or Martha, I really get struck – go clod, country bumpkin. He compares the cultural differences between America and India. He understands the people inhabit two different mental make-ups. He finds the difference very glaring in relationships. Reflecting on relationships which have to stand on the basis of give-and-take lie says: "Nothing over there [America] can be taken for granted. There's an arithmetic in relationships, even in the close relationships of father and mother, brother and sister, husband and wife."

Vishaal then assesses the relative merits in the concept of Love as obtaining in America and India. He finds that in America "feelings are expressed in quantitative terms, unceasingly . . ." He thinks that that mentality is the reason for all the smooching and mouthplay in the American show of

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Love. When March first did it to him, he felt irritated. He asks her "What is this . . . this smooching and licking all the time?" She replies, " Are you innocent, or plain dumb?.. If there's no steady supply of you know what, a guy will just move off." So love and the show of love, in America, is based on the "fear of losing, being walked out on."

He then thinks about the people far away in India. He understands that they are "simple and silent behind closed walls, untouched by the artfulness of oven love." He wonders, "what was the force, the something, that kept them going through thick and thin, bad times and good times?" He is unable to decide whether his mother is more sensitive than Martha. Vishaal is a sensitive human being. He is caught between two cultures. The two cultures are represented by his mother and Martha. One representing the old-and traditional. The other representing the new, the bold and practical. He is unable to commit to any one position. He says, "To be myself. Just myself. In control. Be just the me that I never become. Never become here, never manage it there. A whole country squats in my consciousness. A whole culture, a whole society, a whole tradition of being and doing through the medium of Martha."

In one sentence, Vishaal's dilemma can be summed up as being caught between "the aloneness of nearness and the aloneness of distance." Then there is the narration of the circumstances that bring Vishaal and Martha together. It begins with Vishaal's encounter with a Black man in an American subway. He is waylaid by the Black man. He is told by the Black man to part with his belongings. He is knifed by the man and injured seriously. The man tells him, "Take out all you have, pig." After that, he hoists him, and flings him down with the words, "you bloody swine" and kicks his face with the tip of his boots."

The incident which gives Vishaal a horrifying picture of America is the same incident that gives him a glimpse of the humanity of America. After the encounter with the Black man, Vishaal lies unattended in the subway till Martha appears on the scene. She gets her friend to carry Vishaal on his back and bring him to her house. There he is nursed by Martha to recovery. This experience gives him a different picture about America. He finds it a picture different from what one might expect in India. Vishaal understands that in India people would have passed without paying any attention. The sense of assuming responsibility for someone else is not a quality of Indians. Vishaal reflects in this manner: "Whatever happens on the road, murder, killing, robbery, rape, the passer by [in India] stuck to his job of passing by." This was

in India. In America, "Kindness? And to a coloured? Impossible." Vishaal could not believe the sentiment of humanity.

In this manner, through the personal experience of Vishaal, we get to read about the cultural intercourse taking place between India and America. Vishaal says that he has "a pair of scales within . . . One side of the scales was made fast to the truths beyond the seven seas. On the other side were piled up me, geography, chasm, darkness, and now, Martha." Now, Martha is a woman who comes into Vishaal's life by the force of circumstances. Not by the force of a personal choice. He is amused at the way circumstances determine the flow of events in a man's life. About his relationship with Martha, he confesses in one moment that, "A killing sadness descended into me. I wanted to shout 'You are not my answer, Martha, not any answer. . . . But I did not shout. I did not say anything."

We come to know of the reasons for Vishaal's helplessness in the matter. He is held down by financial problems. His friend, Prashant left his lodging without paying the rent. The rent arrears of Prashant becomes Vishaal's responsibility. It is in one such tight situation that Martha offers Vishaal help. She takes him to Zenith Photographers, a studio where she is employed. She gets too a job at 120 dollars a week. So, Vishaal's indebtedness to Martha increases. He finds himself more and more coming under the influence and force of Martha. While washing negatives once Martha takes Vishaal's hands in hers and she says, "I like Indians. They are so faithful." Vishaal himself admits that Martha's influence on him was more powerful than even his mother's. He admits, "As a child I had a body language with Maa. Now this language has lapsed. Now my body is associated only with Martha. The rights of Martha are tattooed on it."

The other partner in the studio with Martha is Robert. Vishaal has a long and interesting series of debate and argument with Robert. The latter is a great admirer of the American way of life. Vishaal finds this a little too irritating. Once he receives a letter from Maa, reads it and tells Robert that, "the mother is not an individual but a timeless concept. That's why she looks the same to everyone." Robert replies in the typical iconoclastic manner of the American, "You Indians romanticize everything. OK, yeah, your mother is your guiding star when you are a child. But haven't you noticed how quickly we grow up out here?"

In another discussion the topic veers to the work culture in America. He tells Robert that "all labour [in America] yours, everyone's, was a donation to the country. That was how it had won its mega position of super power."

Vishaal comes to India with the purpose of helping Vaseem tie the knot. He is waiting for the call from Vaseem. His mother is unwilling to let him go anywhere. Then during a long conversation she asks him questions that a typical Indian mother would ask his married son. It is about Martha and the family. She asks, "Have the two of you decided to remain just two?"

Vishaal is amused at the fixed concepts of family, parenthood and such ideas of his Maa. He does not want to shatter her notions with the truth that there was no ceremony of any kind in his coming together with Martha. Maa tries to reason, "Children help build new bridges. Love deepens. You should think about it." Vishaal replies, "At the moment we've decided against it." When he talks to his Maa about his family he remembers that Martha had had an abortion just 8 days before his coming down to India. Robert had phoned him on that day. Martha was tired and weak. When Vishaal wanted to know the details. from Martha, her reply shows yet another facet of American womanhood. Martha tells him, "Stop talking rubbish. It's my body. It is my private affair. My sovereign right." The underlined words suggest the fierce sense of independence of the American woman.

We also get to read about Martha's feelings as a woman. She tells something about children which reflects her attitude towards them. We also get to know certain things which are unthinkable Indian context. Martha wants Vishaal to understand that in America girls must fend for themselves from age 18. They must find a-mate and make a home. She then tells Vishaal that she had an amniocentesis done to know the sex of the child. " 'Boy' they said. I didn't think twice. Get off ine bastard, I said. Why should I want to increase their tribe, the bastards."

Vishaal's elder brother then takes him to his room upstairs. It is first time he enters his brother's room. It is first ever time that he is invited. Eventually, he comes to know the motive behind the invitation. He is asked to sponsor his nephew, Chintoo. Vishaal tries to explain to his brother the difficulty of finding a job in America. One had to earn to learn. One had to really work hard. Slog. He tells his brother how there is a dog-eat-dog policy in America and that the competition is stiff. But his brother is unable and unwilling to listen to him.

Soon there is the call from Vaseem. The wedding of Vaseem and Nusrat takes place. It is time for Vishaal to return to America. He takes an elaborate and tearful farewell. He says: "I go country. I never did see, hear, or touch you. I longed for ever to hold you by the hand. The hand that I have to hold now is Martha's.

And here, Martha, I come.

To your country.

I don't know why."

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7.6 ANALYSIS OF THE NOVEL

Seth's *Unarmed* consists of two independent stories – 1. Narrative 1 and Narrative 2. These two stories are linked by the concept of bourgeois mentality. It provides conflict, subjective idealism, and objective realism. Narrative 1 delineates the young man's study of his cousin, a young girl whose circumstances have made her to stay with his family. He with his family and his idealistic friends behave condescendingly towards her. But she shocks them all with her sentiments for the narrator's friend. The reason is quite simple. She does not want to miss the chance of marrying a wealthy young man. Her sudden change is quite evident. The weak girl has become a sharp woman. The friend who is over-confident has reduced to a pathetic being. But the girl does not show any sign of remorse.

Narrative 2 picturises the bourgeois mentality of a man with the desire to have green card. He gives up his studies in India to pursue his American dream. But he finds only humiliation there in the United States of America. For his survival, he depends on a feminist who treats him as her sexual slave. When he returns his home for a short period, he realizes that he still has the chance to begin his new life. But he returns to America, eventhough he knows there is no dignity or delight, he can get there. The author's depiction of U.S. culture is quite evident through the two materialist caricatures. The story describes Indian materialism, which is in no way contradictory to greed and money-mindedness of America.

7.7 SUMMATION

The novel *Unarmed* presents Rajee Seth's vision in two narratives. It is a novel two stories. Basu belonging to the first narrative, is not an expatriate. But the protagonist of the second narrative is an expatriate. Both the young men seek their identities of their own through relationships which do not make sense. When they move into adulthood, and find the people who stand the test of time and emerge stronger. *Unarmed* describes that the protagonists struggle to create new armours to battle their life, shedding their armour of innocence.

7.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS:

1. Hindi
2. Nishkavach
3. without armour
4. Vishaal
5. History
6. partition
7. Electronics
8. Neera

7.9 ANSWER EACH OF THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS IN TWO SENTENCES:

1. What is the cause of Vishaal feeling distanced from Neera and Basu?
2. Examine the reasons for psychological tensions between Neera and her mother.

7.10 ANSWER THE FOLLOWING IN A PARAGRAPH EACH:

1. Sketch the character of Neera.
2. Compare and contrast the characters of Vishaal and Basu.
3. Analyse the reasons for Vishaal's father choosing History for Vishaal.

7.11 ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS IN AN ESSAY EACH:

1. Explore the bourgeois mentality as described in the novel *Unarmed*.
2. Justify the title of the novel *Unarmed*.

7.12 FOR FURTHER READING

Unarmed -rajee seth

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UNIT VIII MALATI AND MADHAVA - *Bhavabhuti*

Notes

Structure:

- 8.1 Introduction
- 8.2 Unit Objectives
- 8.3 Introduction to Author
- 8.4 A Note on the play
- 8.5 Characters in the play
- 8.6 Outline Story of the Play
- 8.7 Summary of the play
- 8.8 Analysis of the Play
- 8.9 Bhavabhuti's Dramatic Art and Style
- 8.10 Summation
- 8.11 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions:
- 8.12 Answer each of the following questions in Two sentences:
- 8.13 Answer the following in a paragraph each:
- 8.14 Answer the following questions in an essay each:
- 8.15 For Further Reading

8.1 INTRODUCTION

Bhavabhuti has been unanimously acclaimed as an eminent Sanskrit poet. *Malati and Madhava* is an 8th century play by Bhavabhuti. It is one of the classics of Sanskrit drama. It claims an important position in accord to the better known drama by Kalidasa *Shakuntala*. Similar to Kalidasa's play, *Malati and Madhava* has survived the ravages of time. It has created interest among the classical scholars who have preserved the original text in its totality by disseminating it as translated versions in many languages, English being one of them.

8.2 UNIT OBJECTIVES

- To make the learners understand the classical Sanskrit drama
- To make them interested in classical learning

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8.3 INTRODUCTION TO AUTHOR

Bhavabhuti is believed to have been born in the family of Deshastha Brahmins of Padmapura in Central India. He is known by another name as well, Sriknatha. Goddess of Learning (Sri Saraswati) resides in his throat. The 12th century historian Kalhana has mentioned that Bhavabhuti is recognized in the court for his scholarship. He is appointed as the poet laureate by the King Yashovarman of Kannauj. He is credited with two more classical compositions, *Uttaramacharitra* and *Mahaviracharitra*, the former work narrates the life of Sri Rama after his return from Lanka, and the latter depicts the early life of Sri Rama.

8.4 A NOTE ON THE PLAY *BHAVABHUTI*

The Europeans initially read the fragment of the play and gave the earliest recognition to the play. The classical scholar called Colebrook in his 'Essay on Sanskrit and Prakrit Prosody' makes a reference about the fifth act of this play. The dramatist has chosen the minor incident in the Puranas and worked it out into a full-fledged play. It is the cause of the greatness of this play. It is the piece of imaginative retelling of a Puranic episode. So this play falls under the category of Sanskrit drama called Prakarana. The play carries all the major stylistic practices of dramatists of Bhavabhuti's period. This play has stylistic devices like the use of ornate language, the preponderance of metaphoric comparisons, the dwelling on abstract matters like reflections on the beauty of nature or the subtle changes of the weather and seasons. Bhavabhuti has performed innovative techniques such as the use of Dandaka which is a poetic measure of 54 syllables and the stanza sustained to 216 syllables.

Bhavabhuti is a play dealing with the complications after the marriage of Malati and Madhava. Initially, Padmavati insists that his minister's daughter Malati wishes to marry a youth called Nandana. But Malati has given her heart to Madhava, the youth with artistic talents. She attempts many odds bravely to have her dream fulfilled. The play has a subplot which is symmetrical to that of Malati and Madhava's love affair. Makaranda and Madayantika are the friends of former pair of lovers.

8.5 CHARACTERS IN THE PLAY

The dramatis personae of the play fall into three categories such as men, women and characters spoken about.

List of the Men characters

Madhava – The son of Devarata who is studying at Padmavati

He is in love with Malati

Makaranda – Friend of Madhava and in love with Madayantika

Kalahamsa – Madhava's servant

Aghoraghanta – A priest of Chamunda and a rightful goddess

A messenger.

8.6 OUTLINE STORY OF BHAVABHUTI'S *MALATI MADHAVA*

All the three plays of Bhavabhuti were performed for the feast of the Lord Kalapriya. He is usually associated with Mahakala of Ujjayini. In *Malati Madhava* also, there is a reference to this Lord, showing it is laid in Padmavati. In that play, it shows how he leaves his home and proceeds to Ujjayini or Padmavati seeking his fortune.

The earliest play of Bhavabhuti is *Mahaviracarita*. There is no evident to assert that *Malati Madhava* is the earliest play. The episodes shown in the play are similar to Katha literature. Bhurivasu is the minister of the King of Padmavati. His old friend Kamandaki has turned into nun. He asked her to arrange a marriage between his daughter and the son of his old friend Devarata, who is the friend of the King of Vadarba. He gives another information that his friend has sent his son to Padmavati, hoping to make his past compact of making their children marry each other.

The obstacle between their marriage comes in the form of Nandana, who is the companion of King. He wishes to marry Malati with the approval of the King. Kamandaki arranges the meeting between the young couple so that their marriage can take place. The friends of Madhava and Malati are Makaranda and Madayantika, respectively. Madayantika is none other than the sister of Nandana. In the first two acts, the lovers are attracted towards each other, in the third act, the lovers meet in the temple of Civa.

When Madayantika is about to be attacked by the tiger, Makaranda comes forward to help. She is saved without injury, from the approaching danger. They begin to love each others deeply. In the fourth act, the King is resolved to wed Malati and Nandana. Madava understands that he can succeed only with the help of Kamandaki. So he decides to offer fresh flesh so that he can win the favour of ghouls of the cemetery. In the fifth act, during his ghastly errand, there comes the cry of Malati from the nearby temple.

Madhava runs to the spot and saves Malati who is about to be sacrificed to the goddess Camunda, from the priests Aghoraghanta and his acolyte Kapalakundala, slaying the priest Aghoraghanta. In the Sixth Act, Kapalakundala swears to revenge him. Malati is going to be wedded with Nandana. Makaranda makes one strategy of sending her to the temple before her marriage, from there Madhava and Malati flee. Makaranda returns as a bride.

In the seventh act, the poor Nandana is repulsed by his bride. Mayantika who comes to rebuke her sister-in-law, is shocked to find her lover there and elopes with him and join with their friends. In the eighth act, Madhava succoured the fugitives. When the King comes to know of it and forgives them. During this chaos, Kapalakundala has kidnapped Malati.

In the ninth act, Madhava and his friend search her. Saudamini, Kamandaki's pupil of Kamandaki comes and rescues her from Kapalakundala. The last act of the play begins with the lamentation of the lost Malati. But the return of the lovers bring back the merry mood. The king gives consent to their marriage.

Check Your Progress Questions

1. Bhavabhuti's *Malati Madhava* was performed for the _____.
2. _____ is the obstacle for the marriage between Malati and Madhava.

8.7 DETAILED SUMMARY OF THE PLAY

The play begins with the traditional invocation to the Lord of the stage called the Rangadaivata. He is generally called Lord Ganesha or Vigneshwara. Manger or the Bhagavata or the Sootradhara utters the dialogue with the spectators' wish that the play would be performed without any untoward

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incident or obstacles in any form. The Managers of the stage circumstances, Kamandaki help the lovers come together. The First Act comes to an end with this.

The Second Act opens in Malati's residence. Two attendants at Malati's residence indulge in conversation. It is understood that the King has given an ultimatum to Bhurivasu and Malati is compelled to marry Nandana. The attendants bring the news that the only hope for Kamandaki is that Kmandaki has asked to see Malati in her place. Avalokita has been entrusted with the task of bringing Malati. In the mean time, Malati has been shown the portrait made by Madhava. She is very much worried as the King gets involved. So their love cannot be carried forward on account of King's wish. It is at this time, Avalokita comes with Kamandaki. They are given details of the developments. Kamandaki advises Malati to obey the King for the time being. Lavangika asked her about Madhava. Kamandaki's describes the background of Madhava. It makes Malati very happy. With the departure of two ladies, the second act comes to an end.

The first scene of Act Three begins with the conversation between Buddharakshita and Avalokita. Avalokaita tells Buddharakshita that she would like to bring Madhava and Malati to the garden so that they could meet each other on the fourteenth day of the moon. It is learnt that Buddharakshita has won the heart of Madayantika, sister of Nandana. The brother has agreed to the love suits of Buddharakshita. He decides to meet his love in the garden.

Check Your Progress Questions

3. The play begins with the invocation to ____.
4. Avalokaita has planned to make Malati and Madhava meet on ____.

The Second Scene of Act Three occurs in the garden of Madana. Kamandaki comforts Malti. Madhava becomes the witness to the tales told by Kmandaki to Malati. After a short period, Buddhirakshita comes searching Madayantika. The tiger's prowling is heard and it is a danger to the lives of the people in its path. Then, the shouts of Madayantika is heard, as the tiger is attacking her. When she is almost killed, Makaranda comes to her rescue, overpowering the tiger with his sword. All are relieved when Madayantika is saved. Madhava's assistance is not needed as his friend Makaranda had come

to rescue her. However, Makaranda falls unconscious, and Madhava comes to his help.

The Fourth Act features both couples Malati and Madhava on one side and Makaranda and Madayantika on the other. Kamandaki has the dual responsibility of uniting both pairs. At that time, the messenger come to take away Malati for the wedding with Nandana which is going to be occur as per the decision of the King.

The Fifth Act begins in the field on which the dead bodies are burnt and there appears the frightful Kapalakundala. He has come to the temple of Kaarala to give a human offering of the beautiful woman to the goddess. To honour his teacher Aghoraghanta, he does this. Madhava does not know that the beautiful woman who is brought as an offering is none other than Malati. When Aghoraghanta is about to raise the sword, Madhava hears his name uttered by Malati as the person she would remember before dying. From his hands, Madhava snatches the sword. Aghoraghanta is informed that the intruder is none other than Kamandaki's friend Madhava. Madhava brings her to the safe place and returns to fight with Aghoraghanta. With this scene, this act comes to a close.

The Sixth Act First Scene begins with Kapalakundala informing the death of Aghoraghanta at the hands of Madhava. He vows to avenge Madhava and declares that he is waiting for that moment. In the second scene of this act, Kalahamsa informs that Malati is approaching the temple where Madhava and Makaranda are waiting in her bridal finery. She is at the head of the procession. When Madhava despairs, Makaranda comforts him saying Kamandaki will never fail them. He is asked to be patient.

The Second Scene of the Sixth Act takes place inside the Temple where Madhava and Makaranda wait for Malati's arrival, at the head of her bridal procession. To give information regarding her arrival, Kalahamsa is asked to wait outside the Temple. He gives the description of the richness and grandeur of the procession and the rich finery with which Malati is approaching the temple.

The Third Scene of the Sixth Act takes place in the Temple. Malati has arrived the place and so Kamandaki, Lavangika and Attendants. The King's Attendant brings the fine clothes for Malati to wear. Kamandaki makes a plan. She makes Makaranda dress up in the bridal clothes. She also asks Malati and Madhava to retire to the forest where Avalokita is waiting to marry them.

Kamandaki also assures Makaranda that if her plan works out perfectly, he would also be able to join his love Madayantika.

The First Scene of the Seventh Act begins with the account of Buddharakshita describing the occurring that happen after the marriage ceremony of Nandana who did not have the slight suspicion. Nandana could not restrain his love for the new bride. But he is tired of Malati and so he goes away slighted and hurt. He makes a vow also not to come too near the new bride till the appropriate time.

Check Your Progress Questions

5. Kappalakundala comes to the temple of _____ to give human offering.
6. To give information regarding her arrival, _____ is asked to wait outside the Temple

The Second Scene of the Seventh Act shows the complication made by Lavangika in disguising Makaranda disguising as Malati. Everyone is under the impression that the new bride has insulted and spoken harshly to Nandana. His sister Madayantika comes with Buddhrashita to talk with Malati, her friend. There is an exchange between Madayantika and Lavangika. In the course of their long conversation, Madayantika expresses her profuse love for the youth who saved her life from the tiger. She reveals that she will never be able to think of living with another man, except Makaranda. At this time, Makaranda comes out of his bed in which he is carefully covered by Lavagika. He expresses his feelings to Madayantika. The lovers embrace in an exchange of their mutual affection. With this scene, the Seventh Act concludes.

The Eighth Act begins with Malati and Madhava sitting by the banks of the river expressing their love for one another. At that time, Avalokita comes to know how things have developed after the marriage of Nandana. Madhava informs that he has sent Kalahamsa to the Minister's house to collect information about the wedding plans devised by Kamandaki. After a short while, Kalahamsa, Lavangika, Buddharakshita and Madayantika make their presence in the scene. Madhava understands, on looking at them, Kamandaki's plan has working out without any mistake. But their plans are known to the soldiers and they have surrounded Makaranda. They are informed of the soldiers getting to know of their plot and their surrounding. Madhava has convinced Madayantika by saying that Makaranda has faced many obstacles in

his life and that he is too courageous to be overpowered by the soldiers. At the break of dawn, Malati appears in the city of Ujjain. He pays respect to the Sun God who is rising in the Eastern sky. He then calls Marisha to know the updates of the arrangements made to entertain the spectators who came from far off places, for celebrating the festival of Kalapriyanatha.

The highlight of the opening scene is that Marisha narrates the Manager the qualities of a classical play that appeal to the sensibilities of seasoned auditors. These are the expectations of the audience towards the playwright. Marisha, the actor lists out the qualities of the successful in the following words: “Profound exposition of the various passions (of the rasas); pleasing interchange of mutual affection (abhinaya); loftiness of character delicate expression of desire (bhava); a surprising story; and elegant language.” When the Manager asks the actor to tell the playwright who may have written a play satisfying the ideals of a classical performance. The Actor Marisha introduces Bhavabhuti and talks about his credentials as a scholar and a playwright. He is introduced as a man born in the learned family of Brahmans in the city of Padmanagara.

The Manager and the actor talk about how the play must be presented for the entertaining the learned audience. They introduce the important characters Kamandaki, a Sugata beggar and his disciple Avalokita. They have good understanding of other characters who will appear on the stage, including the important one: Malati and Madhava. They think that the two can enter after the episode of Makaranda and Kalahamsa.

The First Scene of the play shows the conversation between Kamandaki and her disciple Avalokita. It acts as an exposition of the play. It refers to the love of Madhava for Malati. From the city of Kundinapur Madhava has come to study at the city of Kamandaki, a lowly beggar in rags with the task of enabling the wedding of the lovers. Their conversation centers around the wish of the King of Padmavati that Malati marry Nandana instead of Madhava. Avalokita is entrusted with the responsibility of bringing Madhava to the festival of Madhana so that he will get an opportunity to meet Malati who would also be there at the festival with the companions.

In the Second Scene, Kalahamsa is seen as having the portrait of Madhava which Malati has drawn. He rests under the tree in the forest where he expects to meet Madhava and his friend Makaranda. Makaranda finds out Madhava has been smitten by a beautiful maiden. As Makaranda insisted, Madhava goes into raptures describing his love for Malati. He reveals that he learned about her and her name from her friend Lavangika. At that time,

Kalahamsa comes with the portrait of Madhava which is drawn by Malati which Mandarika had given Kalahamsa to be shown to Madhava. The friends are convinced of the maiden's love for the young man from Kundinapur. They have already known that the king of the land favours Nandana for the hand of Malati.

As Kalahamsa has insisted, Madhava picks up the pencil to draw the portrait of Malati. When Mandarika come to get the portrait drawn by Malati, she is surprised to find the accurate drawing of Madhava, capturing the beauty of his love. The friends promised him that under that comes out of the group, she is met by Kapalaundala who has come to avenge the death of his Guru Aghoraghanta by Madhava. She is carried away by Kapalakundala. Madayantika decides to follow Malati. She comes out to find only Lavangika, not Malati. Lavangika assumes that Malati might have gone to the garden.

During this time, Kalahamsa enters with the report of the developments in the palace. Madhava has rushed to the palace to assist his friend Makaranda, but the latter is brought before the king. The King is pleased with the valour of two youngmen. So he grants them clemency and allows them to return to the banks of the river. There they find only the place as a deserted one. The search for the women. After some time, they met Lavangika and Madayantika. Lavangika narrates the development after Madhava leaving this place for palace to help Makaranda. They begin to search Malati. Madhava is completely shattered at her absence. He vows that in the event of Malati's disappearance, he would also end his life. Makranda also decides to join his friend if such a fate befalls them. With this declaration of Madhava, the Eighth act concludes.

In the Ninth Act, both the friends go searching Malati. They met Saudamini, who is the disciple of Kamandaki. She is the possessor of magical powers. She comforts the two young men. Madhava even falls down unconscious. He is revived by his friend. When Makaranda prepares to end his life, as he is unable to tolerate the sight of Madhava. But he is stopped by Saudamini. She conveys the good news of Malati's good health condition and assures that Malati would be with them very soon. But the young men refuse to believe her. She magically produces the garland of flowers that Malati has produced a short while ago. The ninth act ends with the two men hoping to meet and join with Malati.

The Tenth Act opens with Kamandaki, Lavangika and Madayantika in the other part of the forest looking for Malati. With the help of Saudamini, Malati has been saved by Madhava from the dangerous Kapalakundala. He

was preparing to sacrifice her to the goddess when Madhava, assisted by Saudamini appears on the scene and rescues Malati who is unconscious. Kamandaki revives her with her magical powers. The King and Bhurivasu are informed of these developments. The lovers are united: Malati and Madhava on one hand and Makaranda and Madayantika on the other. On this happy note, the play comes to an end.

8.8 ANALYSIS OF THE PLAY

Malati Madhava can better be described as a bourgeois comedy. It is a drama in ten acts. It is technically known as Prakarana-s. The theme of the play is the love affair of Malati and Madhava culminating to marriage. Their love story moves through the thorny path, finally leading to their marriage. Rajashyalaka who is the brother-in-law of Malati had the chance of looking at Malati. He is enchanted by her beauty and charm. He asks for her hand. Malati's father, the Minister, is not aware of her love for Madhava. So he gives his consent to the proposal of the Rajashyalaka. Out of despair and distress, Madhava goes to the cemetery. He understands that no one can help him to be united with his lady love. So trusting no human being, he goes after some spirits to do a miracle. So he decides to sell his flesh to spirits. The fifth act begins with the description of the cemetery and its inmates, spirits.

When he sells the flesh, Madhava hears the scream of a woman. That scream comes from the temple of Chamunda. He rushes to the spot to save the unknown woman. To his surprise and shock, he notices Malati there who is about to be killed by Aghoraghanta and Kapalakundala, who wish to kill and offer her to the goddess. The Kaplike magicians are notorious for their practice of black magic. Malati's friends, i.e. The Kaapalika magicians are notorious for the practice of black magic. He believed that by offering Malati to the goddess, he could attain the supernatural powers. By fighting with Aghoraghanta, she tries to rescue his beloved by fighting with Aghoraghanta.

The characters recite and act simultaneously. They engage themselves in the symmetrical action also. Thus characters on the stage are engaged in symmetrical actions, probably introducing deliberately wise dance-sequences. Act V of the play is rich in sentiments and *Bibhatsa* (disgust) and *Raudra*. He gives the convenient situation to introduce dance. Act V of this play is rich with sentiments like the *Bibhatsa* (disgust) and the *Bhayanaka* (terror), *Raudra* (fury) and *Adbhuta* (wonder).

The author describes ghosts and evil spirits. It is an example of *Bibhatsa*. The idea of approaching slaughter of Malati brings *Bhayanaka*. The

kidnapping of Malati introduces *Adbhuta*. The quarrel between Madhava and Afraaghanta creates *Raudra*. The author has brought all these four sentiments in a single act. It makes the act extremely tense. The background of the play is quite gloomy. Bhavabhuti adopts to certain measures to relieve the tension. The element of devotion is a technique adopted by the playwright to relieve the tension.

In the introduction of the element of the devotion through the prayer to the goddess in two verses. The same purpose is achieved in the touch of Shringara in the short conversation between Madhava and Malati. The second device is the introduction of the four verses. Bhavabhuti introduced four dance sequences against dreary background. By lifting the tension, the act becomes lively and interesting.

Madhava tries to rescue his beloved by fighting with Aghoraghanta. Malati's father also sent men to find the missing girl, around the temple.

8.9 BHAVABHUTI'S DRAMATIC ART AND STYLE

Malati Madhava is written in the humorous tone. It reflects on Bhavabhuti's own temperament. He is gifted with the richness, elegance of expression, and depth of meaning. His depth of thought and grandeur rank him among the eminent dramatists of India. He is not content with simplicity. He has overloaded his plays with elaborate descriptions. He lacks simplicity and intelligibility in the initial period of his writings. He later improved his style of writing. *Malatimadhava* is considered to be his adventure in the drama genre. It is quite unsuitable for his talent as a poet. In the first act of the play itself, there are some of his admirable touches.

Bhavabhuti has produced natural expression and clarity of diction in his plays. Being a man of great learning, he exhibits his poetic talent and critical judgement in his plays. When the critics comment ill of his writing, he wrathfully comments against his critics. In the prologue of his last play, he has written the following words: "There will always be evil-minded persons who will suspect the purity of a literary work as they would the chastity of women."

Bhavabhuti has first staged the play *Malati-Madhava* at the fair of Kalapriyanatha. In the prologue of the play, Sutradhara says, "Marisha, the auspicious rite of the stage have been duly performed. A large concourse of people, residing in different quarters, has gathered here on the occasion of the fair of the divine Kalapriyanatha. I have been asked by the assembly of learned

people that they should be entertained with the performance of some new play.”

There are many verses in the *Malati-Madhava* of Bhavabhuti. He has the habit of repeating his verses in more than one work. He is considered to be the ocean of poetic composition. He is inclined to express the intended sense than suggesting it. He is skilful in giving word pictures. His graphic description is evident in the description of Kapalakundala, when she flies through the air with her matted locks steaming in all directions, bell sounding, wearing human skulls which make humming noise when air blows through them.

Bhavabhuti is unsurpassed in his description of his idea through various imageries. He compares Malati's cheek with the newly cut tusk of an elephant and the beauty of the spotless moon. The comparison two unrelated things is called 'Nidarsana'. There is impossible connection between the two things.

Bhavabhuti has derived some suggestions from *Brihatkatha* for the plot of *Malati-Madhava*. But the creation of the play is entirely his own. Very few incidents in the play appear to be improbable. But the plot is well-constructed. He has achieved success in the characterization rather than in plot-construction. *Malati-Madhava* is considered to be a social play i.e. prakarana. The scenes of the play are laid in temple, garden, cemetery, near hills, rivers.

The characters for that play is also taken from various strata of society. His male characters include the sages like Vasishtha, Visvamisra, Janaka, who is a loving rajarshi, Jamadagnya who is an obstinate ascetic, and Satananda, a hot-tempered priest. Madhava and Makaranda, the ideal friends, Malyavan, a crafty diplomat.

Bhavabhuti has presented appealing female characters. It shows that he has high regard for women. Women characters are also from different strata of society. He has drawn women characters like sage Vashishtha's wife Arundhati, Kamandaki, a loving Buddhist nun, Vasanti, the loving sylvan deity, Malati, Madayantika as shy and clever women respectively, Lavangika, a clever woman, wise nuns Buddharakshita and Avalokita.

Bhavabhuti has the love for describing nature. He is fond of giving grand scenes. As he was born near natural scenery, he has described nature graphically. From the description of nature, it is clear that he appreciates nature. In the ninth act of *Malati-Madhava*, Saudamini describes hills, and

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rivers. There is a description of hills near the city when Madhava and Makaranda go searching Malati. It is described

The water of the streams rushing through the thickets here is rendered fragrant by the blossoms of cane-creepers. Near them are noticed clusters of Yathika flowers. On the eastern parts of this hill which seem to laugh as it were with the blossoming kutajas, the clouds are holding a canopy while the peacocks are dancing on its peaks.

There are some descriptions of evening and the midnight in the Malati-Madhava.

From his lifelong problems, Bhavabhuti strongly believes in the supreme power of fate. He has expressed his belief in his plays. So there is a lack of Vidushaka (Jester) which is commonly found in Sanskrit plays, in the plays of Bhavabhuti. But there are some instances of humour in Malati-Madhava.

In the third act, Kamandaki describes Malati as a person who is fatigued by the gathering of flowers. "You look as if you have seen your lover, while your lover is looking on." It is a subtle humour as Madhava was there looking at Malati. To appreciate the humours in his plays, one must be cultured and developed taste to admire them.

Bhavabhuti's grandeur of imagination will make the readers dumbfound. The graphic description with minute details shows his closeness of observation. Kamandaki understands that Malati must have enjoyed day-dreaming about her lover, on seeing Malati:

The knot of her lower garment has become loose; her lower lip is throbbing; her arms are drooping; she is perspiring; her eyes appear gentle, charming and contracted at the corners; her body appears benumbed; her bud-like breasts are quaking; her cheeks are horripilated; she faints (again and again) and then regains consciousness.

He has described well the psychical moods of his characters also. Through Kamandaki, Bhavabhuti has preached the necessity of mutual love of husband and wife. The ideal conjugal life is described in the following lines:

The husband and wife should act with one mind; they should identify themselves with each other in sorrow as in happiness. That is true love which is uniform in all conditions, in which the heart finds solace, which does not lose its flavour in old age and which abides in the form of deep affection, when the veil of reserve is removed by the passage of time. Fortunate, indeed, is that man who obtains such love!

Bhavabhuti has expressed his views on religion, society and education through his plays. His views on Buddhist stupas and Viharas are expressed through nuns like Kamandaki, Avalokita and Buddharakshita. His philosophical views on Karma is expressed through Kamandaki who tells Lavangika, “Each one of us will be born in conformity with our own karma. Who can say whether we shall meet in our next birth.” His views on marriage is described through the characters, Madhava and Malati, Makaranda and Madayantika, as post-puberty love marriages. Even though Malati is deeply in love with Madhava, she opposes the elopement, saying “My noble father, my mother of spotless descent and my untarnished family are dear to me – not he (i.e. Madhava) nor even my life.” His views on family life is very noble. He is an ardent advocate of happy family and social life. Regarding, Madhava is shown with the ability to draw life-like pictures in few minutes. He is shown as a good artist.

8.10 SUMMATION

Bhavabhuti is an eighth century prominent Sanskrit dramatist. The plot of *Malati Madhava* is taken from one of the stories in Gunadhya's *Bihadkatha*. This play has a different rasa – Srngararasa. This play advocates women's rights. It contains the position of women with high regard. Women are the companions of men. It occupies large space in the tradition. The patriarchal man will overcome his own fears about his gender identity and autonomy.

8.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

QUESTIONS:

1. feast of the Lord Kalapriya
2. Nandana
3. Lord of the stage called the Rangadaivata
4. the fourteenth day of the moon
5. Kaarala

6. Kalahamsa

**8.12 ANSWER EACH OF THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS
IN TWO SENTENCES:**

1. What is the vow taken by Nandana regarding Malati?
2. Why does Kapalakundala vow to avenge?
3. How does Saudamini contribute to the progress of the story?

**8.13 ANSWER THE FOLLOWING IN A PARAGRAPH
EACH:**

1. How do the complications get solved by the disguise in *Malati Madhava*?
2. How does the role of Kapalakundala contribute to the main plot of the play?
3. Discuss how women in distress are saved by men in right time in *Malati Madhava*.
4. Describe the theme of love as dealt in *Malati and Madhava*.

**8.14 ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS IN AN
ESSAY EACH:**

1. Consider *Malati and Madhava* as a bourgeois comedy.
2. Assess the dramatic art of Bhavabhuti as shown in *Malati Madhava*.
3. Sketch the character of Madhava.
4. Describe Bhavabhuti's employment of dramatic technique with special reference to *Malati Madhava*.

8.15 FOR FURTHER READING

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UNIT IX MALATI AND MADHAVA - Bhavabhuti

Structure:

- 9.1 Introduction
- 9.2 Unit Objectives
- 9.3 List of Women Characters
- 9.4 Characters Spoken of
- 9.5 Status of Women
- 9.6 Women Characters of Bhavabhuti
- 9.7 Women Characters in *Malati Madhava*
- 9.8 Summation
- 9.9 For Further Reading

9.1 INTRODUCTION

Bhavabhuti is an advocate of women's rights. His plays are filled with strong women characters. They overshadow the male characters at times. They project the strong women characters from all strata of the society. From his plays, it is clear that women are highly regarded and respected in his time and society.

9.2 UNIT OBJECTIVES

- To understand the advocacy of women's rights in *Malati Madhava*
- To assess the role of women in *Malati Madhava*

9.3 LIST OF WOMEN CHARACTERS

Malati – The daughter of the Minister of Padmavati, Bhurivasu.
She is in love with Madhava.

Madayantik – The sister of Nandana and friend of Malati.

She is in love with Makaranda.

Kamandaki – The priestess of Buddha: the nurse of Malati and teacher of Madhava

Kapala-Kundala – The priestess of Chamunda

Saudamini – The disciple of Kamandaki and possessor of magical powers

Lavangika – Foster-sister of Malati

Mandarika – Attendant of Kamandaki and beloved of Kalahamsa

Buddharakshita and Abalokita – Disciples of Kamandaki

Female Attendance

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9.4 CHARACTERS SPOKEN OF

The King of Padmavati

Nandana – the King's favourite and the brother of Madayantika

Bhurivasu – the minister of Padmavati and the father of Malati

Devarata – the father of Madhava and Minister at Kundinapura.

9.5 STATUS OF WOMEN

In the history, the status of women in India has gone a series of ups and downs. In the ancient period, women enjoyed equal status as men. They faced oppression in the medieval period and they get promotion to receive equal rights in the modern times. Women enjoyed freedom in the hands of men. In the past few millennia, the position of women has undergone tremendous change. In the Ancient India, women's roles are very essential. They were considered to be inseparable parts of Indian society. They were given respect also.

Check Your Progress Questions

1. In which period, women enjoyed equal status with men?
2. In which play, Bhavabhuti has depicted his born place Pamapuram?

9.6 WOMEN CHARACTERS OF BHAVABHUTI

Bhavabhuti is considered to be a well-known Sanskrit dramatist. He was born to a Brahmin family in the city called Pamapuram in the Southern region of India. He portrays this place in his 'Mahaviracarita'. Jatukarni and Nilakantha are his parents. He lived between 700 and 730 B.C. From his writing style, it is understood that his first play was *Mahaviracarita*. *Malati Madhava* is considered to be second play. *Uttararamacarita* is considered to be his third play. *Uttararamacarita* and *Mahaviracarita* are the two works which reflect his devotion for Valmiki. From the stories of Gunadhaya, particularly in him *Biradkatha*, the plot of *Malati Madhava* is taken. All his three plays contain different Rasas. *Malatimadhava* gives importance to Virarasa.

9.7 WOMEN CHARACTERS IN MALATI MADHAVA

Kamandaki is the strong character in *Malati Madhava*. She plays a leading role in the play. The entire play gives importance to her. She is an intriguing but loving woman. She is the elderly Buddhist nun who gave up worldly pleasures. She is the friend of Malati's and Madhava's fathers Bhurivasu and Devaratha. She is aware of the promise that their fathers promised each other to give their children in marriage to each other. But Bhurivasu does not keep up his words.

Kamandaki's role is to unite Malati and Madhava. She exerts herself for that cause. As a Buddhist nun, she is not expected to play such role. She is quite concerned with the welfare of Malati and Madhava and so tries to take necessary steps to unite them. It appears that Kamandaki and her disciples were playing the roles to stimulate such feeling. Bhavabhuti was criticised for employing the character of nun to bring out the unification of two lovers. He used Kamandaki to let the audience know that she is their friend, and so it is her responsibility to keep the promise of uniting Bhurivasu and Devarata to each other. From this incident, it is clear that the great importance is given to friendship by Bhavabhuti in his own life.

The woman protagonist of the play *Malati* was born in an affluent family. She lived with her parents from her birth, according to their wishes, respecting the elders and her teachers. She gave up her love for Madhava as it is against the wish of her father. Malati says,

Let the full moon blaze in the sky every night, and let Cupid take the toll of my life, which is the utmost he can do. But my

noble father, my mother of spotless lineage and my blameless family are dear to me – not he nor (even) my life.

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Malati decides to obey her parents and live according to their wish. She convinces herself saying that it is better to lead a life of death-like, than going against her parents, and making them painful and agonized. In that period, women are free to choose their life-partners on their own, but she does not go against her father's wish by choosing her own life-partner. Malati respects her father's promise. She is an ideal woman as she does not defy her parents. She has impeccable conduct. Bhavabhuti delineates Kamandaki like Malati. But the morality of the character is not compromised.

Notes

Kamandaki with her friends make many plans to unite the lovers Malati and Madhava through marriage. They succeed in their attempt also. Makaranda is Madhava's friend, Madayantika is Malati's friend. The love affair between these two persons were also taking place simultaneously. Bhavabhuti has made use of many charming characters in this play. Malati is portrayed shy, Madayantika as bold, Lavangika as clever, Buddharaksita and Avalokita as wise nuns. Both Kapalakundala and Saudamini are considered to belong to Kapalika sect. But Kapalakundala struggles to destroy others whereas Saudamini tries to help others.

Check Your Progress Questions

3. Even though _____ is a Buddhist nun, she tries to unite Malati and Madhava.
4. Lavangika is portrayed as a _____ woman.

9.8 SUMMATION

Srngararasa is paid much importance in the play. Its intensity is felt by the brilliant masterly writing of Bhavabhuti. He repeats the essentialities of love in a married life. He stresses the equality of husband and wife in marriage. Kamandaki says,

The husband is to the wife a dear friend, all relatives put together, all desires, all wealth, nay, her very life. So is the wife to her husband. Let this be borne in mind by you, my dear children.

Bhavabhuti has given minute description for the spontaneous orgasm of youthful ladies who are stucken with love. His *Malati Madhava* recognised the

rightful place of woman as compared with men. They are the co-sharer of pleasure and pain arise out of the dark image which occupies a large space in tradition. The patriarchal society restricted women's freedom. In the ancient Indian literature of women, women are presented as women with sexual freedom.

9.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS:

1. ancient
2. *Mahaviracarita*
3. Kamandaki
4. clever

9.10 ANSWER EACH OF THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS IN TWO SENTENCES:

1. Write a note on the role played by Kamandaki.
2. Morality of the character Malati gets shaken in the end. Comment.

9.11 ANSWER THE FOLLOWING IN A PARAGRAPH EACH:

1. Examine Bhavabhuti's minute description of youthful ladies sticken with love in *Malati Madhava*.
2. Analyse the various types of women as portrayed in *Malati Madhava*.
3. Assess the causes for women being in distress with special reference to *Malati Madhava*.
4. Comment on the freedom of woman choosing her own life-partner and Malati's obedience to her father in *Malati Madhava*.

9.12 ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS IN AN ESSAY EACH:

1. Assess the part played by women in *Malati Madhava*.
2. *Malati Madhava* recognised the rightful place of woman. Substantiate.

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*Malati and Madhava -
Bhavabhuti*

Notes

UNIT X SAMBASIVA – A FARCE - *Chandrasekhar Kamkar*

Notes

Structure:

- 10.1 Introduction
- 10.2 Unit Objectives
- 10.3 Unit Structure
- 10.4 Introduction to Author
- 10.5 A Note on the play
- 10.6 Characteristics of Farce
- 10.7 Prologue to the play
 - 10.7.1 Scene Two
 - 10.7.2 Scene Three
 - 10.7.3 Scene Four
- 10.8 Scenewise summary of the play
- 10.9 Summation
- 10.10 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions:
- 10.11 Answer each of the following questions in Two sentences:
- 10.12 Answer the following in a paragraph each:
- 10.13 Answer the following questions in an essay each:
- 10.14 For Further Reading

10.1 INTRODUCTION

Sambasiva – A Farce is a Kannada play written by Chandrasekhar Kambar. Padma Ramachandra Sharma translates it into English. On 30th September 1985, the play was first produced. This play belong to the New

Wave Drama which began in the 1960s in Kannada. Girish Karnad, B.V.Karant, Kambar, K.V.Subbanna are the leading dramatists belonging to the New Wave or *Navya* movement. The mixture of folk and modern dramatic elements is the main feature of the drama. Kambar occupies a predominant position in the *Navya* movement. He has produced many more remarkable plays to his credit. *Jokumaraswarmi* is his one such contribution.

10.2 UNIT OBJECTIVES

- To understand and appreciate the dramatic elements in the play
- To understand the message conveyed in the play

10.3 INTRODUCTION TO AUTHOR

Chandrasekhar Kambar was born on 2nd January 1937. He is a prominent Indian poet, playwright, folklorist, film director in Kannada language. His plays revolve around the mythology interlinked with contemporary issues. His focus of issues, inculcate modern lifestyle. He has become a pioneer of such literature. He has achieved in blending the folk and the modern theatrical forms. So he has made a significant contribution to Kannada theatre as well as Indian theatre in general.

10.4 A NOTE ON THE PLAY

Sambasiva – A Farce is basically a street drama. It employs the language of wit and brilliant repartee which is the characteristic of street drama. In this play, the playwright has employed the common language of the lower classes of Bangalore. It has drawn elements from Company Drama, popular cinema and even from Western comedy. It is a first pure comedy of Kambar. It centers around the overthrow of a lecherous king. It is a play with revolutionary theme. Such themes are dealt in a serious manner. Theme is treated comically. Even the rebels have comic attitude. There is comical movement in action. It makes play engaging and lively.

10.5 CHARACTERISTICS OF FARCE

‘Farce’ refers to a short comic play. The intention of the farce is mere amusement. But this genre offers the chance to reveal a critical insight in social relations too. The characters in farce work with disguises and assume false identity in order to deceive other persons. It includes mimicking and gesturing. There is no stage directions usually in the farce. And there is no use of

iconographic material also in farce. The most amusing effect of farce is largely based on language. Among its play on language, the misunderstandings, the act of taking a metaphorical expression in a literal sense, ambiguous and obscene language and the play with foreign languages and use of false Latin in particular.

Check Your Progress Questions

1. *Sambasiva – A Farce* belongs to _____ drama.
2. In *Sambasiva – A Farce* Chandrasekar Kambar has employed the language of lower classes in _____.

The world of farce is without human harmony. In farce, the socially inferior character gets a chance to take revenge for an unjust action of his superior, by the way of cunning and deceit. The theme of cunning is general to all human relationsm irrespective of personal, commercial, professional. The average length of a farce text is about four hundred lines.

10.6 PROLOGUE TO THE PLAY

The prologue of the play is designed to entertain. The director talks of it in the following lines:

All the spices you need for your entertainment

Are in this play –

There is love, sex and revolution,

Politics,

There are dialogues, songs and dances and a circus.

And there is also a cabaret.

There are men and women who are not a mixture of both,

And that third kind is there too.

It may be shocking to the bourgeois.

....

I will tell you one secret straight away –
The hero of this play is a donkey !
Donkey becomes Minister and King becomes Donkey,
The disinherited hold their revolution
And the revolutionaries become pimps,
Male becomes female, there's marriage
Of a she-ass, etc.

The Director further goes to declare the purpose of staging a farce like Samba Siva:

This is the kind of play where looking at each other –
And that means
Us looking at you –
And you looking at us –
We must all laugh.

10.7 SCENEWISE SUMMARY OF THE PLAY

It takes place in the Ganesha temple in the outskirts of the city. The God is not found in the altar. Samba and Shiva, who are father and son are present. When the play opens, they are found quarrelling with each other. Samba takes out a bottle of toddy to drink. Samba is a widower. He wishes to marry again. So his son gets too angry with him for that reason. It becomes funny when Samba spoils the chances of his son. Shiva had an alliance from Chikanalli. But when they declined Samba offered himself as a prospective groom.

The quarrel between them goes on. Samba tells that his first wife came in his dream asking him to marry again. Shiva too tells that his mother came in his dream too, asking him not to let his father Samba marry again. The quarrel between them continues in such a way. Finally Shiva suggests that Samba can be dressed up as a woman and find work in some house. Shiva would like to meet the girl of house. So he suggests his father to disguise as his mother, and work in her house as a maid servant. He would come there on the pretext of

Notes

meeting his mother, would see the girl and marry her. Samba refuses to this. Shiva threatens to commit suicide. He enters the Ganesha temple and locks himself inside the temple.

At this time, Lord Ganesha appears with a donkey. He is highly irritated that there is no place to relax. He wishes to gift the donkey to someone. But the donkey is not leaving him. He finds the doors of his temple also locked. He is irritated more for not having place there too. There are no devotees, not anyone to worship. He knocks at the door but there is no response. Samba who got up, finds Lord Ganesha. He mistakes Him to be a drama artist with the make-up. Samba does not believe even when Ganesha tells him that he is the Almighty God. He makes fun of the God. Ganesha tries to prove Samba that he is God. Samba asks for a boon. Ganesha feels helpless as he has nothing to give from the abandoned temple.

Samba remembers the suggestion of Siva and asks God if he can be changed into a woman. God gives him a pearl and asks him to swallow which transforms him into a woman. Samba is terrified. He understands that He is a God. He begs pardon and asks him to be turned back into a woman. Then Ganesha turn to a closed door. Shiva is asked to open. He too asks for a boon. Then Ganesha tells him that he will give him the donkey. It is not an ordinary donkey. Its name is Ding Dong. It was created by an artist. He gave him the hair of the King to paint. When the painting was completed, he noticed that it is in the form of a donkey. Then Lord Ganesha brought the donkey to life.

Shiva once again asks for a boon, opening the door. Ganesha grants him the boon that he will get the girl he desires. In this regard, he can get the help from the donkey which is given to him by the Lord. Samba then asks for a pearl. He asks Ganesha to let him have it for just days and that he would return him. Ganesha hands over the pearl before closing at the door of temple. Ganesha stresses them that the donkey play must be enacted smoothly.

Check Your Progress Questions

3. Why is Lord Ganesha irritated?
4. The King wants the girl to appear in ____ colour saree and ____ colour blouse.

10.7 1 Scene Two

Scene Two takes place in the palace where there are King and the police men. The King asks the policemen to guard the place. He wishes to have a private conversation with the Chamberlain. The Chamberlain was assigned a work of bringing the merchant's daughter. The King wants the girl to appear in a green saree and a blue blouse. As the girl was not found, the Chamberlain returned empty-handed. The King orders the Chamberlain to make a thorough search and bring the girl. He imagines that he is with the girl in the garden. At that time, the policemen come with the news of few revolutionaries who come to see the King. But the King feels irritated for having interrupted his imagination. However, he permits to meet the revolutionaries who came with a petition. The petition carries a complaint against the King himself. The King becomes the cause of grief by overtaxing the people. The King dismisses the revolutionaries after accepting the petition from them. Then he indulges in the conversation with the Chamberlain, i.e. resuming his previous act.

Notes

The King imagines the romantic situation with the “nightingales” grazing. The king foolishly thinks that the nightingale is a donkey, not the bird. He does not even know that it is a bird. He imagines that “nightingale” with its four legs singing i.e.braving, when he is with his beautiful girl in the garden. The Chamberlain tries to correct him saying nightingale is a bird. But the King persists in that idea and finally Chamberlain also agrees that it is an animal and not a bird. The Chamberlain reminds the King that the nightingale – donkey is the national animal. The King attributes human characteristics and behavior with the donkey. He says that donkey is like a man. It brays when bored. It kicks when it does not like. He adds, “Only Kings should have the right to kick.” As he is irritated and angry with the behavior of the revolutionaries, he says, “these damned revolutionaries wants the right to kick, too.” This digression of donkey, the King had for a few moment.

Then the King resumes his activity of daydreaming about his girl in his beautiful garden. He rehearses the movements and words with Chamberlain who suggests the words that the King could convey to the girl. For the benefit of the King, he also acts out the movements of the lover. Then he decides to meet the girl in the travellers' bungalow instead of his garden. As he has planned to meet the girl in the garden, there will be a problem of mosquitoes at night in the garden. So their evening may get spoiled. That is the reason for their change of place.

10.7.2 Scene Three

This scene shifts back to the Lord Ganesha temple where Samba and Shiva indulge in the conversation. Initially Samba expresses his disappointment of Lord Ganesha gifting him the donkey. He says that no God has given such gift to the devotees. Then Samba tells him to use his head. He can earn crore of rupees by making donkey perform such acts. As it obeys all the commands, it could be used to make money through such performances. Shiva is overjoyed. Both of them sing a song which throws light on the character of the King:

Salaam, sir Ding Dong!

Great entertainer!

There is none to compare with you.

The king who rules this land is no tiger but a eunuch

Leopard.

You are better than him! Oh sir!

You walk on your forelegs,

Kick with your hind legs –

Twice two four

Your kick, walk and dance –

The King who rules this land is a mere two-legged man –

You are better than him.

Scriptures, knowledge, wisdom

Stink like rotten garbage –

You eat it all and burp

And leave a mound of dung.

The king who rules this land has a head full of hay seed –

Samba asks Shiva to give him the saree and blouse. The colour of the saree is green and the blouse is blue. Shiva is impatient to see the girl. Samba asks him

to be patient till he finds a job in the same household where she works. Samba asks Shiva to remember his name. Now he is a woman, the name of this womanly disguise is Bangari.

10.7.3 Scene Four

Notes

The Fourth Scene takes place in the rich man's house. Samba is now in the disguise of a woman with the name Bangari. He is now standing near Gajanimbe, the beautiful woman. Gajanimbe is standing by the window and singing a song. She sings:

I cannot bear the pain

Of separation!

I cannot bear the love-god's power.

No, No!

My dear love, why didn't you come?

She sings of Shiva, "that youth bewitched and stole my heart." She decides to use Bangari to find Shiva. She decides to ask her mother to give a job in the house. Gajanimbe notices Shiva standing at a distance. He is love-smitten and makes enquiries with Bangari. Gajanimbe is completely attracted to Shiva. Samba who is in the disguise of a woman is jealous of his son. He tries to turn the attention of Gajanimbe from Shiva, by describing him as an ugly monkey. He reminds her of the oldman who is with Shiva. He hopes that she would be attracted towards him. But Gajanimbe finds someone ugly, more monkey-like. She even feels sick at the sight of Samba. Samba is convinced that he has lost to Shiva in the competition. He concedes defeat and answers her questions about Shiva favourably. This intensifies her love for him.

Check Your Progress Questions

5. Samba names himself as _____ after the disguise.
6. Gajanimbe feels sick at the sight of _____.

At that time, Godavari, mother of Gajanimbe enters the house. She is angry with her for standing near the window. Bangari comes to her rescue.

Notes

Godavari is told about Bangari. She reluctantly offers her job as a maid in the house. The richman too comes into the house. He notices the donkey outside. He is impressed at the majestic look of the donkey, as it looks more majestic than the horse. At the same time, Chamberlain also comes there. He finds Bangari in the green sari and blue blouse. He is overjoyed. He mistakes Bangari for the richman's daughter. When he is told that she is the maid, he makes enquiries. He wants to know if Bangari was at the spring festival. He asks whether she fell in love with her. Samba, quick to understand the matter, lies to the Chamberlain.

The Chamberlain is confirmed that Bangari is the woman whom the King was looking for her desperately. He asks Bangari to tell that she is the daughter of that richman. The rich man, Godavari and Gajanimbe agree to this clever scheme of the Chamberlain. They also demand that Samba (Bangari) give them a portion of the wealth the King would give his ladylove. The Chamberlain informs Bangari to be present at the Travellers' Bungalow in the evening. Bangari refuses. She asks the Chamberlain to bring the King to the Lord Ganesha Temple. He finally agrees to do so.

10.8 SUMMATION

The scenes begin with the funny episode of the father wishing to get married and so tells his son that it is his dead wife's desire who comes in his dream. It takes a serious turn when Lord Ganesha trying to prove himself as God. People's faithlessness and ignoring God has its impact on their lives. People are caught in the web of the foolish Government officials who focus only on the trivial matters. The reference to 'nightingale as donkey' and 'mosquitoes' denote the filthy and meaninglessness of the Government officials. It is extended to the green sari and blue blouse episode also. Man in the disguise of the woman coming before King and other officials lessen the serious turn and takes turn of ridicule only.

10.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS:

1. new-wave
2. Bangalore
3. no devotees, no one opens door
4. green, blue

5. Bangari

6. Samba

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**10.10 ANSWER EACH OF THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS
IN TWO SENTENCES:**

Notes

1. What is the uniqueness of Chandrasekhar Kambar as a playwright?
2. Why does Shiva wish Samba to dress and disguise as a woman?
3. What are the human characteristics and behavior that the King attributes to the donkey?
4. For what purpose, the King used the term 'nightingale' in his speech?
5. Write a note on green sari and blue blouse reference in *Sambasiva- A Farce*.

**10.11 ANSWER THE FOLLOWING IN A PARAGRAPH
EACH:**

1. Describe the relationship between Samba and Shiva.
2. What is the cause for their quarrel in the opening scene of the play?
3. Describe Samba's encounter with Lord Ganesha.

**10.12 ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS IN AN
ESSAY EACH:**

1. Justify *Sambasiva – A Farce* as a farce.
2. Bring out the farcical elements in *Sambasiva – A Farce*.

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UNIT XI Sambasiva – A Farce

Chandrasekhar Kamkar

*Sambasiva – A Farce -
Chandrasekhar Kamkar*

Notes

Structure:

- 11.1 Introduction
- 11.2 Unit Objectives
- 11.3 Summary of the play
 - 11.3.1 Scene Five
 - 11.3.2 Scene Six
 - 11.3.3 Scene Eight
 - 11.3.4 Scene Nine
- 11.4 Summation
- 11.5 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions:
- 11.6 Answer each of the following questions in Two sentences:
- 11.7 Answer the following in a paragraph each:
- 11.8 Answer the following questions in an essay each:
- 11.9 For Further Reading

11.1 INTRODUCTION

Sambasiva – A Farce is a Kannada play written by Chandrasekhar Kambar. Padma Ramachandra Sharma translates it into English. On 30th September 1985, the play was first produced. The mixture of folk and modern dramatic elements is the main feature of the drama. Kambar occupies a predominant position in the *Navya* movement. He has produced many more remarkable plays to his credit. *Jokumaraswarmi* is his one such contribution.

11.2 UNIT OBJECTIVES

- To understand and appreciate the dramatic elements in the play
- To understand the message conveyed in the play

11.3 SUMMARY OF THE PLAY

11.3.1 Scene Five

The fifth scene takes place in the palace. The King and his minister are there. The King is indulging in conversation with his Minister. The Minister brings to the attention of the King about the horrible state of the Kingdom. The people are sick and angry with the King. The Minister tells him that neither he (the King) nor White Elephant (Government official) realize the difficulties of the people. He says, “The people are getting together and talking of revolution.” The King ridicules that he himself “engineered a few revolutions” like “Green revolution, white revolution, and yellow revolution.” The Minister is angry and says, “I cannot be blind to the agony of the people and the violence of the officials.” He even warns the King of dire consequences. When the King does not listen, the Minister offers his resignation, and walks away.

The servant brings the news of the arrival of the White Elephant. The King informs the White Elephant about the revolution. He is asked not to worry. White Elephant tells the King that the Minister is the leader of the revolution. He asked the people, “how many bungalows does each White Elephant own?” White Elephant replies to this ironically. It is a satirical statement about the moral corruption of the politicians and leaders of the present era. The following is the conversation about the King and the White Elephant.

White Elephant: My Lord, because there are people like this, there is a king like you. Because there are kings like you, there are officials like us. Because there are officials like us, this country is what it is. If we weren't here, would the country be like this, my Lord? You are a king and you have a palace. We are your servants and shouldn't we have at least a couple of small bungalows each?

King: But I believe there were once huts where you built your bungalows.

White Elephant: That's called progress, my Lord. We have a bungalow where there was a hut. We are the direct descendants of the slaves of the Queen of London. That's why we are called the IAS.

At the end of the conversation, the King wants to know the purpose of the visit of White Elephant. He replies that except two (the King and himself) everyone is a thief. He says, "it is a sin to steal. But no one stops stealing for

Check Your Progress Questions

1. What does the White Elephant mean?
2. What are the revolutions engineered by the King himself?
3. White Elephant suggests giving license for ____.

that reason." The White Elephant tells the King to give license for stealing. It is hailed by the King as an "excellent" suggestion. At that time, the servant announces the arrival of "Small Change" another Government official. White Elephant cautions the King to be on his guard with Small Change. Small Change comes with an equally cunning plan to cheat the people. When the King says that the people are angry and a revolution is imminent, Small Change offers him a suggestion. All the poor could be gathered in the field. All the greatest actors in the country would go there with baskets.

Baskets are full of bread. All the greatest actors in the country will not give it to the poor but will go on eating in front of them. Because of their attitude, the hungry people become angry and come near them to find that they are not eating the real bread, but only cardboard bread. Then the people will clap and shout happily, appreciating their acting skill. The King wants to know if the poor people will laugh. Small Change clarifies his doubt. He assures him of their ability to laugh. He justifies it saying it is a tested and proven method. Then White Elephant enters telling the King that the people have gathered to congratulate him for his plan to sign the bill that will make them cheat the people. There is then a quarrel between White Elephant and Small Change as to who should get his bill first signed by the King.

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When the King is asked to show his face, he realizes that it is unwashed. So he puts his legs out of the window for the people to see. They pull his leg outside. The officials pull the legs inside. The King is in great pain. Shiva who appears with the Donkey, Ding Dong, makes use of this opportunity and asks the donkey to disperse the crowd. It does it so effectively. The King who watches this asks Shiva and Ding Dong to be brought inside. He admires the appearance of Donkey as it looks like a horse. In recognition of its merit, he appoints the Donkey Prime Minister of the Nation. Siva who is now Sivanna is appointed Ding Dong's PA. Chamberlain passed the proclamation saying:

a. No one will call "Ding Dong sahib" a donkey or criticize him. Every one instead of using God's name will now say "Ding Dong!" Any violator will be fined Rs.10,000 / -

b. In recognition of Ding Dong's service to the King, of dispersing the revolutionaries, everyone will have to buy the special postage stamp issued in his honour.

c. A special fodder – tax will be collected from the people so that the Ding Dong can be given "Grass from Australia, oilseed from America, fodder from China, and waste paper from England."

Then Small Change wants to know if Ding Dong is married. When Sivanna tells him that he is not married, Small Change agrees to arrange sexual pleasure for the night for Ding Dong. He asks Sivanna to bring Ding Dong in the evening to Mantralaya Bar sothat he can enjoy virgin donkeys. White Elephant hearing this says that he would arrange real virgin girls instead of Donkeys as Ding Dong is now appointed as PM. He asks Sivanna to bring Ding Dong to Balaji Bar in the evening.

Check Your Progress Questions

4. What is the name of the donkey that Shiva has brought?
5. Ding Dong was appointed as _____.

11.3.2 Scene Six

The Sixth Scene takes place in the Ganesha temple. Samba comes with a newspaper. He sings a song also while entering. His song is sarcastic in tone. It exposes the madness of his times. It shows how his country has degenerated and the people are treated as fools and idiots. His song as follows:

Notes

Times have changed.

A poisonous wind blows through the land.

Iron floats and cork sinks.

.....

They sing his praises,

'Ding Dong, Ding Dong' they call.

Man and woman dance like Donkeys on all fours,

Wearing borrowed faces,

Feeling to see if the wise have grown tails,

They tie gods to donkeys' tails.

They are burping from the fake they're fed.

.....

My god, these people are really mad.

Birayya is the name of the other man who has had a dream about the city becoming "a sewage tank". He wants to share his dream with someone. Samba takes the drink from him and begins to listen to his dream. They understand that they had the same dream. They see two halves of the same dream. They are pained to see the river turning into the sewage tank. The King and his men built a tank around it and made it a tank. They catch all the fish. When Samba catches one fish, it pleads with him to break the dam. The playwright brings to light how the politicians destroy the natural resources for their own profit. This scene ends with Birayya leaving to bring a pick and axe to break the dam down.

11.3.3 Scene Eight

This scene takes place in the Travellers' Bungalow. Samba is dressed up as a woman. He enters the Travellers' Bungalow first. Then enters Small Change. He is attracted by the woman, who is actually Samba. He wishes to know the reason for her arrival. Samba who is in disguise, replies that he wants a job as PA in White Elephant's office. Small Change assures her the job, provided Samba, whom he calls his 'Sundari', must offer Sexual favours to Small Change. Small Change closes the door and turns towards Samba. Before he touches Sundari, who is none other than Samba, White Elephant knocks at the door. Because there is no way out, Samba gives him a saree so that no one can identify him, when he is dressed up as a woman.

When White Elephant enters, he too talks like Small Change. Everything happens as before. When White Elephant is about to touch Samba (Sundari) the King arrives. He is also given the saree so that he can dress himself up as a woman. Then only the King would not punish him. The King enters and sings the praise of Sundari. Sundari tells the King that there are two other women who would like to dance before the King. The King agrees to that. Sundari sings and the two women Small Change and White Elephant dance. At the end of the dance, the King asks Samba to leave locking the door from outside. He decides to spend the night with those two women.

Check Your Progress Questions

6. Who dreams of city becoming a sewage tank?
7. Samba comes in the disguise of a woman to _____.
8. Small Change addresses Samba who is the disguise of a woman as _____.

11.3.4 Scene Nine

The last scene of this play takes place in the Ganesha temple. Samba and Shiva are seen conversing. The previous night something dreadful happened. The King, Small Change and White Elephant all appear with bandages. They appear to be injured severely, after the adventure of the previous night. The swayamvadhū of Ding Dong is over. Siva makes Ding Dong choose Gajanimbe by twisting its tail and making it bray. The King recognizes Gajanimbe as the girl in green saree and blue blouse. He is very angry with the Chamberlain for bringing him so much physical damage.

In this manner, the corruption, callousness, the lechery, and immorality of the politicians is parodied by Chandrasekhar Kambar in *Sambashiva*.

*Sambasiva – A Farce -
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11.4 SUMMATION

Notes

The episodes shown in this unit, shows the foolishness of the King and other Government officials. They do not understand the necessities of the people. They do not think of improvising the conditions of the people. They merely entertain themselves through some foolish activities. Their main concern has become passing trivial and irrelevant acts and proclamations. People's anger does not affect them. They continue doing foolish activities. Through these scenes, the playwright has condemned the idiotic attitude of the Government officials.

11.5 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

QUESTIONS:

1. Government official
2. Green revolution, white revolution, yellow revolution
3. stealing
4. Ding Dong
5. PM
6. Birayya
7. the Travellers' Bungalow 8. Sundari

11.6 ANSWER EACH OF THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS IN TWO SENTENCES:

1. Why does the King put his legs out of the window where people gathered?
2. What is the cunning plan devised by Small Change?
3. Why does the White Elephant and Small Change quarrel between each other?
4. How does Ding Dong save the King?
5. Why does Small Change ask for the marital status of the donkey?

11.7 ANSWER THE FOLLOWING IN A PARAGRAPH EACH:

1. Explore the madness of the times and degeneration of his country as reflected in Samba's song.
2. Describe the Travellers' Bungalow Episode in *Sambasiva – A Farce*.
3. What does the proclamation passed in favour of Ding Dong reflect?

11.8 ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS IN AN ESSAY EACH:

1. Analyse the degeneration of the society as reflected in *Sambasiva – A Farce*.
2. How does Kamkar criticize the society in his *Sambasiva – A Farce*?

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*Sambasiva – A Farce -
Chandrasekhar Kamkar*

Notes

UNIT XII THE RIGHTS OF THE EARTH

-K. Satchidanandan

Structure:

- 12.1. Introduction
- 12.2 Unit Objectives
- 12.3 Critical Appreciation of ‘The Rights of the Earth’
- 12.4 Summation
- 12.5 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions:
- 12.6 Answer each of the following questions in Two sentences:
- 12.7 Answer the following in a paragraph each:
- 12.8 Answer the following questions in an essay each:
- 12.9 For Further Reading

12.1 INTRODUCTION

K.Satchidanandan is considered to be the most active Malayalam poet. He is one of the most popular poets of Malayalam. He belongs to the New Wave of Malayalam poetry. Ayyappa Panikker, A.Ayyappan, Balachandran Chullikkadu and Vijayalakshmi are the other Malayalam poets who are ranked as eminent poets. Among these eminent poets, K.Satchidanandan occupies a prominent position in bringing out a new idiom, attitude and phraseology to Malayalam poetry. His poetry is eclectic in its choice of subjects, and treatment. His metaphors are a mixture of the traditional, the modern and the post-modern. He remains a cultural icon in Malayalam literature. He is a poet, translator, editor. He acts as a cultural bridge between the Eastern and Western cultural traditions. His fame reached beyond the boundaries of the nation.

12.2 UNIT OBJECTIVES

- Making the learners appreciate the greatness of the poet
- Making them understand the poet’s commitment towards society

12.4 Critical Appreciation of ‘The Rights of the Earth’

Through this poem ‘The Rights of the Earth’, K.Satchidanandan voices forth his concern for his society. He expresses his duty and commitment towards society in particular and the world at large. He stresses the necessity of oneness and being harmony with nature. He advocates that there is unity behind diversity all around the world. There may be different languages, different cultures, different ways of life but there is sameness in human spirit, human desires and human aspirations. The poem opens with the following lines:

Parrots speak the same language

all over the earth.

Even the Chinese crow recognizes

what’s in the cry of the Indian crow.

The organ Ganga plays, Volga plays too.

God has created animals, plants, trees and human beings so that they can live in harmony with each other. Each creature must understand and respect the needs and wishes of the other. Then only there can be an environmental balance. The ecological balance will not be disturbed if the creatures give space for the other living beings and non-living things.

Check Your Progress Questions

1. ‘The Rights of the Earth’ stresses the necessity of harmony with ____.
2. Why does dinosaur species evacuate from the world?

The oak and the teak, the hare and the peacock,

even the lions of fire in every wood

speak the same green language of instincts.

But the world fails to function with peace. Nations are fighting with one another. Each nature attempts to dominate the other nation. As a result, there is only an aggressive attitude. There is violence, uneasiness and dismay

everywhere. None expresses the concern, understanding, forgiveness with others. They are stuck to their own position and expect others to bend according their own wishes. This is what the poet expresses in the following lines:

The cold war is no reason

for the harshness of the grunt of the polar bear –

The poet gives a warning to people with such attitude. They should realize that the world function on the principle of harmony. If they fail to understand this,

Check Your Progress Questions

3. Who created artificial walls dividing nations, communities?
4. What creates the difference between people?

they are not fit to live in this world. They would be eventually wiped out of this world. The poet cites the case of the dinosaurs which lived like an exclusive community. These creatures did not live in harmony with other creatures. Because of this nature, they disappeared from the world. This particular species evacuated from the world for violating the oneness of the world:

though the dinosaur vanished uncomprehended

as they spoke in Sanskrit, like the gods.

There may be differences of opinion among people regarding that. Only with patience, once can understand the necessity of being in harmony with creatures.

The printing machine may not follow

what the washing one has to say.

It can, however, guess the complaints

of the typewriters murmuring like rains.

The language of the printing machine can be understood by the typewriter. Only with patience and willingness to listen, one can understand it. The world is getting intolerant. In the opinion of the poet, patience and willingness to

listen are the rarer virtues. Intolerance of the people leads to violence. The poet expresses his anguish regarding this stage:

*The speech of the train's wheels turns obscure
only when stained by the blood
of a young human throat.*

Men are born alike. By nature, we are born alike. By nature, all men are born alike. People are born with same nature. But it is culture that creates difference. Because of that, we became strangers to one another. Humans created artificial walls dividing everyone into nations, communities, ethnic groups and so on. Man does not realize this manmade artificial wall which is dividing one another. Because of this division, man feels sad. The small-minded men emphasize this difference. It is expressed in the following lines:

*Men too, of all nations,
cry in the same tongue on being born.
Afterwards they grow strange to one another
even stranger than a grasshopper is to a centipede.
Sawdust and rust
rags moist with the fat of machines,
insecticides and gun powder
enter the substance of words.*

Men led away from the correct path. Leaders and thinkers have narrow-mindedness only. They influence the minds of people with their ideas. They wish their followers to be like sheep, following them blindly, without questioning them. They are merely manipulators, think only of their own gains. Their aim is to attain their needs, with their selfish interests. They involve with their minds and hearts, only towards fanaticism, jingoism, parochialism, hatred, jealousy and violence. They modify their world into a hotbed of bitter rivalry and anachronism. Finally they ruin the peace. Political leaders, the religious fanatics, the community leaders made this world into a place of savagery. They change it into a place of disturbance so that they can be active.

*The leader's cunning and the follower's cant,
the lie of the manipulator and the blood of the victim
ruin even the little transparency that remains.*

The poet mentions the political struggle which is going on between Israel and Palestine. This struggle destroyed the peace of the West Bank and Gaza region. It has a historical significance. It is a holy land of Jerusalem. It is a divine place for three influential religions in the world: Judaism, Christianity and Islam. The clash between the Jews and the Palestinians is a political struggle. In the name of God, one army is pitted against the other. It is called spiritual struggle.

*Olives trees speak the language of genesis
in the land of the Arab as well as of the Jew.
Yet here among the orange groves
behold, a new Auschwitz.*

With the historical consciousness, the poet refers to Israel and Palestine. He ironically refers to this topic. God has given the language to men so that they can live together as a community, in harmony. But the followers of the Jewish religion and the Islamic religion are at war with each other. They have used language only to describe their division, separation and independence. Humans are not supposed to behave in such a way:

*Piled up this time at the doorstep
are not the dolls, whistles and toyguns
of the offsprings of the Jew
but rifles, of the fighters of Palestine,
gypsy rifles, of the fighters of Palestine,
thrust out of a python's mouth.
Like the silken pall that veils the worlds,
and you feel the stench of the corpses,
maimed and battered.*

Check Your Progress Questions

5. The political struggle between Palestine and Israel destroyed the peace of ____ and ____.
6. The purpose of language is to _____.

The poet feels worried that even the children are not spared from their desertion. Children are the embodiments of purity, innocence. They are the symbols of hope and strength. They become victims to the cruel elders. It is understood from the history that this world faced unhappy twists and turns and finally led to this unhappy state. During the childhood, children enjoy the beauties of nature. They feel blessed at the lap of nature. But by falling victim to the cruelty of the elders, they lose their innocence. In their innocent age itself, the blood is shed.

Heart shudders when children reach for the knife,

only to snap a twig in the garden though.

Silence sharpens the murderer's knife

while the hangman's shadow darkens speech.

The poet lives in such a place filled with violence. He finds hatred and violence in his world. He wishes to bring a change in the world with his words. He wants to restore peace and harmony in the world. He wishes to bring back the lost harmony:

Then comes to the poet, the foolish prophet,

comes to build a temple of light

For the World of Man.

He strokes the Word

with the leaves of the sun

and the petals of music.

He propitiates the Word

with the cooings of the dove,

and the murmur of the pipal.

He washes the Word in the sweat of the toil

and the thirst of the toiler.

He anoints the Word

with the sigh of the lonely

and the wrath of the crowds.

He offers the Word the salt of the Buddha

and the wine of Jesus.

And on the summits he again carves out

with the seventy-faced diamond, words;

Love, struggle, Freedom.

12.4 SUMMATION

Through this poem 'The Rights of the Earth', K.Satchidanandan voices forth his concern for his society. He expresses his duty and commitment towards society in particular and the world at large. He stresses the necessity of oneness and being harmony with nature. He advocates that there is unity behind diversity all around the world.

12.5 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS:

1. nature
2. violated the oneness of the world
3. People
4. culture

5. West Bank and Gaza region

6. Live together

*The Rights Of The Earth -K.
Satchidanandan*

**12.6 ANSWER EACH OF THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS
IN TWO SENTENCES:**

Notes

1. What is the contribution of K.Satchidanandan to Malayalam poetry?
2. For what purpose, people use language, according to K.Satchidanandan?
3. What is the aim of narrow minded leaders, in the view of K.Satchidanandan?

**12.7 ANSWER THE FOLLOWING IN A PARAGRAPH
EACH:**

1. What does K.Satchidanandan stress through the poem ‘The Rights of the Earth’?
2. Describe the status of present society that K.Satchidanandan wishes to change in ‘The Rights of the Earth’.
3. How are children treated in the present society as depicted in ‘The Rights of the Earth’?
4. Write a note on the behavior of the narrow-minded leaders.
5. How does the poet justify that the struggle between Israel and Palestine as ‘spiritual struggle’ in ‘The Rights of the Earth’?

**12.8 ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS IN AN
ESSAY EACH:**

1. Examine K.Satchidanandan’s concern for society as revealed in his ‘The Rights of the Earth’.
2. What are the duties and commitments that one has towards his society as mentioned in ‘The Rights of the Earth’?

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UNIT XIII BLACK FLAG IN THE HANDS OF AMBEDKAR NIKILESWARAR

*Black Flag in The Hands Of
Ambedkar Nikileswarar*

Notes

Sturcture:

- 13.1. Introduction
- 13.2 Unit Objectives
- 13.3 About the poet
- 13.4 Influence of Ambedkar in Telugu - Dalit Literature
- 13.5 Nikhileswar's Views on Poetry
- 13.6 Nikhileswar's Conception of Violence
- 13.7 Summation
- 13.8 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions
- 13.9 Answer each of the following questions in Two sentences
- 13.10 Answer the following in a paragraph each
- 13.11 Answer the following questions in an essay each
- 13.12 For Further Reading

13.1 INTRODUCTION

'Black Flag in the hands of Ambdedkar' is written by Nikileswarar. Among the Telangana poets, Nikileswaran greatly contributed to the patterns of Telugu literature. He occupies prominent position due to the themes he has taken for his poems. His poems are rated so high in Telugu literature. He experimented new techniques and style in Telugu literature

13.2. UNIT OBJECTIVES

- To make the learners know about the poet
- To make them appreciate the powerful words employed by the poet

13.3 ABOUT THE POET

Yadava Reddy under the pen name of 'Nikileswar' has contributed to the field of Telugu literature. With the emergence of Naked poets (Digambara Kavulu) in the year 1965, a group of radical writers emerged. They believe in violence to bring out a social change. Among the Naked poets, Nikhileswar is one such person. There were six Naked poets such as 'Nagamuni' (Manepalli Hrushikesava Rao), 'Nikhileswar' (Yadava Reddy), 'Cherabanda Raju' (Baddam Bhaksar Reddy), 'Mahaswapna' (Kammisetty Venkateswara Rao), 'Jwaalmukhi' (Veera Raghavacharyulu) and 'Bhairavaiah' (Manmohan Sahaya).

These poets employed slang and abusive language in their poems to give the shock treatment to the society. They feel that the entire is rotting with leprosy patients. They compare themselves as the saviours of the society. But they lacked the support from the society. These revolutionary poets advocated armed rebellion. Telugu literature is dynamic with their activity. Nikileswar talks about the unravelling plight of Dalits and their demand for social justice in his poems.

13.4 INFLUENCE OF AMBEDKAR IN TELUGU - DALIT LITERATURE

Dalit literature has been an extensive study made in Telugu literature. The poets writing about the plight of Dalits, wish to abolish the discrimination and inequalities from contemporary society. They advocate humanist principles of liberty, equality and brotherhood. The most influential Dalit thinker is Ambedkar.

Check Your Progress Questions

1. Yadava Reddy writes in ____ language.
2. Who has been the motivating force for the dalit movement in Andhra Pradesh?

Ambedkar has been the motivating force for the Dalit movement in Andhra Pradesh. Ambedkarism has been considered as an avant grade Dalit political and literary movement in Andhra Pradesh. His principles are received well into their literature. His philosophy, and ideology were reflected in their

writings. Ambedkarism aims at the successful accomplishment of new democratic country.

The socio-cultural problems of Telugana society were reflected in the writings of Telugu poets. They expressed their sympathy for the untouchables. They made remarkable efforts to reform the society. They projected the problems of the Dalits from various angles in their literary creations. They voice out the torments and distressful conditions of Dalits in their writings. They write about the atrocities inflicted by the upper castes on the Dalits and revolt against it.

*Black Flag in The Hands Of
Ambedkar Nikhileswarar*

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13.5 NIKHILESWAR'S VIEWS ON POETRY

Nikhileswar has talked of the art of poetry in the following lines:

For me, poetry has been an exploration of truth. The phase-wise search led me from mere romanticism to social protest. My inner self found an expression in my poetry. The Telugu language in which I have been writing compelled me to break new grounds for fresher pastures and red Oleanders. So our revolt began in the form of 'Digamabara Kavita'. It opened up all the floodgates of emotions interacting with the world around me. In exposing the inherent injustices and oppression in our social system and to fight them in my own humble way, my poetry is a constant companion on the path of people's revolution. The form is only a tool, of course with all the avenues of experimentation. I believe that genuine poetry wherever written becomes the inner voice of human essence."

13.6 NIKHILESWAR'S CONCEPTION OF VIOLENCE

Nikhileswar talks of the pains and distress endured by the poor people and the luxurious life of the rich people. By providing the contrastive picture of the rich and the poor, the poet intensifies the sorrows of the poor. In the poem 'Violence', the words and phrases like 'emptiness', 'bodies rotting in pain', 'stinking bodies', 'meaningless laugh', 'destroying the crashing values', 'spotless love' and 'sprouts from violence' indicate his powerful use of words to stress the plight of the poor and luxury of the rich. The poet's repeated use of the word 'emptiness' indicate his harsh tone which projects the readers of the author's concern for the poor people.

In the poem 'The Violence of Vengeance', Nikhileswar talks of the current scenario in which the terrorism is the common one. To avenge the person, the blood flows in the human history. The ritual of bloodbath is quite common in human history. Without mercy, men go on killing other men. Without human values, people burn the other humans and make tea using that pyre. Those people do not exclude the lifeless things. They do not show mercy on children also. They find pleasure in committing infanticide. There is only thin line between violence and non-violence. The earth longs for greener life. The terrorism breathes through the politics of murders and suicides that stalk round imposing final question over the existence.

Check Your Progress Questions

3. What is the original name of Nihileswar?
4. What is Nikhileswar's constant companion to bring revolution in the lives of people?

13.7 SUMMATION

Nikhileswar writes under the pen name 'Yadava Reddy'. According to him, poetry is the exploration of truth. The poetry helps him to open the floodgates and put his emotions through writing. It helps him to expose the inherent injustice and oppression prevalent in his society. He feels that poetry is his constant companion to bring revolution in the lives of the people. He strongly believed that genuine poetry is the essence of human life.

13.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS:

1. Telugu
2. Ambedkar
3. Yadava Reddy
4. Poetry

13.9 ANSWER EACH OF THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS IN TWO SENTENCES:

1. What are the contrastive pictures that Nikhileswar provide in his poems?

2. What is quite common in human history, according to Nikhileswar?

3. What are the things that Nikhileswar express through his poetry?

*Black Flag in The Hands Of
Ambedkar Nikileswarar*

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13.10 ANSWER THE FOLLOWING IN A PARAGRAPH EACH:

1. Describe Nikhileswar's views on violence.

2. Bring out Ambedkar's contribution to Dali movement.

13.11 ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS IN AN ESSAY EACH:

Write a critical appreciation of the poem 'Black Flag in the Hands of Ambedkar'.

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UNIT XIV THE PLEASURE DOME-

Shrikant Verma

*Black Flag in The Hands Of
Ambedkar Nikileswarar*

Notes

Sturcture:

- 14.1. Introduction
- 14.2 Unit Objectives
- 14.3 About the poet
- 14.4 Critical Appreciation of the poem
- 14.5 Poet's anguish on Seeing the Rottening Society
- 14.6 Summation
- 14.7 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions
- 14.8 Answer each of the following questions in Two sentences
- 14.9 Answer the following in a paragraph each
- 14.10 Answer the following questions in an essay each
- 14.11 For Further Reading

14.1 INTRODUCTION

'The Pleasure Dome' is a poem with irregular lines. It is not a poem with regular stanzas or regular line arrangement. It is irregular in its length of the lines also. It has several sections, both big and small. The poet seems to be in the loss of control of his thoughts. His thoughts seem to be flowing with speed. He has thoughts about himself, about the country and about the time in history in which he lives. This poem is about his comment on everything he sees and responds to.

14.2. UNIT OBJECTIVES

- To make the learners understand the rush of poet's thoughts
- To make them appreciate the poem

14.3 ABOUT THE POET

Shrikant Verma is one of the most notable poets of the Modern Age in Hindi poetry. He brings freshness of everyday conversation in his poetry. He expresses his concern for the several issues of contemporary India. He shows his anger and irony about the degenerating condition of the society and country. He was born in 1931 and died in 1986 at his age of 55.

Check Your Progress Questions

1. Shrikant Verma brings _____ of everyday conversation in his poetry.
2. The poem opens with the whizzing of _____ near him.

14.4 CRITICAL APPRECIATION OF THE POEM

In the poem 'The Pleasure Dome', Shrikant Verma makes a comment on everything the poet sees and responds to. When the poem begins, it is seen the poet is walking. He describes the bullet which whizzes near him. It indicates the act of terrorism in the country.

And as I walk along, thinking of this,

a bullet whizzes past

very close to me.

Is this a hold up,

Or is it a revolution?

In the name of a separate state, there comes revolutions, sabotages, destruction, violence and bloodshed. Peace is ruined. The administrators are inefficient. They divide the country now and then as they fail to govern the country with law and order. The poet mentions this inefficiency of the administrators.

The poet does not seem to be bothered about the things that happen around him. Men do not have control over things. They remain helpless. Everything goes intolerable and unbearable for men. He says:

*Whatever it is, it makes no difference now,
all that's left for me to do
is to move along.*

The poet understands that there are troubles within the country. But there are more troubles without the country. The country does not remain same physically, geographically, and politically. There is a disturbing change taking place all the time:

*I've watched the country on the map,
every year the map's different,
a portion to China,
another to Pakistan –*

He decides to express it. He understands that it is of no use nowadays when people turn out to be callous, selfish and unconcerned. People do not have interest in everything they indulge in. So the poet expresses it:

*This is really the limit, I'll have to speak out now,
there seems to be no limit to anything,
you might as well come right in,
strip me to the skin,
lash me on the butt and write across my face
HE'S AN ASS.*

The poet is angry with the people who are not concerned with the things that happen around them. He is shocked at their indifferent attitude towards life. He cannot tolerate the indifference they show in their life. He says:

*Even this
makes no difference –
everyone sits unleashed exactly where he is,
keeping every strand of shameless indifference in place
with a cheap plastic comb.*

He feels pained to see this. He exposes the evils of society so that people can understand their position and reform themselves to undergo a change. He is filled with concern for society. He wishes to bring change in the society. To eradicate the evils of society, he writes one poem after another poem. He finds strong reason to one poem after another condemning the evils of society.

I empty myself out each time

only to be filled with still more puss.

Everywhere people go after quick and instant remedies. They think that there are miracle drugs available all around the world to cure their sickness. The poet is very cautious about such gimmicks. He does not wish to be cheated by such gimmicks.

Whether it's running sores or eczema, acne or ringworm,

it works wonders on all of them,

this SURDAS CREAM from Mathura,

try it now

today.

There are remedies for sexual sterility in society. People go after these drugs to revitalize their sagging sexuality. The poet says no to their tendency. He notices the web of prostitution and sinful indulgence of the flesh everywhere in the society. He refuses to draw into this web. He mentally gets away from all these entanglements.

What did you say? Salamander oil

to give me staying power?

No, no, sweet ladies eager to be laid, please turn back,

I'm past such things.

He does not want to a part of the corrupted society. He says that he is happier putting them in places where they belong:

I've let them pass just like that,

let everything return to its proper place,

*sins to the world,
con-men to their mother's wombs,
bureaucrats to this gymkhanas,
politicians
to their smelly stables.*

The farmer is depended on the monsoon. But the monsoon is going to fail the farmer. There will be a widespread famine and suffering. Politicians cannot bring remedy to the situation. He talks more, appears more on Television and fool people with excuses and explanations. They do not show their concern for the people. Whether they are fed or not, whether they live or die, the politicians are interested only in ensuring his seat in the capital.

*The monsoon isn't going to arrive,
there's going to be a shortage of grain,
everyone's going to die of indigestible NEWS,
only the capital's going to survive.*

Check Your Progress Questions

3. Politicians cannot bring remedy to _____.
4. How do the politicians fool people?
5. The poet does not wish to be the follower of _____.

There is anger and frustration everywhere. There is a spirit of revolt. But somehow the poet understands that it is not going to change the world radically. He feels,

*The stomach's already begun to convulse,
...one feels the emptiness,
the sap's gone.*

The poet makes one important decision. As he would not bring out a change in the society, he decides to bring out a change in the personal world. He declares

his independence, his autonomy and his absolute freedom. He is nobody's slave. He would not listen to anyone. He would not be the follower of another man. He would be his own master. Not even the government of his country can control him and have him under its thumb:

*No matter who runs the show,
I go by no one else's terms,
listen to no one's pleas
that he killed my enemy.
no one represents me,
before the census count
I must pass away from every lane in every town,
every ballot-box will contain
one vote less.
no one makes the terms for me.*

He declared his independence and freedom. Then he decides to take his own path. He cannot go on the routine and beaten path. He decides to find his own way. It may not conform to the expectations of the world. But he is not concerned for the concern of the world. He is more interested in how to regain his freedom, how to secure his release from all kinds of worldly entanglements.

*I have to make my way through the milling crowd,
I have to pass the mass of flies,
drawing close to them, one by one,
I have to move away from all my friends*

People around him wish to have a pleasing attitude and fine behaviour. The poet's behaviour is not a pleasing one for the people. The poet feels restless. It is clear from the poet's wish to be left alone:

*YOU THERE WALK PROPERLY,
this Absurdity barks at me –*

*shoving me around,
surrounding me with eyes that glare,
where are you taking me against my will?
Let go! Let go! Let go of me,
or else!*

When the poet is left alone, he broods over his fate. Without anybody's patronage, he wishes to be left alone. He is strengthened by his resolve to be left alone. He may not have achieved anything substantial or significant in material terms. But he had the quiet and solitude that makes him a great poet. He is satisfied with himself, as he could write great poems in his solitude. His poem may not provoke social upheavals or revolutions. But his poems may come in the mind of the sensitive readers who share the same sentiments that of the poet. The poet ends this poem by saying:

*Though everything went against me,
I made poems possible,
made something to myself.*

14.5 POET'S ANGUISH ON SEEING THE ROTTENING SOCIETY

Shrikant Verma is an eminent poet who writes with the intention to reform the society. He notices the society as rotting. People are also leading their lives without responsibility. They lead only sinful life. They do not focus on the necessities of life. They crave for only satisfying their external needs. They do not lead their lives meaningfully. Verma has given the contrastive pictures in this poem. Materialistic life presented in sharp contrast with immaterialistic values of life. The healthy life is in contrast with unhealthy life. The role of politicians is contrasted with innocent people. The survival and death, responsibility and irresponsibility, peaceful atmosphere and violent atmosphere, violence against the people and inaction of the people, attentiveness and idleness, lustful attitude of the people and the poet's concern for the society.

14.6 SUMMATION

Shrikant Verma is one of the most notable poets of the Modern Age in Hindi poetry. He brings freshness of everyday conversation in his poetry. He expresses his concern for the several issues of contemporary India. In the poem 'The Pleasure Dome', Shrikant Verma makes a comment on everything the poet sees and responds to. The poet makes one important decision. As he would not bring out a change in the society, he decides to bring out a change in the personal world. He declares his independence, his autonomy and his absolute freedom. He is nobody's slave. He would not listen to anyone. He would not be the follower of another man. He would be his own master.

14.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS:

1. freshness
2. Bullet
3. Failure of monsoon
4. with excuses and explanations
5. Another man

14.8 ANSWER EACH OF THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS IN TWO SENTENCES:

1. What is the interest of the politicians, according to Shrikant Verma?
2. What is the decision made by Shrikant Verma in his 'The Pleasure Dome'?

14.9 ANSWER THE FOLLOWING IN A PARAGRAPH EACH:

1. Why does the poet feel restless in 'The Pleasure Dome'?
2. What makes the poet follow his own path in 'The Pleasure Dome'?

14.10 ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS IN AN ESSAY EACH:

1. Write a critical appreciation of the poem 'The Pleasure Dome'.

2. Explain the poet's anguish on seeing the rotting society with special reference to 'The Pleasure Dome'.

*Black Flag in The Hands Of
Ambedkar Nikileswarar*

Notes

14.11 FOR FURTHER READING

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