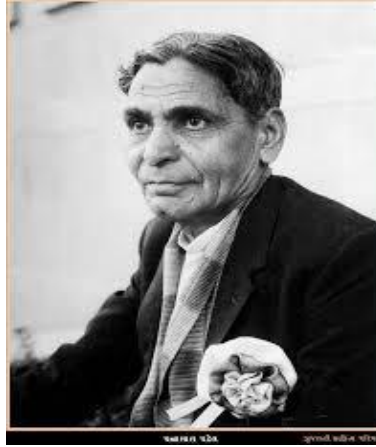


Chapter: 2

Life and Works of Pannalal Patel and R. K. Narayan in the Postcolonial context

Pannalal Patel (07- 05 - 1912 to 06 - 04 -1989)



(<http://www.gujaratsahityaparishad.com/prakashan/photo-gallery/sahitya-sarjako/pannalapatel>)

Pannalal Patel is considered to be an exceptional voice in Gujarati literary world, as he wrote without any extensive formal training or education, solely relying on his individual talent and distinctive sensibility. He created a place for himself in the world of Gujarati fiction due to his exceptional story telling skills and unique subject matter.

To acquaint ourselves with his works, it is useful to have a brief introduction to his life and literary career on the basis of History of Gujarati *Literature* and some other biographical material: Pannalal was born in Mandali, a small village of Dungarpur district located near Rajasthan-Gujarat border on May 7, 1912. His father, Nanalal Patel was an ordinary farmer, whom people used to address as ‘Nanasha’. At the age of two, Pannalal had lost the shelter of his father. His father was fond of reading epic poems like the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* and books like *Kavyadohan*, *Okhaharan*. He often used to recite such books at home rhythmically. Consequently, his home was labeled as the ‘place of education’

in that small village. Nanalal had provided rich informal education in the family, which had left its influence on Pannalal's career too. Gabo, a Brahmin had started a temporary school in a small village on the insistence of village people, but hardly had Pannalal learnt ABC, the school closed. Later on he was sent to a place called Meghraj for further study where he could study up to the 4th standard. While staying in Meghraj, he came into contact with Jayshankaranand, the priest of the temple and his teacher, who taught him the lessons of life. This event has left its influence on Pannalal's literary career, especially in his novels where he often uses to draw the character-sketches of saints, priests or devotees. Here, he also received an opportunity to serve the saints and the monks like Khemraj Vyas and Paramhansa from whom he could gain spiritual knowledge. Once he was introduced to the prince of the Dungarpur state by chance. In order to please the prince, he sang the song *Bansivala Ajo More Des* (i.e. O, flute player come to my land!) in his sweet voice. As a result, the prince's assistance made his boarding education possible at Idar. The school, where he took his education is now known as 'Sir Pratap High School Idar'. (Lieutenant- General Maharaja Sri Sir Pratap Singh Sahib Bahadur of Idar GCB GCSI GCVO KIH (October 22, 1845- September 4, 1922) commonly known as Sir Pratap, was a Career British Indian Army Officer Maharaja of the Princely state of Idar (Gujarat). Sir Pratap commanded his regiments valiantly during the First World War in France and Flanders. The name Idar is derived from the myth of two devils named Elva and Durg who stayed in the hills of this region. So people used to call the place as *I-dar-chhe* (meaning 'there is a fear'). Hence, Idar, a historical location surrounded by mountain, valleys, streams and fertile land, has left its inherent influence upon Pannalal's creativity. The stately palaces, mountain caves, etc. portrayed in his novels might have derived from his experienced state at Idar. Pannalal was fortunate enough to befriend Umashankar Joshi in his youth. Both had received their education together up to 8th standard. At the age of sixteen, his wedding took place. His wife Valiben

was around six years old when their marriage took place. He remained the victim of evil customs like the child-marriage. The economic crisis had forced him to leave the education at an early stage. After leaving school, he had a very difficult life. He found a job in a city mill. Later on, he tried his luck at various places. He started a cloth shop of his own, worked as a clerk, became a manager in a warehouse, cultivated land as a farmer in a village, enjoyed the task of grazing bullocks, served at the waterworks and electricity company in Ahmedabad and also joined as a servant to the owner of the Milijin store. Such experiences are indirectly echoed in some of his stories like *Jindagina Khel*. The Freedom Movement was on in Ahmedabad and various parts of the country during that period. Pannalal was residing in Ahmedabad, the centre of non-cooperation movement, during this period in 1930-33. Though, he could not participate in the movement since livelihood was his prime concern. His later novels like *Na Chhutake* focuses on Gandhian movement and philosophy. Since his childhood, Pannalal had received music as a gift from a man like Jayshankaranand.

Umashankar praises his talent for singing in an article on *Alapzalap* and claims that he would have become a good singer, if provided an opportunity. Umashankar views music in Pannalal's fiction writing as 'a soulful element' mirrored especially in the novels like *Valamana*, *Malela Jeev* and *Manvini Bhavai* (Dave & Desai 18 Trans.).

While delivering his speech in Gujarati Sahitya Parishad (conference), Pannalal has confessed his favour for treatment of the theme of erotic love in his fictional world: "My pen suits the theme of love more and likes it too. Though, my love is not limited to only to man – woman In spite of this, it seems that my creativity favors the man-woman plots" (*Ibid.* 18 Trans.).

The event brought complete change in Pannalal's personality is his second meeting with Umashankar. When Pannalal Patel made his debut in Gujarati literature, Gandhiji's influence was all pervading on the life of Indian people. Gandhiji appealed writers to

approach villages. Many literary authors followed Gandhiji's call during those days. Pannalal too, attended the 'Sahitya Parishad' presided by Gandhiji at Gujarat Vidyapith Ahmedabad in the year 1936, where he was advised to write by Umashankar Joshi and T. P. Luhar (known as Sundaram). They influenced Pannalal's literary genius. Pannalal has confessed that Sundaram's recommendation proved like 'wings offered to cripple' (Dave & Desai 19). Pannalal started his literary career by attempting poetry, but could not please the major poets like Sundaram, who directed him to write stories. Sundaram was highly impressed after reading his first story *Vanbala* published in *Prajabandhu*. Later on *Sheth Ni Sharda* was published under the loving care of Jhaverchand Meghani. As a result of his friendship with Umashankar, he became familiar with major international writers like Shakespeare, Chekhov and Turgenev. His Stories like *Dhaninu Nak*, *Sukh-Dukhna Saathi* were published in *Prasthan* by R.V. Pathak which established him as a successful Gujarati writer.

Pannalal is an example of a man who in spite of scant formal schooling, rose to become one of the greatest of Gujarati writers. One of the sources of his creative consciousness is rural background. Other sources of his creativity are the native dialect, the lifestyle, the customs, and traditional, orthodox values of the region where he lived for years. Pannalal is slightly different than his forerunners because without pursuing any overt political ideology, he has depicted human condition realistically. Pannalal himself has confessed: "In reality, I am not an idealist, emotionalist or literary writer. Since the beginning, i.e. when wrote the story *Kanku*, I am interested only in the human life..." (qtd. in *Pannalal Patel* 93 Trans.).

Pannalal remarks in *Alakmalak*, A Miscellanea on how he has achieved the expected path through experiencing the life:

Life seems to me like a spider's life- to keep on emitting the saliva by self and move ahead with the support of same saliva. Similarly, I sought out my way

through self-understanding, faced obstacles, learned gradually and got shaped.

At present, I could see that such understanding hasn't come through meditation, reading or in contact with certain persons, but seems to be implicit in the experiences of life. (158 Trans.)

The beauty of nature, the fairs, the earth and the sky of Ishan region have shaped his creative genius without much effort. He does not remain harsh towards the tough realities of life like Umashankar Joshi, because his aim is neither to reform the society nor to propagate any form of idealism. He aims at talking an earthly man, showing the manifold mysteries of human incarnation and strength of people in love and separation. He shows the brave face of humanity.

The indigenous environment, the vicissitudes of life, friendship with eminent writers, and the spiritual experience of Pondicherry, etc. constantly instigated Pannalal's creativity. It is considered that the school of experience proves more beneficial to him than four-walls of formal education. He is well-known for his *Manvini Bhavai*, *Malela Jeev* and *Valamana*, which placed him among the foremost novelists of Gujarati literature. Sundaram, while introducing Pannalal, notes:

Pannalal emerges without receiving any formal training in literature. He is the miracle of the present literary era. Such miracle leads us towards its roots what Pannalal himself says 'derives from a mysterious world (derives through divine inspiration)' (Introduction to *Bhangyana Bheru*).

Umashankar seems to justify that *Sarasvati* (Goddess of learning) might have shaped him since childhood: "Pannalal was forced to return from the door of *Sarasvati* - his education remained incomplete, but *Sarasvati* (Goddess of Learning) came inspire him, originated in his pen" (*Alakmalak* 11 Trans.).

Pannalal was the product of the Gandhian era, and his approach seems validating the humanitarian aspect. The dimensions like non-violence, non-cooperation, consciousness of self-dignity, desire to establish right and the awareness to fight against injustice, etc. are fully merged in his expression. Pannalal was the winner of Narmad Gold-medal, Ranjeetram-medal and many more prizes. *Manvini Bhavai* his *magnum opus* also won him 'Indian Jnananpith Award' in the year 1985. Pannalal's literary career lasted for about 47 years. During this marathon span, he wrote 56 novels, 26 short-novels (collection), 15 books on literature for children, one-act plays, conversions of literary works into drama and miscellaneous (Prakirna) forms.

Here is the detailed sketch of his literary world:

Novels:

Valamana (1940), *Malela Jiv* (1941), *Bhiru Sathi* (1943), *Yauvan* (1944), *Surabhi* (1945), *Manvini Bhavai* (1947), *Bhangyan Bheru* (1957), *Ghammar Valonu 1-2* (1968,) *Pachhale Barne* (1947), *Nachhutake* (1955), *Fakiro* (1955), *Navu Lohi* (1958), *Padagha ane Padachhaya* (1960), *Manakhavatar* (1961), *Ame Be Baheno* (1962), *Karoliyanu Jalu* (1963), *Andhi Ashadni* (1964), *Vali Vatanman* (1966), *Min Mati na Manvi* (1966), *Nagad Narayan* (1967), *Pranayna Jujava Pot* (1969), *Kanku* (1967), *Ajawali Rat Amasni* (1971), *Allad Chhokari* (1972), *Galalsing* (1972), *Ek Anokhi Prit* (1973), *Markatlal* (1973), *Ekalo* (1973) *Nathi Paranya Nathi Kumvara* (1974), *Parthne Kaho Chadave Ban 1-5* (1974), *Rame Sitane Marya Jo 1-4* (1976), *Krishna Jivanlila 1-5* (1977), *Taag* (1979), *Shiv Parvati 1-6* (1979), *Bhushmani Banshayya 1-3* (1980), *Angaro* (1981), *Pageru* (1981), *Kach-Devyani* (1981), *Devyani-Yayati 1-2* (1982), *Param Vaishnav Narsinh Maheta* (1983), *Raw-Material* (1983), *Jene Jivi Janyu* (1984), *Satyabhamano Manushi Pranay* (1984), *Manavdehe:Kamdev-Rati* (1984), *Bhim-Hidimba* (1984), *Arjunno Vanvas ke Pranaypravas?*(1984), *Pradhyumna-Prabhvati* (1984), *Krishnani Aath Patranio* (1984), *Shinkhadi- Stri ke Purush?*(1984),

Revatighela Baldevji (1984), Sahdev-Bhanumatino Pranay (1984), Kubja ane Shree Krishna(1984), Narman Nari Il-Ila (1986), Jindagi Sanjivani1-7 (1986-87).

Short Stories:

Navalिकासंग्रह; Sukhdukhna Sathi (1940), Jivo Dand (1941), Jindagina Khel (1940), Lakhchorasi (1944), Panetarna Rang (1946), Sachaan Samanan (1949), Parevada (1956), Vatrakne Kanthe (1952), Orta (1954), Dilni Vat (1962), Manana Morla (1958), Tilottama (1960), Dharti Abhna Chhetan (1962), Tyagi-Anuragi (1963), Dilaso(1964), Chitareli Divalo (1965), Morlina Munga Sur (1966), Malo (1967), Vatno Katko (1969), Anavar (1970), Koi Deshi Koi Pardeshi (1971), Asmani Najar (1972), Binni (1973), Chhanko (1975), Gharnu Ghar (1979), Narato (1981).

Edited Stories:

Pannalalni Shreshtha Vartao (1958), Pannalalno Vartavaibhav (1963), Vineli Navalikao (1973).

Text Translated in Hindi:

Gunge Sur Bansurike (1986)

Ekanki (One Act Play) and Drama:

Jamairaj (1952), Dholiya Sag Sisamna (1963), Kankan (1965), Allad Chhokari (1971), Bhane Narsaiyo (1977), Swapna (1978), Tran Safal Rupantaro (Chando Shen Shamlo?, Sapanana Sathi, Kanan) (1985).

Ball-Kishor Sahitya:

Pariksha (1962), Ankh Ada Kan (1964), Ek Khovayelo Chhokaro (1969), Balkillol Granthmala Pu- 10 (1973), Vartakillol Pu- 4 (1972), Vartakillol Guchchha Pu-2 (1973), Rishikulni Kathao Pu-4 (1973),

Dev no Didhel 1-5 (1975), Mahabharat Kishorkatha (1976),

Ramayan Kishorkatha (1978), Shree Krishnakatha (1978),

Satyayugni Kathao 1-5 (1981), Bhishma (1981),

Gurudakshina (1981), Lokminara (1986),

Prakirna:

Alapzalap (1973), Purnayognu Achaman (1978),

Alakmalak (1986), Sarjanni Suvarna Smaranika (1986).

Brief Survey of Pannalal Patel's Novels:

Jhaverchand Meghani welcomes *Valamana* (1940) as the true introductory text of rural life (Desai 23). Pannalal has preferred the moment and the situation in this short novel with which expresses his experience of mysticism and humanism deeply. Monor Mukhi in order to get advantage of victimized Zamku brings her to Ahmedabad. He does this evil business to earn money by selling her. But the person, who wishes to sell her off, seems to have transformation of his heart. He observes the face of his dead daughter Nathi in Zamku's innocent face unknowingly. The flow of latent love awakens in his heart to show his best. As a result, after returning to the village, Mukhi gets her engaged to Moti, the son of Amba. Though, Mukhi has to struggle hard against the groups of the community to solve the issue. Finally, Monorda accepts Zamku as his own daughter and manages everything for her marriage ceremony. This is the story of Monor Mukhi's changed heart. The plot construction and environment communicates Pannalal's skilled art of narration. Prior in the narrative, after returning from her father-in-law's house, Zamku settles in her native from where once she tries to escape with a Brahmin Tehsildar, but could not adjust herself with him. Finally, she returns to her parental house wherein her brother and his wife refuse to accept her in the house. For her daughter's ill-luck Jamna, her mother requests Monorda, the Mukhi to solve

the dispute. As soon as Mukhi finds this opportunity, he thinks about how he would take advantage of this helpless girl. But the fiction varies from time to time and runs in a rising and falling dramatic situation that results in an unpredicted ending. A variety of symbols get uncovered through the portrayal of character in pertinent background and the use of dialogic language. Monorda's journey with Zamku to Ahmedabad does not remain mere travelling, but also symbolizes his inner journey converting him from the materialistic to humanistic figure. Pannalal has depicted the two aspects of Monorda's character. Here, we find internal and external conflicts of his mind. The feelings of rage, vexation, fatigue, fear, helplessness, love, excitement, dislike, and agitation of Mukhi's character stand in contrast and moves him by heart. At the end true father in his soul wins and judges to send Zamku back. *Valamana* also narrates the incidents like "Love affair between Manorda and Amba", "Zamku escapes with tehsildar", and "Nathi- the dead daughter of Manorda". These sub-plots are woven together with the main plot. They do not merely serve as auxiliaries, but also support to clarify the relationship between numerous deeds and causes. Pannalal knows it well 'how to obscure and solve the puzzle'. Hence, this novel is a well structured short novel, and moves towards its goal in the straightforward natural sequence. Pannalal has invented a narrative in prose incorporating the innate use of figures of speech in his language. He focuses on Ishan Region, its community, their customs and traditions as to demonstrate the particular environment, place and time appropriately. The description of nature does not merely serve a narrative purpose, but also proves an auxiliary factor to develop the plot indirectly.

The character sketch of Manorda seems to be impressed by materialistic world in the beginning, but at the end acquires his indigenous identity after realizing the truth that 'daughters' should not be considered as properties to sell and earn money. The novel to some extent can be considered postcolonial text that foregrounds indigenous cultural identity. In the beginning, Manorda's character seems to have to some extent mechanical and colonial

mindset, who always thinks of his own advantage. Neither feelings nor family cultural values prevent him from committing the sin of selling someone else's daughter. While bargaining Zamku he realizes by heart that after all she is at his daughter's place (73). The sobbing of innocent Zamku moves him by heart, forbade him from committing that sin and his inner soul reminds him of his role as a guardian to judge the future of a girl. The man, who treats her mere selling thing or object to earn money in the beginning, seems completely changed in end and treats her as his own daughter. To him, Zamku now, is like his dead daughter, Nathi. Manorda's native cultural identity is awakened to rescue him from the materialistic trend of the modern world which validates the postcolonial reference in the text. The regional or rural simplicity has survived his inner one towards the end.

Pannalal has attempted to present an authentic portrait of rural culture in *Malela Jiv* (1941) through his self-taught scholarship. This novel is the tale of rural culture, i.e. Janpadi novel. The setting of such novel is found usually in a village, and the narrative covers the folk life. The pervasion of regional novel is extensive in a form which depicts the whole region while Janpadi covers the limited structure. This novel has been considered a Janpadi because the major focus is on the special identity of the particular region. In *Malela Jeev Udhadiya-Jogipura* and the surrounding villages are at the center of the setting. The whole community, their lives and the nature, all have been depicted in an agreeable style by Pannalal. The writer has expressed the live image of the earth where he was born, bread up and lived for years. The depiction of the fields, the hills, the rivers, the forests, the thickets, the sheds, the wells, the rivers, the bridges, the courtyard, the barnyard, the people and their dialects, living standards, doubts, illiteracy, superstitions, beliefs in good and bad omens, hopes, expectations, status, practical approaches, festivals, indigenous songs, poverty and pride: all have been woven together in rural culture. The whole characteristics, spirit of Janpadi (of village life) have been awakened by Pannalal in a remarkable way. The atmosphere of

Janmashtami and Kartiki Poornima's fairs, the festivals of Dipawali, Navratri, the arrival of the Goddess of measles and its celebration construct an environment of a particular village. The entire image of village culture has been made alive to the reader through the artistic interpretation and picturesque descriptions. Pannalal has presented the chief dialect of Idar region authentically by using dialectical words in speech, by evoking its modes, the rhythm and intonation pattern, the idioms, the proverbs and the folk songs, the duhas-hudas (the couplets) occasionally. He has used Vagadi dialect (language spoken) of this region with a view to focusing regionality. Dialect needs to be interpreted and cannot be applied as the refined or standard form of language, but the region (of his time) represented by Pannalal lacks the literacy on a large scale hence, the imagined expression of these people too should be in accordance with it. Hence, Pannalal has brought regionality into novel voicing through their local dialect. The dialect employed by Pannalal seems similar to the standard form of Gujarati (except standard grammar) and can be understood by the Gujarati reading community in general. He could attract Gujarati reading community, especially from rural background with the help of his depiction of rural culture. His novels have become a household of Gujarati people. Pannalal has offered a place to the marginalized folk culture through depicting their dialect. It was the stage of nation formation which was opened up to include marginal rural cultures. Hence, following Gandhian call, he has visualized such rural facet in his novels. To that sense, Pannalal has visualized the inherent spirit of rural life.

Malela Jiv is the distressing love story of Kanji and Jivi who meet at the fair of *Janmashtami* by chance and fall in love with each other, i.e. it's a love at first sight. But the obstacles of casteism, social prestige of Kanji's old brother in the community have been arise simultaneously. Kanji and Jivi can neither break the standards of old-aged orthodox tradition nor forget each other. Abiding by Kanji's promise Jivi gets ready to marry the dwarf Dhulia, the barber of the same village, who is of suspicious and possessive nature. Being incited by

Reshma, he harasses and beats his wife Jivi often. Her miserable plight leads her towards committing the suicide, but her dreadful plan brings another disaster. Dhulo eats the poisoned bread prepared by Jivi by mistake. Although Jivi wanted to commit suicide by eating that bread, in her absence Dhulo himself eats the same bread and dies. She is constantly tortured by bitter comments as the killer of her husband. Though, Jivi seems still eager and thirsty to receive Kanji's love. Kanji too, is unhappy and pines for her love in separation. The harsh treatment of community promotes her insanity incessantly. At the end happy reunion of two lovers takes place when Kanji breaks the restricted norms of the community and accepts maddened Jivi to amend the mistake committed in the beginning. Though, according to the western understanding of tragedy this novel can be considered a tragedy, even if it covers happy ending. The flag of love 'the highest relationship in the world' is hoisted at the end. Though the novel begins with sweet ripples of love, but ends in a tragic tone. Pannalal has made the village belonging to Idar region alive by concentrating its distinctions and limitations artistically. *Malela Jeev* differs from a traditional love story. The region of experiences by creator has been narrated here. The use of similes, situations, incidents, customs, job-professions, superstitions and spirituality reflects the realistic representation of Pannalal's native land Ishan region.

Meghani addresses the readers in his Introduction (Prastavana) to *Malela Jiv*: "I would not criticize its plot weaving or statement of art through kite's beak-like pen. But only wish to say: O Human Being! Enjoy the aroma of this earth! See how the human heart opens up here!" (23 Trans.)

Nhanalal, the eminent poet of Gujarati literature has made a bitter comment on using of certain words like *Pateliyan* (Patels) and *Gayanjan* (Barbers) articulating rural image in *Malela Jiv*. He has shown his aversion by viewing that such novel should be thrown into fire (*Alakmalak* 65). The scholars of *Sakshar Yug* (Era of Learning) were not ready to allow the

rural dialects in refined (standard) literary discourse. But Pannalal was determined to depict regionality in his writings, he continued in his later novels too. Pannalal has attempted to conserve indigenous culture through writing. Hence, the identity of natives reflects postcoloniality in literature. In one of his articles in *Alakmalak* “Mari Vaat: Thodik Dhrishtata”, Pannalal remarks:

In my view to move ahead, means to return towards the self. Never mind if the western world is moving faster to the moon and other planets in search of peace; but I belong to the country where one can seek the peace within a self and I have been pursuing my creation on the same path. I have a complete doubt that all those principles of morality have become prejudiced among us and remained the standard of our criticism ... Fortunately, it was the Gandhian Era and such mentality was prevailing among minorities and *Malela Jiv* received a welcoming note. If the novel *Malela Jiv* would have been written fifty years prior to Gandhian period, it would have certainly been stood alive in a rank of a book like *Sadevant- Savalinga* at least instead of fire-cylinder.

(31, 32 Trans.)

Hence, the novel reveals the true spirit of indigenous ethos of one of the parts of Gujarat in the hands of conscious artist without demonstrating the literary scholarship and pretense.

Some of the incidents depicted in the novel have their genuine alliance with writer's personal life. Manilal Patel in *Tarsya Malakno Megh* (2007) observes that Kodar's (Pannalal's brother) wife, Rukhi once gave him the poison as she was not satisfied with her married life. Pannalal and his two sisters too, had eaten the same poisoned bread. Though the urgent medical treatment offered in a nearby health centre saved the whole family from that deadly disaster (17). The incident occurred in real life, is imagined in the novel, but

transformed into a different frame. Here, Jivi herself wishes to commit suicide, but by mistake her husband eats the poisoned bread and dies.

Surveying the postcolonial dimensions in the novel, Kanji remains the postcolonial voice who strictly disapproves the native oppressive structure, challenges the caste rigidity and superstitious minds. For instance, the police inspector tries to harass Kanji by involving him in the matter of serious injury to the cunning Reshmo. But Kanji discovers the hidden fact of the case and proves his innocence before public. The police inspector demands bribe from poor, illiterate people to solve the case which clearly symbolizes the exploiting framework of native colonial: “Don’t say this much or that much, Mukhi. If you can manage double than this, then only come to us for further talk, otherwise, I’ll drag the entire village to the court”. The chief of the village, Mukhi in order to please the authority requests the village people to collect one rupee from each house and promises the inspector a big amount of money to solve the case: “As you wish, Saheb. We’ll fulfill your expectations. After all, you are our Saheb!” (*Kanji and Jivi: A Tragic Love Story* 168). Though, instead of surrendering, Kanji challenges the power and justifies the native consciousness. While explaining his views on the rigid caste - system, he seems to be a follower of Gandhian preaching unknowingly. The novel also depicts the harsh treatment towards illiterate peasants by native colonial oppressors. They seem to establish their hegemony over innocent people by addressing them in an abusive tone. When Manor’s father argues that some outsider might have committed the crime, the inspector soon interrupts him in a sarcastic tone: “shut up, you dirty pig! Why would an outsider come? Did he possess diamonds? The dirty pig!” (*K.A.J. T.L.S.* 159) The philosophical utterances by Kanji remind the worthlessness of human life corresponding to Shakespearean note as ‘lies to the wanton boys, they kill us for their sports’. Likewise, Kanji tells Bhagat that “This is nothing but illusion” and adds that why God has created all this because he takes delight in destroying us (*K.A.J. T.L.S.* 28-29). The saintly figure, Bhagat

often reminds Kanji ‘to preserve moral purity’ in his life. He seems to justify his views on the importance of character in one’s life thus: “If our body gets soiled with a blot, it is removable as the new skin will be formed sooner or later; but if our soul is soiled with a shameful blot then the blot will remain even in the next birth” (*K.A.J. T.L.S.* 94). Such utterances represent the dignity of native beliefs and cultural identity where in one can observe the common truth: ‘if character is lost, everything is lost’.

Pannalal has added two epithets at the beginning of this novel, which denote the message of this novel:

Mathani Tumbadiman Lakh Lakh Moti,

Lya Haiyani Kothali Khali,

Abhagiya! Haiyani Chenthari Thali!

(*Malela Jiv* n.pag)

(O Human being! Hundreds of pearls are stored in the gourd-like (plant, a pot or vessel made of its dry rind) head, but the bag of heart is empty, O you unfortunate one! The rag of heart is empty!)

Meaning: The intellect or knowledge is like a pearl. But the heart must be filled with love in human life. If it remains empty, life is meaningless.

While the second one is the well-known statement by Shri Aurobindo:

Din Kok Avashya Ha

Leshe Mrutyu Thaki Prem Jagne Pan Uddhari.

(*Malela Jiv* n. pag)

Meaning: Someday surely, the world too shall be saved from death by love.

Malela Jeev is also translated into three more languages: 1- *Janumada Jodi* (Kannada) by K. K. Kallar, 2- *Jeevi* (Punjabi) by Amrita Preetam, 3- *Kanji and Jivi: A Tragic Love Story* (English) by Rajesh Patel.

Manavini Bhavai (*Endurance, A Droll Saga*) originally written in Gujarati (1947) by Pannlal Patel is translated into English, titled as *Endurance, A Droll Saga* (1995) by V. Y. Katak. This novel has also been translated into two more languages: 1. *Jeevan Ek Natak* (Hindi Translation) 2. *Manavini Bhavai* (Rajasthani Translation by Nrisingh Rajpurohit). *Manavini Bhavai* is a modern classic in Gujarati fiction. Pannlal was awarded 'Jnanpith Award' (1986) for his greatest magnum opus: *Manavini Bhavai*.

V.Y. Katak was an eminent academician and a critic from M.S. University, Baroda. As a professor of English he also taught at the Utah University, US and CIEFL, Hyderabad and wrote extensively for various literary journals in India and elsewhere. He could retain the essential simplicity, the rural culture and the original spirit of the Gujarati novel as closely as possible in translating *Manavini Bhavai* as *Endurance, A Droll Saga*. Set against the rural backdrop of North Gujarat, especially of the Sabarkantha region, this novel is a fictionalized account of the great famine of 1900 (the famine of '56 – Vikram Samvat). The ghastly famine had played havoc and seriously ravaged this interior region of Gujarat. The novel incorporates the love story centered on Kalu and his beloved Raju along with the hardships, pathos and struggle of poor farmer's life in Indian villages. Though, this novel is a part of a trilogy, the remaining two parts are: *Bhangyana Bheru* and *Ghammar Valanoo*. The novelist himself has clarified in a Nivedan (statement) that the meaning of this title has of course connotation. In addition to this, 'Bhavai' can also be interpreted as 'property', i.e. two cattle and two children. Except this, the farming itself, is uttered as Bhavai of many people. The novelist further affirms in context to the title of this novel that he has offered the precious peacock of his land playing in the lap of earth (Pannlal, n. pag). It is a story about a poor farmer- the son of the earth, or 'Bhavai' means *Sansar* (the Life). 'Bhavai' is also a type of folk-drama which reproduces an appropriate representation of society. Pursuing the Shakespearean notes 'Life as a stage and we, the human beings are the puppets' seems quite

pertinent to this novel. All the characters Valo, Parmo, Rupa, Fuli, Kalu and Raju honestly carry out their assigned role, while evil characters like Mali, Nano, Manor and Ranchhod stand in contrast and symbolize the wretched aspects of human nature. The intense conflict between 'good and bad' reaches to its climax and finally results into poetic Justice. The novel is written in a simple and direct style and is free from conventional artifice and sophistication. While surveying the historical importance of this novel, 'Darshak', a noted Gujarati critic, has rightly pointed out in his review titled as 'Truptino Ghant' on *Manvini Bhavai* that the novelist has explored a new trail by writing *Manvini Bhavai* as 'a time-dominated novel. Darshak further remarks that it is not merely a tale of Kalu, but also of the villages situated in the transition period of new and old era, near the border region of Gujarat while four decades ago. Likewise, in a response by Yaksha's question in the *Mahabharata*, it has been aptly defined that 'the biggest tale is the tale of 'Time' (*Manvini Bhavai* 11, 28). Such a perspective has its direct relevance to this 'time-dominated' novel.

Pannalal has depicted an evocative image of native rulers and oppressive structure of the region, which shows its broader appeal in the novel. The colonial authority had rooted its exploiting structure everywhere in India. Kalu, the protagonist of the novel expresses his anger against British hegemony that merely shoots instead of providing bread to the hungry people in days of famine. Kalu is symbolized as postcolonial face who blames the British Raj as:

O you damned white man! You brought down the guns and cartridges; couldn't you have brought us some grain instead, wicked one? Here we have death dogging our every step, and in the midst of this calamity you use your carriages only to bring these deadly weapons, life destroying things. Why couldn't you have brought us something life-sustaining instead in those very carriages? You use all your brains- the whole gamut of the proverbial thirty-

six arts and skills - for what? Only to deal out death to us...Had you used your powers to search out some means of enhancing life we should have taken you to be a true knower of the 'thirty-six arts and skills'-and a model (*Endurance A Droll Saga* 394).

The farmer, the producer of grain remains hungry while those who have neither experienced labour nor have ever worked are enjoying the taste of *Roti*. Their store houses are packed with grain forever. Kalu decides to rob the grain from bullock-carts because he could not suffer more injustice:

This whole hilly belt is now in the throes of hunger for want of grain. And look at this! Here's Talakchand Karbhari carrying on his tradesman ship. It is Business as usual... Is this justice or injustice? After all the grain belongs to us- belongs to those who have grown it. Yet those who raised it die of hunger. And then, too, before our eyes these trades-people are carting away what is ours- tantalizing us, leaving us famished and pining. If we have this much of grain the whole village could be fed a whole month...Why the village would come to life again! (*E.D.S.* 373)

Kalu is the voice of oppressed people against the tyranny of native oppressor who are the imitated faces of British Raj. Neil Bissoondath in 'A Casual Brutality' states explicitly the hegemonic nuance of internal as well as the external form of colonialism: "as they (the colonizers) exploited us, so we (the Post-colonials) exploited each other. As they raped our land, so we raped our land. As they took, so we took. We had absorbed the attitudes of the colonizer, and we mimicked the worst in him. We learnt none of his virtues" (qtd. in Nayar 99-100). Dissent is suppressed as elite groups take charge and become more oppressive than the colonial master. Initially, nationalism had helped the struggle against colonial masters, but later on it becomes something entirely different. Kalu is the true son of earth. The farmer

is considered the father of the world who nourishes the people, how can he be placed among beggars? He thinks: 'better to die than beg'. When Kalu is forced to beg grain from Sundarji Sheth, he asks Raju:

Do you know this? Worse than hunger and more terrible, is begging. Hunger melts down our flesh and bones, but this begging, in fact... It actually dissipates our pride, even our very soul... turns everything to water... reduces us to nullity. And remember.... (*E.D.S. 416*)

Such utterance makes one realize the true spirit of native consciousness.

The novel also focuses on Hindu sermons 'as you sow, so you reap' (*Karmayog* of *Bhagavad-Gita*) especially in case of woman like Mali's death. The character sketch of Shankarda utters the principle of *Karmas* on the wretched death of Mali:

It's indeed fate, the result of our own past '*karmas*'. Otherwise, how is it that an old woman such as had once splashed about milk and ghee dies, and not evens a single child gets fed? Isn't that the doings of one's fate? (*E. D. S. 364*)

Even the women set out for the river bank for their ceremonial bath after the body has been taken away to the cremation grounds, "Yes, sister, that's what her actions were alike; she got what she deserved" (*E.D.S. 362*).

In a chapter *The Brahmin's Forecast* the cultural values and Indian traditions are highlighted. The Kashi-trained Purani confirms the horoscope of little Kalu while performing the child's naming ceremony: "Your boy will develop into a self-reliant person, old man!" and turning to them with a look of self-confidence and even a touch of arrogance, says: "Let it be on record. See if my predictions prove wrong." Scrutinizing the horoscope once again, he adds, "Without official Mukhihood he will rule like a Mukhi... and be a natural leader of men" (*E.D.S. 16-17*). Looking to the whole aspect of forecasting in case of Kalu, the utterance proves truthful. Though, the strategy applied by the novelist to an imaginative tale,

yet his purpose to provide Indian cultural identity through one of the religious Sanskars (there are 16 Sankars to be performed in whole life of Hindu religion) has remained fruitful.

The novel *Bhangyanan Bheru* (1957) [The Second Part of *Manvini Bhavai*] is an extension of the plot of *Manvini Bhavai*. *Manvini Bhavai* describes the great famine-56 while *Bhangyanan Bheru* focuses on the reality of the post-famine predicament. Here, the character-sketch of Kalu develops as a folk-leader of rural community. Kalu takes the challenge to re-establish famine-affected people who have left their native land. He re-engages them in their honest profession of agriculture with sincere efforts. Even through Kalu's humble recommendation; the Bhil community of Dungari area receives the grain from government. Taking another mode the story of his love affair with Raju proceeds here. Nano (the son of Mali in *Manvini Bhavai*) retains his identity as a rogue who often creates obstacles in Kalu's (the protagonist) life. To satisfy her hunger Bhali (Kalu's wife) sells her chastity to an unknown person during critical phases of famine and becomes pregnant. But owing to Raju's explanation, Kalu gets ready to accept her in spite of her faithlessness. The novel focuses on the incidents like the birth of Kalu's son Pratap, his marriage with Champa, the missing of Pratap committed by Naniya, the sudden death of Bhali after dashing her head against Nana's doors and the entry of Raju in a depressed and lonely state of Kalu's life.

Hence, the novel describes the happy re-union between Kalu and Raju, who previously remained the victim of evil conspiracy conducted by cruel and rigid leaders of their community. Mali dies owing to her evil deeds in the first part likewise Nano too, after going mad commits suicide here which shows the poetic justice. The beginning of the novel proves Pannalal's narrative skill. The chapter *Pegam* shows Kalu as an excellent organizer and gives the impression of his humanitarian approach. The debate between Kalu and Raju in *Aa Par ke Pele Par*, the folk-picture of the innocent, rural curiosity, rural logic, the responses and reactions produced between two cultures: the East and the West and their cultural values, the

female facial expression, etc. in the chapter *Gore Tanya Tambu* generates the live image of illiterate people. Though, the novel lacks the intensity, depth and complexity of experienced world reflected in the first part of this novel.

Pannalal has incorporated the incident of 'Religion Conversion' in the chapter titled as *Gore Tanya Tambu*. The tribal youth, Mangalo, who is brought up by Kalu as own son, is Christianized. The interpreter of the Christian Missionaries group tries to convince the illiterate people that if they offer their son to them, they will make them civilized. They distribute the literature to propagate the Christianity: "distribute this... no money! Free to all" and convey the message "Lord Christ... have faith... do love" (193-194. Trans.). Kanako narrates the talk to Kalu and Raju which he has heard from Christian Madam: "If you want to survive from the pains like this famine, take refuge of our God". When John insists Kalu to offer his son, Kalu reacts: "You can talk much, but by selling someone else's son who is not mine, I do not wish to bring the second famine on this earth, brother John" (202, 204 Trans.). Kalu believes that religious conversion is a sin and practicing of such activities even displeases the nature. Several postcolonial novels deal with the theme of religion and faith, the relation between Christian missionaries and native people. Pannalal has woven together such postcolonial aspect in this novel. The novelist has also mentioned the war between England and Germany in a slightly humorous tone in the chapter *Mangalni Motar*. When people see the illiterate Mangal converted into an educated youth and modern personality, they appreciate the wonder of British culture. Even a man like Kalu has to alter his firm opinion on true religion: "What makes one see by providing education and teaches him the skill of earning bread, is a true religion. Therefore, he (Mangalo) has been involved in religion of these trustworthy people. Because in our religion 'Guru' merely makes us wear Kanthi (necklace) on our neck or offers the Rosary to count its beads, mostly, but in this religion they do not only provide education but also manage jobs. Moreover, they cure on

free of charges if the person belongs to another religion like us, are sick”. To add this, Kalu further explains: “And our religion also preaches ‘mercy is the source of religion’. But these dependable men (Christian Missionaries) actually show the practicing (of such preaching)!” Kalu favours the Christian culture to some extent. But Mangalo seems slightly confused on clashes among religions. The clashes of superiority or inferiority among religions have broken his old-new complexes: “Religion for what? What is religion?” (295, 296 Trans.) In addition to it, these days of the First World War make him nervous because on one hand, his faith in Bible’s love and forgiveness leads him forward, contrary, his shaken faith wishes to return when he sees the World War being fought by the followers of the Bible. Though, he favors the life of innocent and illiterate rural people who can enjoy the life without concerning themselves in any deep philosophy: “Then what? They will run away if ordered do so and if asked to come, soon they would be there!” (296. Trans.). It means they do not treat their life rationally. Mangalo thinks that those who are more educated are found more perplexed because too much knowledge and logic places one in a state of dilemma. Thus, Pannalal has mirrored the indigenous identity of rural culture in a rational manner.

The eminent critic of Gujarati literature, Sundaram in the ‘introduction’ of this novel observes that the novel shows how the evils and inauspicious, disaster and destruction turn out to be creative. This fiction recounts such victory which allows the wretched to play its entire role, but confirms ultimately how the obscurity of life remains triumphant. (10)

Ghammar Valonu Part 1-2 (1967) is the third part (also divided into two more parts) of the novel *Manvini Bhavai*. Here, Panalal’s limitations as a writer are apparently seen. The characters of second generation Pratap and Champa are at the centre in place of Kalu and Raju. The union and separation and at the end the familiar and revised plot of happy re-union takes place. It has been argued that the interest of the reader has been maintained thoroughly, but the creative insight of the novelist in realizing the internal movement of the human mind

seems to disappear. Anantray Raval in the 'Introduction' of this novel remarks that 'churning is practiced well, but the butter hasn't come out yet' (Dave & Desai 32. Trans.). The incidents of happy re-union of Pratap and Champa and the death of Raju and Kalu simultaneously seem slightly formal. To add this, it has also been observed that the novel by covering the seven to eight decades under the single theme remains untouched to the contemporary social, political and economical flow. Even while applying the language, the novel sometimes neither fully concentrates over the time-being changes observed in people's speech nor in the behavior of the contemporary generation (Dave & Desai 32 Trans.).

Pachhale Barne (1947) is one of the remarkable janpadi (of rural life) novels by Pannalal Patel. Published in the same year of *Manvini Bhavai's* publication, the novel seems rather different than the earlier novels of Pannalal's fictional world. Here, the element of love remains subsidiary. The conflict between two brothers of an ideal loving mother, the evil conspiracies to seize the throne and the victory of motherly love over political game, etc. are represented with a view to focusing the Indian Freedom Movement along with Gandhian perspectives. Though the novel narrates the native rulers and political introduction, but the emphasis is also laid upon the sentiment of the human heart and its ups and down mode.

Kumvarbai, the mother of twin brothers Amar and Himmat, whose motherly heart, her thirst and agony are depicted particularly. The dramatic irony remains the essential element in the novel. Kumvarbai gives one of her twin sons to 'Raj' as there wasn't a legal heir to the throne and save Rajbai, a Thakarani from clutches of evil hands. For the sake of public welfare and removal of their poverty, Kumvarbai leaves her dear son aside, but her own son, Amarsinh after becoming Thakore, exploits and harasses the poor people. Amarsinh is brought up in a palace, Hence, pursues the standards of native oppressor while Himmatsinh, the second son of Kumvarbai is brought up in a poor family. Himmatsinh is the educated youth, follower of Gandhiji, good natured and faithful to her mother. The novelist has

revealed the conflicts on the path of truth. The character of Kumvarbai is found struggling and torn between inner conflicts thoroughly. She suffers the thirst and hunger of motherly-heart, but at the time of death, the last hope to see her dear son is contented. She dies in the hands of her abandoned son in the end.

The swift flow of plot related interest, the agreeable and interesting narrative skill, the political game performed by small native rulers and the depiction of exploitation of poor people, the hunger of a mother's heart, the struggle of Himmat against state rulers for independence and the confused state of Galbo who knows the mystery of separation of two brothers, etc. become live and leave the permanent impression of local colours or native culture on the mind of the reader. The postcolonial aspect is reflected through Freedom Movement and Gandhian perspective. Himmatsinh is neither ready to surrender the harassing power of native kings nor colonial authority. In order to sustain the dominance, the native rulers are shown to prevent the spread of education. Those who think of receiving an education are treated as an enemy to local rulers. For example, when Rajbai, the Thakarani learns about Himmat's going to school in a city, she says: "which law has permitted this farmer to admit his son in a school, which is situated in another state? (Neighboring British border), what is the need to get him educated? ... Shall we allow the boasting of these subjects, thus?" When Kumvarbai requests to return her confiscated lands, Thakarani satirizes at her: "How can you be a poor? If so, why did you think then to get your son educated? ... You do not deserve the sympathy" (50, 51. Trans.). Himmat prefers farming a divine profession instead of accepting *Mukhiship* (leadership) because it seems to him more than slavery. Himmat after receiving training on non-cooperation, and reading Gandhian literature becomes the worshipper of truth and non-violence. While discussing over the punishment system, he doesn't find any difference between the colonial government and local state rulers: "British or our Darbars, all belong to the same group" (96 Trans.). The state

Karbhari (the administrator) reminds Himmat the power of their sole authority: “The dogs have already eaten the justice. To us, whatever we say is a justice” (110 Trans.). Himmat thinks of the native oppression and exploitation of poor people when he sees the huge palace constructed for the local king (Thakore):

These balconies and portico are constructed through mere drudgery. The poor farmers and their bullocks would have been perished while carrying the stones. The skin of Bhill people while carrying the broad iron buckets and stones would have become blood-spattered through receiving a thrashing (committed by oppressors). (105 Trans.)

Himmat is depicted as postcolonial face who never compromises with his Gandhian ideals. Karbhari advises him to put his Gandhian cap under Bavaji’s (Amarsinh’s) feet to receive his grace and reacquire his detained land, but Himmat is not ready to compromise, even wishes to offer his head in place of insulting Gandhian cap (110 Trans.). Raghuv eer Chaudhari considers this novel as: “with a view to studying the changing social and political reference” (Dave & Desai 32 Trans.), which seems more significant in the context of this novel.

Na Chhutate (1955), in comparison to *Pachhale Barne*, is larger Janpadi (of rural life) novel. Here, the heart-moving tale of love and obstacles faced by two lovers are woven skillfully. The novel narrates the Gandhian *Satyagrah* against the tyranny of state rulers along with the love story. The dacoits Ratno and Dalo and their offspring Rimal and Dariyav’s marvelous love-story, the sub-plot of Mashur and Ramli’s lifelong interruption, the bad beliefs, the conspiracies, and the portrayal of superstitions, etc. provide the novel an agreeable mark of appreciation. The novel shows the excellent description of Magariyo Dungar (the mountain), the background of Aranyak Anchali (the forest region) of Chora Dungari and the hardships of Damor-Katara caste, the farmer community. The novel focuses on the pragmatic and heart touching tale of exploitation, injustice and aggravation of Batali’s

(community) uncultivated villages by the riches and native oppressors. Contrarily, the corporeal and microscopic changes of energizing and reacting public power against the former redundancy also take place. It portrays life living with a diverse viewpoint and the clash between good and evil factors like: the dacoits, the public servants, the egocentric politicians, the harsh leaders and the tyrannical rulers. The description of confused state due to the public-awareness through the medium of the novel remains the new experiment here.

Looking to the postcolonial context, the novel makes one realize the Gandhian consciousness. The chapter *Gandhino Bhekh* (Gandhian Asceticism) describes the Gandhian philosophy. Dalo, the Gandhian tries to convince his dacoit friend, Ratana to give up the path of committing violence in order to attain freedom from Thakore (the native rulers). He insists that Ratna should pursue the path of non-violence. Ratana is not ready to surrender. Dalo explains: “Ratana, dear friend! I think that our paths are going to alter. Hence, think over it and join with me. You know it, but to endure the beating and control the anger is a sign of true valor. Hence, throw away this false bravery (guns) into the deep water of Jambudia... Forget the enmity against Thakore and Mashur ... How many days will they keep us in jail? We will pursue the Gandhian way of life willingly” (118-119 Trans.). The novelist has depicted the future vision of cultural change of this world through the character sketch of Dalo, the dacoit and Gandhian who imagines that the strategy of war has already been altered; likewise the world will also have to change its calculation... Explaining to Rupal, the beloved of his daughter, Dalo remarks: “But remember at least, the whole world seems to me changing, otherwise how these Brahmins and Banias dare to challenge the Britishers (who are skilled in thirty-six arts) only with the help of raw cotton thread! Henceforth forgets the fight with weapons” (120, 123 Trans.).

The wearing of Gandhian cap by Dala prevents the Thakore from releasing him from jail. He is even ready to convene the assembly, if Dalo gets convinced to blaze his cap in

front of people. But Dalo, the anti-colonial face denies his appeal (197). Lalakaka explains the essence of the whole situation to Dariyav, the daughter of Ratana that: ‘it’s a battle of truth against untruth’. He often uses to comment the proverb that our kings (the native rulers) belong to the ancestry of Gora:

This government forces drudgery and recovers various types of taxes, eats goats and hens, takes bribery and without any offense blames and beats the innocents harshly; all is persecution. (303 Trans.)

Lalakaka appreciates the judicial system of the British ruling where “Both, a tiger (the powerful) as well as a goat (the feeble) can freely drink water on the same bank”. Here, native oppressors have been portrayed more dangerous than colonial rulers. At least, to British people, equality in justice is their motto. When asked why then Gandhi opposes Britishers? Lalakaka responds to Dariyav: “What is the mystery, I do not know, but it is said that these Britishers are like mole, which blows with the mouth and keeps on biting, so one cannot understand”. He further adds: “Gandhi says that these Gora thus by pleasing us, send the wealth of our country to their country situated beyond the sea” (303, 304 Trans.). Rimal is released from jail, but such liberty seems further painful than jail to him because in jail, they were forced to obey only soldiers... while here it’s ‘like the eating of Balearic myrobalan (Baheda) and experiencing the intoxication of nutmeg (Jayphal)’ (310 Trans.). The novel depicts the period of National awareness in India. Here, the movement for social and political consciousness is woven together the original love story. The Quit India and Non-Cooperation Movements are reflected in this novel. Dalo adds the mythical association of Britishers with Indian Kings. To explain his argument he says that when Indrajeet was killed, Rama had promised his wife that her kingdom will flourish forever in *Kaliyug*, and the same is Lady Victoria whose assistants are Indian Kings (364). The identity of the true social worker is the character of inspector, who was once a government officer. He strictly opposes

the issue of heavy taxes imposed on poor people. When Thakore satirizes him: “Instead of advising the government, if you are kind enough, why don’t you pay the taxes of poor people from your salary?” The inspector soon resigns and takes an oath “to dedicate his life in service to the subjugated brothers of the state” (359 Trans.). While delivering the condolence speech on Dala’s death Bhaisaa’b affirms that those who rely on violence should note that it is not an accident that one violent dacoit has taken the path of non-violence. It is a sign of things to come: “Have trust, the sacrifice of Dalabhai would not go in vain, it will surely make us free from drudgery... and will establish the new-era accordingly” (419 Trans.). The slogans like: *Satyamev Jayate*, *Inkilab Zindabad* and *Nokarshashi Murdabad* advocate the zeal of freedom movement.

Though towards the end, the novelist visualizes the achieving of freedom and the release from exploiting colonial empire. The sun of British Raj has already been set and the native rulers too, have lost their kingly spirit. The ideal of democracy ‘people first and then king’ seems emerge now. But it also brings certain nuisances like communal riots with it. Hence, on one hand India receives its freedom while inherited revenge has spread among various communities forever. (444-45)

Pannalal wrote more than 400 short stories which are available in his 26 collections of short stories. Except Dhumketu, hardly any writer contributed such huge number of fiction-writing in Gujarati literature. Pannalal’s art of story-writing is comparable to Chekhov and Maupassant. Likewise novels, the local community and its nature remain like the spinal cord in his short stories (Dave & Desai 38). They depict the themes of love, family-life and the relationship between husband and wife. While coming across the postcolonial perspective, Pannalal’s stories like *Malak Upar*, *Bapuno Kutaro*, *Daninu Ghadiyal*, *Megho Ghameti* and *National Savings* are remarkable in portraying the inhuman harshness of officers or native

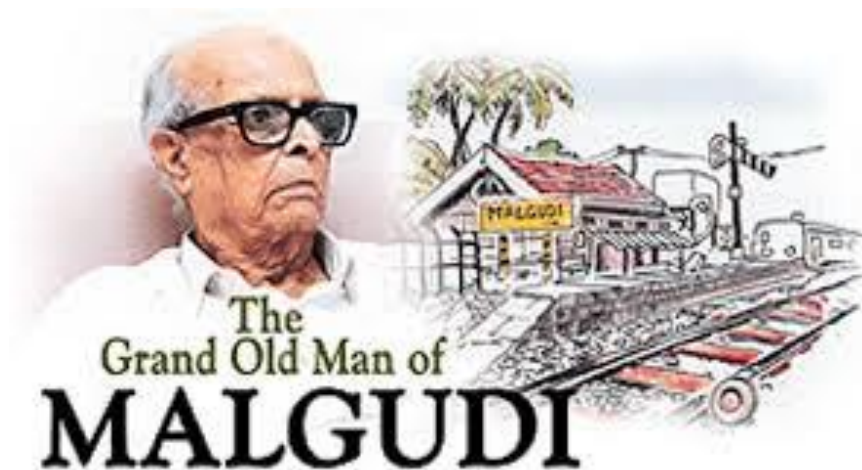
oppressors and pains of helpless, illiterate people who remain the victims of social and political reality.

Malak Upar is a pathetic tale of an old Chamar (Cobbler belongs to downtrodden community: Dalit) whose objection brings him a disaster. He becomes the victim of soldiers who beat him harshly. Ultimately, he is forced to leave his community and village forever. The portrayal of Chamar (untouchable) community has been highlighted along with political, social and economic relationships. Similarly *Rehmu's Sipai* narrates the story of Rehmu, the Sipai (soldier) who not only remains the part, but also the victim as the representative of police department committing the force and exploitation. *Bapuno Kutaro* describes the wretched predicament of flatterer people when Bapu's (the protagonist) alien dog is killed by street's dogs of the village. The dog is brought for the occasion of Bapu's arrival. The insulted and excited Bapu shoots four to five dogs caught by village people. Pannalal has drawn the picture of village mentality and royal pomp of Bapu in an ironic tone. The reader of the story experiences the terrible blankness of the situation created towards the end. The story *National Savings* focuses on the wretched economic predicament of poor village people. The government issues the 'national saving certificates' to meet the economic burden occurred due to the war situation. These certificates are offered forcefully to the poor Bhil Community. As a result of it, each of the villagers is forced to sell his only buffalo or costly domestic material as a cost of purchasing the certificates. Besides this, they are promised that they will receive the doubled sum of their money invested in certificates after twelve years. Unfortunately, even before the maturity period, all go in vain. The rich people of the village buy all the certificates in quarter part of the total value. The government and the rich folks equally perform their exploiting task. The role of government and the rich happens to be one and the same. Pannalal's effort is to depict the cruel and harsh approaches of mighty government and riches as native oppressors. The twofold exploitation of poor Bhil

community shows the complexities of the ruling class. *Daninu Ghadiyal* depicts the satirical but the pathetic condition of village people caught in a social, economic, and political situation. The story *Megho Gameti* draws the portrayal of Megha (black) night. Here, the clash between government's soldiers and Bhill people is the theme of the story. The soldiers are shown recovering the taxes in the days of famine whereas the Bhills are placed in 'do or die' predicament. The said 'fear' is pushed backward by Gameti with due understanding and love. Gameti remains an impressive personality in compromising the situation. Pannalal reveals the humanity in such a story without preaching the ideals. *Nadan Chhokari* is woven around the psychological knot. It shows how one small doubt scatters the whole family life (*Pannalalni Shreth Vartao*). Pannalal's creative attitude at the initial stage seems to depict love-affairs and its complex knots or individual puzzles in his short stories. But during the sixth and seventh decade, he has tried to depict the portrait of post-independence society, politics, movements, activities and changing situation. His stories like *Chitareli Divalo*, *Morlina Munga Sur*, *Malo*, *Koi Deshi Koi Pardeshi*, etc. are woven together with such themes.

While expressing his views on writing activity in *Alakmalak*, Pannalal has shown 'what should be the ideal religion of a writer', he seems to advocate the postcolonial note. He favors the seeking of truth from both ancient and modern sense of creativity. He is of the view that the writer in modern time should not strictly adhere the transitory changing past values of the world. On the contrary, mere attracting towards the romantic waves too would not serve all the purposes. But by setting in between the old and newer conflicts, the writer has to discover the truth and will have to write with faith and tranquility (19 Trans.). To that extent, Pannalal seems to favour postcolonial aspect in his writings.

R. K. Narayan (10-10-1906 to 14-05-2001)



(<http://www.google.co.in/imgres?imgurl>)

R.K. Narayan stood as one of the three leading figures of Indian writing in English, along with Mulk Raj Anand and Raja Rao. He was born in Madras (presently known as Chennai) on October 10, 1906. R. K. Narayan's full name is Rasipuram Krishnaswami Ayyar Naranayanaswami. In his early years he signed his name as R. K. Narayanaswami, but apparently at the time of the publication of *Swami and Friends*, he shortened it to R. K. Narayan on Graham Greene's suggestion. It is the custom in the south: R stands for the name of the village Rasipuram of Salem district to which his family belonged, K stands for the name of his father Krishnaswami Iyer and the full form of Narayan is Narayanswami. Graham Greene was his literary godfather who appreciates Narayan's brilliance in his Introduction to the novel: *The Bachelor of Arts* in the following remarks:

There are writers - Tolstoy and Henry James to name two - whom we hold in awe, writers – Turgenev and Chekhov – for whom we feel a personal affection, other writers whom we respect – Conrad for example – but who hold us at a long arm's length with their "Country foreign grace". Narayan (whom I don't hesitate to name in such a context) more than any of them

wakes in me a spring of gratitude, for who has offered me a second home.

Without him I could never have known what it is like to be Indian. (n. pag)

Here is the detailed sketch of his domestic life along with social, academic and literary career as viewed in his memoir, *My Days* and other accessible sources: His father Krishnaswami Iyer was a school headmaster. Narayan could receive some of his education at his father's school. As his father's job required frequent moves, Narayan spent part of his childhood under the care of his maternal grandmother named Parvathi. His grandmother gave him the nickname of *Kunjappa*. She taught him arithmetic, mythology, classical Indian music and Sanskrit. Looking to his schooling career, Narayan while living with his grandmother, studied at schools in Madras, as well as the Lutheran Mission School in Purasawalkam, C.R.C. High School, and the Christian College High School. Narayan was considered an enthusiastic reader as his early reading covers the eminent writers like Dickens, Wodehouse, Arthur Conan Doyle, and Thomas Hardy. It has also been observed that when Narayan was twelve years old, he participated in a pro-independence march, for which he was reprimanded by his uncle; the family was apolitical and considered all governments wicked. It has also been viewed that, Narayan was not so clever as a student. He failed both in the High School and Intermediate examination. He took four years to obtain his B.A. Degree. After taking graduation from Maharaja College, Mysore, he was called upon to contribute to the family income, so he started working as a clerk in the secretariat of Mysore for some time, but could not manage this profession very long. He quit the job as a teacher in protest when the headmaster asked him to substitute for the physical training master. His ambition was to become a writer, so he decided to devote all his time to writing. His first published work was a book review of the *Development of Maritime Laws of 17th century England*. Later on he attempted his hand in writing the local interest story for English newspaper and magazines. In the year 1930 Narayan wrote his first novel *Swami and Friends*, although his effort was

ridiculed by his uncle and publishers too rejected the novel. Through his novels, Narayan created a fictitious town Malgudi, which artistically replicated the social sphere of the nation. In his fictitious Malgudi milieu, Narayan favours the native culture, and has disapproved certain limits enforced by colonial rule. He also traces the socio-political changes of British and post-independent phase in his novels. While enjoying vacation at his sister's house in Coimbatore, in 1933, Narayan came into contact with Rajam, fell in love with her. His proposal to marry Rajam was not granted by her father because their horoscope did not tally. In spite of astrological obstacle Narayan managed to get permission from Rajam's father anyhow. Such experiences are already mirrored in a number of his novels and short stories. After marriage, he became a reporter for a Madras based paper called 'The Justice', dedicated to the rights of non-Brahmins. This career offered him an opportunity to meet a wide variety of people and their issues. His married life was quite satisfactory. One daughter Hema was born to them. Meanwhile, his three novels *Swami and Friends* (1935), *The Bachelor of Arts* (1937) and *The Dark Room* (1938), published in quick succession. The publications confirmed his popularity and brought him fame as well as money. In 1939 (only after five years of their marriage) his wife Rajam died of typhoid. It was a great shock to Narayan. Rajam's death affected him deeply and it was a shattering experience for him. For about six years after the death of his wife, Narayan did not write any novel. It was a period of deep anguish and introspection during which he edited only a journal 'Indian Thought' and published three volumes of short stories: *Malgudi Days* (1941), *Dodu and Other stories* (1943), and *Cyclone and other stories* (1944). His novel *The English Teacher* was published in 1945 since then the flow of his novel-writing started incessantly at the rate of one book every two years. His next effort *Mr. Sampath* (1949) marks with a more imaginative and external style. *The Financial Expert* (1952) is considered his masterpiece and hailed as the most original works of fiction. His next novel *Waiting for the Mahatma* (1955) focuses on

Indian Independence Movement. His works have been published both in England and USA. He is regarded next only to Faulkner and Graham Greene in America. It has also been viewed that like most south Indian Brahmin, Narayan did not eat meat nor like alcohol, but unlike them he had no objection to eggs. He knew two languages: Tamil and English, and could manage to understand Kannada. He dressed simply in dhoti and kurta. While surveying his daily routine, it has also been studied that in the morning he used to meet and talk with lawyers, traders, artisans and teachers and worked in the afternoons after lunch, for three or four hours, writing on an average; about 2000 words every day. His creative career lasted for almost seven decades. He wrote novels, novellas, stories; travel books; a memoir; columns with causeries, short essays; skits, radio talks as well as edited a journal. He performed the task of teaching courses in universities and in a later stage, he was his own publisher. Anthony West, New Yorker places him with Gogol:

R. K. Narayan... has been compared to Gogol in England, where he has acquired a well-deserved reputation. The comparison is apt, of Narayan, an Indian, is a writer of Gogol's stature, with the same gift for creating a provincial atmosphere in a time of change... One is convincingly involved in his alien world without ever being aware of the technical devices Narayan so brilliantly employs (*The Dark Room* cover page).

Narayan received honours on a substantial scale and won a variety of awards during the course of his literary career. The first major award, which he received, was the Sahitya Academy Award for his novel titled *The Guide* in 1958. When the book was made into a film under the same title, he also received the Film fare Award for the best story. He received the Padma Bhushan during the Republic Day honours in the year 1964. The British also appreciated his creative talent and was awarded the AC Benson Medal by the (British) Royal Society of Literature in 1980, of which he was an honorary member. In the year 1982 he was

elected an honorary member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters. He was also nominated for the Nobel Prize in Literature, although never won that honour. Recognition also came to him in the form of honorary doctorates from the University of Leeds (1967), the University of Mysore (1976) and Delhi University (1973). Indian Government too offered its highest status by appointing him for the upper house of the Indian Parliament for a six-year term starting in 1989; especially for his outstanding contributions to Indian literature. During the last phase of his life in 2000 (a year before his death), Narayan was awarded India's second-highest civilian honour, the Padma Vibhushan.

Rama Kunda, in an article on “R. K. Narayan: A Return to Ritual” states:

R. K. Narayan is the genial, smiling face of postcolonialism without exhibiting the anger, resentment or assertive self-consciousness of cultural nationalism; he is still a representative postcolonial writer in another way... Though he writes good English and is perfectly at ease with his medium, his basic Indianness is revealed at every turn through his use of themes, vocabulary, proverbs, place and last but not least, use of myths which imparts an additional dimension to his novel (Bhatnagar 48-49).

It seems true that postcolonial writing uses the language of the colonists, but adapts it to the discourse of the colonized. Narayan remained the product of a period when English education had already been introduced in the Indian sub-continent. It has been analyzed that “the study of the English language and literature in the postcolonial context seems to be a densely political and cultural phenomenon” (Hawkes 2-3). Having received an English education, Narayan preferred to write in English since the beginning of his career. The colonial ambiance might have left its influence on Narayan, but he had preferred the English language in its Indianized form. Iyengar in *Indian Writing in English* notes that Narayan:

Uses the English language much as we used to wear dhotis manufactured in Lancashire- but the thoughts and feelings, the stirrings of the soul, the wayward movements of the consciousness, are all of the soil of India. (359)

Maniruzzaman in his article on “R. K. Narayan’s attitude towards the English Language” observes that Narayan is seen to have used the English language and literary form to scrutinize colonialism and depict the Indian society continually under change due to the colonial rule. Narayan’s position in this regard is deemed quite ambivalent and complex - he is aware that English is the language of the colonist, yet he is found to have accepted it for practical reasons. That is, his attitude towards the English language appears to have resulted from and shaped by the reality prevailing in the postcolonial setting (web. streetdirectory).

In one of his interviews with William Walsh, Narayan justifies his writings in English:

I was never aware that I was using a different, a foreign language when I wrote in English, because it came to me very easily. I can’t explain how English is a very adaptable language. And it’s so transparent it can take on the tint of any country (*R. K. Narayan* 7).

Narayan’s English is designed with the Indian context and native colour, not the language of the rulers. Alexander McCall Smith in his ‘Introduction’ to Narayan’s *My Days* remarks that “Narayan’s novels are like a box of Indian sweets: a highly- coloured container conceals a range of delectable treats, all different in a subtle way, but each one clearly from the same place...” (vi). McCall Smith further clarifies the impact of colonization on writers and locates Narayan’s position as devoted Indian in the following observation:

Colonialism hurt and damaged those subjected to it, but it would be inaccurate to portray the process as being a simple matter of subjugation and humiliation; ...The writer in the colonized country tended to soak up the culture of the

colonial power and feel a familiarity and some affection for it, even though the experience of colonialism may have demoralized and destabilized his own colonized culture..... Narayan himself made it, as did others, although some did so by leaving the culture in which they had been brought up. Narayan remained in India – an Indian writer who was happy to be read by those outside India but who remained firmly within the world into which he had been born (*My Days* vii-viii).

Here is the detailed sketch of Narayan's literary contribution:

The novels:

1 *Swami and Friends* (1935), 2 *The Bachelor of Arts* (1937), 3 *The Dark Room* (1938), 4 *The English Teacher* (1945), 5 *Mr.Sampath-The Printer of Malgudi* (1949) 6 *The Financial Expert* (1952), 7 *Waiting for the Mahatma* (1955), 8 *The Guide* (1958), 9 *The Man-Eater of Malgudi* (1962), 10 *The Vendors of Sweets* (1967), 11 *The Painter of Signs* (1976), 12 *A Tiger for Malgudi* (novella) (1983), 13 *Talkative Man* (novella) (1986), 14 *The World of Nagraj* (1990), 15 *Grandmother's Tale* (novella) (1992)

Autobiography:

My Days: A Memoir (1974)

Short Story Collections:

Malgudi Days (1943), *Dodu and Other Stories* (1943), *Cylone and Other Stories* (1945), *An Astrologer's Day and Other Stories* (1947), *Lawley Road and Other Stories* (1956), *A Horse and Two Goats* (1970), *Under the Banyan Trees and Other Stories* (1985)

Collection of Stories, Essay and Sketches:

Next Sunday: Sketches and Essays (1956), *Reluctant Guru* (1974), *A Writer's Nightmare: Selected Essays* (1988), *A Story- Teller's World* (1989), *Salt and Sawdust: Stories and Table Talk* (1993)

Retellings of Epics and Folklore:

God, Demons and Others (1964), *The Ramayana* (1972), *The Mahabharata* (1978), *The Indian Epics Retold* (1995)

Brief Survey of R. K. Narayan's Novels:

Swami and Friends (1935), the first novel by Narayan, is considered a significant work of art by critics. Graham Greene called it, "A book in ten thousand" (*Swami and Friends* cover page). The novel narrates the life of schoolboys in South Indian schools through offering the live portrayal and childhood's activities carried out in the form of playing, quarrelling or wandering on the bank river by Swami, the protagonist and his friends Mani: the Dada, Shanker: the most intelligent boy, Somu: the monitor, and Rajam: the son of the police superintendent. The novelist has visualized the child-psychology while rendering the thoughts, emotions and activities of school boys in a slightly comical manner. Swaminathan experiences the subjugation under authoritarian Christian teacher and his strict natured father. M.C.C. (Malgudi Cricket Club) remains his favorite passion. The emotional release, which he seeks from strains and pressures, is his playing cricket and funny adventures accompanied by his friends. The novel focuses on postcolonial aspect of his character. For example, Ebenzer: a fanatic Christian teacher makes a dirty comment on Hindu Gods. Unable to tolerate the Christian missionary operating against Hinduism, Swami loves to leave the school in protest, "I do not care for your dirty school" (18). The question "Why was Christ crucified if he was much better than Krishna" (4) asked by Swami seems Narayan's strict response to colonial representatives advocating mere blaming against Hindu Gods. The chapter 'Monday Morning' vividly draws the picture of school-going children in Indian education system. Though, little children do not prefer to attend school initially as it puts a ceiling on their childhood pleasure. The certain authoritarian atmosphere in the school generates mental fear over their delicate mentality: "Swaminathan shuddered at the very thought of school: that

dismal yellow building; the fire-eyed Vedanayagam, his class-teacher; and the headmaster with his thin ling cane....” (1). Though, such a system of severe punishment of past has no place in the modern educational set up. Modification of the educational system on a major scale is being conducted in its entire framework. Narayan in a speech on ‘Cruelty to Children’ to Indian Parliament indicates certain changes in the Indian schooling system. The Macaulay-made educational frame has been proved slightly upsetting to small kids where children are forced to wear particular uniform, footwear and a number of other things. Narayan notes in his speech that the ‘child is groomed and stuffed into a uniform and packed off to school with a loaded bag on his back. The schoolbag has become an inevitable burden for the child’. Narayan pleads for abolition of the school bag as a national policy, by an ordinance if necessary. He further clarifies that ‘the dress regulation, particularly in convent school is another senseless formality- tie and laced shoes and socks, irrespective of the climate, is compulsory ... it’s absurd to enforce it on children ... A simple uniform and footwear must be designed and brought into force and these should be easier to maintain’. Narayan is of the view that childhood needs a change to bloom rather than wilt in the process of learning (*Malgudi Landscapes* 197-98). Narayan’s advocacy over ‘education without burden’ has brought some favorable signs in framing up of modern educational policies. Through the character sketches of Swami and his friends in the novel, Narayan seems to be protesting against the British legacy of education system and appeals for certain improvement according to the native set up and environment. Narayan has described his experiences at Lutheran Mission School as a Brahmin boy in his autobiography *My Days*:

The scripture classes were mostly devoted to attacking and lampooning the Hindu gods and violent abuses were heaped on idol-worshippers as a prelude to glorifying Jesus. Among the non-Christians in our class I was the only Brahmin boy and received special attention; the whole class would turn in my

direction when the teacher said that Brahmins claiming to be vegetarians ate fish and meat in secret, in a sneaky way and were responsible for the soaring price of those commodities. (10)

Swami and Mani listen to Gaurishanker: a Gandhian in Khaddar, who delivers his speech: “We are slaves of slaves... English is no bigger than our Madras Presidency and is inhabited by a handful of white rogues, the English men”. They declare,” to boycott English goods, especially of Lancashire and Manchester cloth” and organize the program: “the bonfire of foreign clothes” (*S.A.F.* 93-95) in the wake of the Swadeshi movement led by Gandhiji. The chapter *Broken Panes* introduces the Indian Freedom Struggle. Though, Gandhiji's indirect presence is felt at the back of the whole incident. The novel recounts the event happened in India several years ago in a realistic manner. The satire on imagining nations, maps and Europe figures is also communicated in the novel. When Swami is trying to draw a map of Europe: “It puzzled him how people managed to live in such a crooked country as Europe... How did the map-makers find out what the shape of country was? How did they find out that Europe was like a camel’s head?” (*S. A. F.* 56).

Hence, the novel has been considered frankly autobiographical and rooted in Narayan’s personal experience as a boy to school. Narayan’s is an artistic reality, not a photographic one. Certain events happened in his real life (described in his memoirs *My Days*) show their genuine relationship with his fictional world. Generally authenticity in literature is judged in context to its credibility. Natural language not written with a controlled vocabulary is considered one of its parameters by critics. Narayan uses language of everyday life without further verbosity or ambiguity. The setting of this novel is provided by Malgudi, purely a country of the mind. The novel may be termed as the quest for identity and maturity. Narayan observes: “In childhood, fears and secrecies and furtive acts happen to be the natural state of

life, adopted instinctively for survival in a world dominated by adults. As a result, I believe a child is capable of practicing greater cunning than a grown up” (*My Days* 20).

The more matured work than his earlier novel, *The Bachelor of Arts* (1937) describes the career of a young man, Chandran at the time when he is about to leave college and enters life. The novel is divided into four parts. The first part is divided into five chapters, depicting a vivid account of the college life of the hero, Chandran. He is a brilliant speaker, so is appointed as the secretary of the college Historical Association. Though extra-curricular activities generate disturbances in his study, but at least he manages to pass the B.A. Examination anyhow. The second part of the novel deals with Chandran’s search of a job and his frustrations while facing life-reality. Unable to find a job, Chandran wastes his valuable moment by mere useless walking on the bank of the river or sleeping for long hours. He falls in love with a beautiful girl Malthi, proposes her to marry, but their horoscopes do not tally. Being disappointed by such mishap, Chandran falls ill and confined to bed for several days. The third part of the novel narrates his aimless wandering in Madras wherein he also tempts to visit the house of a prostitute in the company of a degenerate youth. Later on, the peace of Kapaleswar temple attracts him and he turns a Sanyasi, but seems tired of practicing the difficult role of Sanyasi and finally returns to his parents in Malgudi. The fourth part of the novel shifts towards Chandran’s marriage with Susila and his settled life. The novel ends with an optimistic note of life, i.e. when one compromises the situation, all ends well.

The depiction of horoscope in the novel is an aspect of Indian reality. Chandran shows his hatred for tradition bound caste division and feels that a marriage would not be tolerated, even among sub-sects of the same caste: “If India was to attain salvation, these watertight divisions must go-community, caste, sects, sub-sects and still further division” (38). Looking to above views, Narayan has presented a firsthand account of Indian life from within. Chandran’s mother views on marriage that “it is always a matter of destiny: you can marry

only the person who you are destined to marry and at the appointed time. When time comes let the ugliest girl, she will look alright to the destined eye” (158). Such views define the popular belief that ‘marriages are made in heaven’. Chandran expresses his clash against the injustice, slavery or distortion of Indian history by the colonial rule. He shows his likeness for the pure image of India and the history of patriots as the makers of India in place of distorted history by the colonial rule. Raghavachar, the nationalist professor of history, expresses his views: “If he were asked what the country needed most urgently, he would not say self government or economic independence but a classified, purified Indian history” (19). In the context of this argument, Narayan mentions the colonial attitude towards Indian historian in one of his essays titled as ‘When India was a Colony’: “Indian history was written by British historians – extremely well documented and researched, but not always impartial ... The Black Hole of Calcutta never existed”. Narayan adds that when he mentioned this aspect to a distinguished British historian some years ago in London, he brushed aside his observation with: “I’m sorry; Indians are without a sense of history. Indians are temperamentally non-historical” (*Malgudi Landscapes* 343). Hence, Narayan concentrates over colonial’s partiality, the annoyance over caste discrimination and native consciousness in the domestic-traditional Indian life.

The Dark Room (1938), the third novel by Narayan, describes the tale of a littered housewife named Savitri. Ramani, the office secretary of *Englandia Insurance Company* is authoritarian and distrustful by nature. Savitri, Ramani’s wife is a true identity of traditional Indian womanhood. She is shown fully dedicated to her husband, but Ramani, the patriarch, often rebukes and abuses her. The arrival of Shantibai, the widow, who falls in love with Ramani, completely disturbs the marital life of Savitri and Ramani. Savitri shows her remonstrance, revolts against her husband and in desolation leave the house to commit suicide. Though Mari, a blacksmith and burglar comes to her rescue and saves her life. Savitri

decides to live an independent life in a temple, but cannot control her feelings of reminiscence and a tormenting anxiety for her children. The affection and attachment with family makes her impatient and finally she returns to her home after realizing the futility of her attempt to escape from patriarchal oppression. Here, Narayan does not suggest any solution to the problem, but focuses on the regretful fate of Indian womanhood. This novel is considered a tragedy of domestic life and disharmony. Narayan has described the Navratri festival as a part of Indian cultural tradition. People celebrate this auspicious festival to honor and praise the Goddess Durga. The religious reference adds the splendor in local colors of the novel. Though mother Durga is worshipped, but the woman (*Nari*) a symbol or form of the Goddess (*Narayani*) is being tortured, is the exposed reality expressed indirectly by the novelist. Narayan also emphasizes the necessity of women's education through Savitri when she confesses the social reality that her incomplete educational career has played a major role in shaping her misfortune. "If I had gone to a college and studied, I might have become a teacher or something" (120) or "I am like a bamboo pole which cannot stand without a wall to support" (189). Economic dependence is her helplessness. The patriarchal structure of society makes her silent. Sudhir Dixit in his article on "Ibsenite Feminism in Narayan's *The Dark Room*" expresses his views that Narayan could easily have made his Savitri a staunch rebel like Ibsen's Nora, but the harsh realities of Indian society compel Narayan to make his heroine surrender to its overwhelming pressures" (Bhatnagar 183). Narayan considers it a form of movement in its early stage: 'I was somehow *obsessed* with a philosophy of a woman as opposed to man, her constant oppressor. This must have been an early testament of the 'Women's Lib' movement... A wife in an orthodox milieu of Indian society was an ideal victim of such circumstances' (*My Days* 132). Though, Narayan's attitude towards women has been severely criticized by some critics in contemporary criticism. It has been argued that while developing the initial stage of nation formation, Narayan in order to sustain individual

Brahminic favour and preserve the ancestral norms to manage the male hegemonic frame, might have been forced to prevent the status of gender equality in that period. But it is equally true that that present day feminist movement was not at its height in those days and what Narayan could do was his generating sympathy towards the marginalized status of woman in society. It should not be treated mere injustice because he dared to depict at least the naked reality of the contemporary era through voicing the gender inequality.

Narayan's personal experiences, rather suffering have been transformed into his novel *The English Teacher* (1945). The novel narrates the domestic life of Krishna, who serves as a lecturer in English in the Albert Mission College, Malgudi. His happy married life devastates completely when his better-half Sushila is stung by a flea, develops typhoid and dies after few days unfortunately. The sudden death of his dear wife makes him so upset that he loses all interest in life. The only comfort and compromise to him is his little daughter, Leela. Wondering about a lotus pond, he meets *Sanyasi* who possesses the miraculous power to converse with the spirit of a dead one. Here, Narayan confers the philosophical discourse over the parapsychology and the mysteries of the world of spirit. Krishna regains his lost interest in life after meeting the headmaster of a new child's school. Overwhelmed by his educational theories, Krishna soon decides to give up his job at the college and readily joins the new institution to render his service. With the help of Sanyasi, Krishna can communicate with the spirit of his dead wife directly. His communication with the dead wife is neither a magic nor a miracle, but actually a means of finding reconciliation with life. The novel is fully autobiographical as Narayan himself confessed in his *My Days*. In the year 1939 his wife Rajam had died of typhoid which devastated Narayan inwardly. He writes:

I have described this part of my experience of her sickness and death in *The English Teacher* so fully that I do not and perhaps cannot, go over it again.

More than any other book, *The English Teacher* is autobiographical in content;

very little part of it is fiction... The toll that typhoid took and all the desolation that followed, with a child to look after, and the psychic adjustments, are based on my experience (*My Days* ix).

Elizabeth Brown appreciates the novel as: “An idyll as delicious as anything I have met in modern literature for a long time. The atmosphere and texture of happiness, and above all, its elusiveness have seldom been so perfectly transcribed” (*The English Teacher* cover page).

Narayan has woven his theme around Hindu myths through this novel. ‘The soul is immortal and ultimately it merges with the divine spirit’ is reflected in the second part of *The English Teacher*. It promotes him to gain power to endure. He could accomplish the stage to self-sufficiency and find happiness within. Krishna thinks that his wife has always been with him. Narayan writes: “Perhaps death may not be the end of everything as it seems – personality may have other structures and other planes of existence, and the decay of the physical body through disease or senility may mean nothing more than a change of vehicle. This outlook may be unscientific, but it helped me survive the death of my wife. I could somehow manage to live after death” (*My Days* 151). Here, he seems to confirm the philosophical truth over the mortality of human being and perpetuity of soul as per sayings in *Bhagavad-Gita*: “Vasansi Jirnani Yatha Vihay Navani Gruhnati Naroparani, Tatha Sharirani Vihay Jirnanyanyani Sanyati Navani Dehi” (Adhyay 2, Shloka 22, 37), i.e. As a man shedding worn-out garments, takes other new ones, likewise, the embodied soul, casting off worn-out bodies, enters into others that are new.

Life under colonial rule seems an essential facet in the novel. The title of the novel itself suggests the influence of the unwelcome ruler. Towards the end of the novel Krishna realizes that his job as an English Teacher is worthless. Krishna believes that English teaching to Indian students is like to feed them on ‘literary garbage’ and the fate of English Teacher in India is like ‘the paid servants of the department of garbage’: “This education had

reduced us to a notion of morons; we were strangers to our own culture and camp followers of another culture, feeding on leavings and garbage” (171). He decides to resign as an English Teacher because colonial system of education is going to attack a whole century of false education (205). Krishna feels that English education has proved ineffective in bringing him solace at the time when required. He realizes that such education has actually placed him far from Indian culture and its educational theories. It is Krishna’s inner self-development. Though he praises the aesthetic value of English literature and has high respect for Mr. Brown, the principal of Albert Mission College and well-known poet, but his opposition towards the British Education is slightly different when he thinks that his (Mr. Brown) western mind will not be able to grab the idea of inner peace in the Indian sense. The Western philosophy demands the scientific evidence of an event like reunion with the spirit of dead one, but Krishna’s feelings require no confirmation.

It seems that Narayan through Krishna’s character shows how the English education system dehumanizes the Indians. To justify his views, Narayan further notes in his essay ‘When India was a Colony’ the influence and attitudes of ICS (now IAS) officer during the colonial phase: “Instead of taking the trouble to understand India and deal directly with the public, Briton transmuted Indians themselves into Brown Sahibs... They were also educated to carry about them an air of superiority at all times and were expected to keep other Indians at a distance ... the ICS manual was his Bible that warned him against being too familiar with anyone... These men proved ruthless in dealing with agitators ... they were viewed as a monstrous creation of the British. An elder statesman once defined the I.C.S. as being neither Indian nor civil nor service. When Nehru became the Prime Minister, he weeded out many of them (*Malgudi Landscapes* 338). The native residents of India too were forced and trained to remain alienated themselves from their motherland during colonial rule. The intellectual youth was misguided to think the countrymen inferior. Narayan through English Teacher

exposes the genuine sense of the true education system. The English Teacher, Krishna thinks that he would be converted into a mechanical or materialistic personality and would completely forget the importance of native cultural values, if he continues to be a teacher under British legacy. His conscience awakens him to join the institution where he could find solace and render his service to humanity. Hence, the character sketch of Krishna reflects the postcolonial dimensions in his life philosophy.

The character of Susila distinguishes the humanized form of Indian woman while carrying out her domestic duties. She has been aptly appreciated by Somerset Maugham in his letter to Narayan: 'Your story is charming and moving and curious, but what I think what chiefly delighted me was the description of home life... You cannot imagine how fascinating that is for the European reader. The portrait of Susila is very graceful and touching and very, very human' (Rao 72). Hence, the novel describes the aspects of Indianness, wedded love and familial ties.

Narayan's next effort, *Mr. Sampath: The Printer of Malgudi* (1949) is viewed by Walsh as 'the first book exhibiting modified approach' as it indirectly focuses on some of his own experiences, particularly the aspect of starting his own journal; he also makes a marked movement away from his earlier novels by intermixing biographical events (62). Srinivas, the protagonist of the novel meets Mr. Sampath, the printer and assigns him the charge to print his weekly, *The Banner*. The strenuous work of editing and publishing of the weekly seizes all his attention, Hence, ignores his family life. Srinivas' negligence of domestic duties generates a disturbance in the family, sometimes quarrels take place, nevertheless they continue their routine life with due compromise. The publication of the weekly is suspended because of Srinivas' own mismanagement and a strike in the press. The breakdown of publication inspires Mr. Sampath to become a film producer. He sets up *the sunrise picture studio* and appoints Srinivas as the script writer, his friend Somu as the

financier and Ravi, the young man as the accountant of the company. *The Burning of Kama* is the first film to be produced in which Mr. Sampath acts the role of Shiva and Shanti, the actress as Parvathi. Ultimately, film producing venture also comes to an end while excited Ravi develops uproar on the stage to embrace his idol Shanti. Ravi has gone mad and has been sent to the police lock-up. Srinivas revives the publication of *the Banner* afterward. The financial crisis compels Mr. Sampath to leave Malgudi to escape the notice of his creditors, Somu and others. Finally, Mr. Sampath bids farewell to Srinivas and Shanti. Hence, the novel envisages the enterprising rogue Mr. Sampath placed in the awful dilemma due to uncontrollable circumstances. This novel is considered a classic in Indian writings in English as it deals with some serious subjects in comic manner.

The novelist has introduced the spiritual aspect of Indian reality. The historical importance of Malgudi and river Sarayu is visualized with a view to focusing on mythical truth of native Indian culture. The myth of the birth of river Sarayu has been associated with Lord Rama who on his way to a holy river ... rested on a sandy stretch in a grove, and looked about water for his forehead-marking. He pulled an arrow from his quiver and scratched a line on the sand, and water instantly appeared. Thus, was born the river Sarayu (206). Lord Buddha too, came this way, preaching his gospel of compassion, centuries later. The lesson 'mortality of human being' is also preached through the story of a handful of mustard by the Buddha himself in this place. The great Shankara appeared during the next millennium. He saw on the riverbank a cobra spreading its hood and shielding a spawning frog from the rigour of the midday sun. He remarks: "Here the extremes meet. The cobra, which is the natural enemy of the frog, gives it succour. This is where I must build my temple" (207). He installed the goddess there and preached his gospel of *Vedanda*: the identity and oneness of God and His creatures. Narayan perhaps intends to convey the message through such mythical tales that Indian spiritualism emphasizes the philosophy of non-violence, mortality

of man and the morale of forgive and forget existed since centuries. The *Vedanta* teaches the mystery of earthly man and his attachment with supernatural beings. Lord Buddha interpreted the philosophy of mortality woven with human life and preached his disciples to pursue the path of truth, knowledge and peace to be relieved from worldly pains: “Buddham Sharanam Gacchami, Shantam Sharanam Gacchami (move towards peace). Hence, looking to the postcolonial context, the novel highlights the genuine perception of Indian civilization and its rich cultural heritage. Though satirical in tone, but the novelist has visualized the mythical significance of certain virtues like restraint and chastity through the incident of ‘The Burning of Kama’. The concept of making a film based on mythological truth proves ridiculous while rehearsing the act.

Looking to another appealing aspect of this novel, the character-sketch of Sampath is none else, but Narayan’s charming friend Sampath himself who became a film director. Narayan expresses this fact in his memoir, *My Days* that he was specialized in the theatre and was a master of the dramatic art. Sampath loved and welcomed his friends always but could frankly tell his friends: “There should be no printing obligations between friends”. Sampath in real life too has become a very busy film personality (179-80).

The Financial Expert (1952) by Narayan is considered his masterpiece. The novel is organized into five parts narrating the story of the falling-rising state of Margayya, the financial expert. Margavya, a money lender initiates his business under a banyan tree, in front of the Central Co-operative Land Mortgage Bank in Malgudi. His profession is to help the shareholders of the bank to borrow money on a small interest, and lends it to the needy people at a higher rate of interest. Balu, the spoiled child of Margayya generates tensions by throwing his account book into the gutter, which makes impossible for Margayya to carry on his old business. He approaches an astrologer to show his horoscope and receives the advice from astrologer that to regain his wealth, he should perform Laxmi-Puja for forty days with

ash from a red lotus and ghee made out from a gray cow in order to please the goddess of wealth. Margayya performs the suggested ceremony of Laxmi-Puja hoping prosperous career. Dr. Pal sells him MS book on Bed Life to get it published. Madan Lal, a man from the North publishes that book at fifty-fifty partnership base; accordingly the publication of the MS book brings Margayya a good fortune. But his spoiled son, Balu ruins him repeatedly by wasting a lot, cannot pass his SSLC, even tears out the school leaving certificate into four quarters and throws them into the same gutter where he has already thrown the account book of Margayya. Balu marries Brinda, the daughter of the owner of a Tea-estate in Mempi Hills. Though, Pundit raises the obstacle on the issue of unmatched horoscope, but another astrologer is paid Rs.75 to tally the horoscope. Narayan satirizes that 'money can dictate the very stars in their courses'. Margayya grows rich in the course of time, even contributes to war fund and works day and night to fill up his money bags. Meanwhile, Balu harasses his wife and engages in nocturnal activities in the company of Dr. Pal. Dr. Pal whispers to the people that Margayya's business is not going well as a result, hundreds of people demand their deposit. Consequently, all the wealth accumulated through unfair means by Margayya is lost unexpectedly. Ultimately, Margayya advises his son to restart their old business under the same banyan tree. Hence, the novel centres around the theme of lust for money along with the father-son relationship and certain religious beliefs practiced in Indian culture.

The ritual of Laxmi-Puja is an aspect of Indian mysticism. Religion and rituals in the postcolonial writer lead to what Ken Goodwin has termed 'an objectification of a social need' (qtd. in Nayar 97). It symbolizes one type of supplementary system to the constructed culture. Pujas and Mantras bring one, a good luck and prosperity is a firm conviction. Narayan shows how man prospers on Indian soil by performing such sacred observance. Through the context of Laxmi-Puja Narayan seems to suggest that when a man is surrounded by worldly disaster, none, but God alone grants him the peace and survives his earthly existence. God is the

ultimate force of survival and place of refuge. In India, a man like Margayya obstructs the government strategies or policies for national development: "If the purpose of the Co-operative Movement was the promotion of thrift and the elimination of middlemen, these two were the objects that were defeated here under the banyan tree" (2). Apart from the vigour of the narrative, what is remarkable about the book is the unselfconscious ease and humour with which R. K. Narayan conveys the spirit of Indian Life (cover page of the novel). Hence, Narayan's depiction of Indian reality demonstrates a legacy of the ancient and contemporary verifying the traditional rhythm of Indian life. Margayya is enticed by the thought of purchasing a western automobile. Dr. Pal induces Margayya to accept the semi-pornographic *Bed Life* for publication which catches the attention towards the invasion of modernity into the Indian life. It is a custom in India that childless couples vow to God to perform Pujas and offer gift, jewelry or money if they are blessed with children, e.g. Margavyya and his wife fulfill their vow by offering money to the Lord of Tirupati Hills. Margayya insists that his son should regularly pray Goddess Saraswati, the Goddess of Learning for better knowledge. The school-going ceremony of his son is also performed with splendor. Narayan also narrates the enmity between two Goddesses, Laxmi and Saraswati in the novel, i.e. 'Shree and Sarasvati never go together'. The priest tells Margayya: "There is always a rivalry between the two- between the spouse of Vishnu and the spouse of Brahma. Some persons have the good fortune to be claimed by both; some, on the contrary have the misfortune to be abandoned by both. Evidently you are one of those for whom both are fighting at the moment" (50). Patrick Swinden in his article on *Gods, Demons and Others in the novels of R. K. Narayan* states: "Here for the first time, Narayan succeeds in bringing his interest in Hindu mythology into alignment with his ambition to represent a character's inner development on the 'orthodox' Western psychological model" (Bhatnagar 66).

The character-sketch of Margavya is shown as a multifaceted personality. His business early on is to collect money as money seems everything to him. K. R. S Iyengar in *Indian Writing in English* remarks that ‘there is a certain chain of nemesis in the intersecting relationships between Dr. Pal and Margavya, the apostles respectively of sex and money. Margavya’s ruminations and obiter dicta on money set the tone of the book and offer a clue to the extraordinary career of this Malgudi Napoleon of finance (377). His materialistic approach represents a colonial outlook: “It is money which gives people all this (authority, dress, looks). Money alone is important in this world. Everything else will come to us naturally if we have money in our purse” (*F.E.* 21). In one of his dialogues with the Priest, Margayya shows his strong passion for money and tries to convince the superior power of the wealth over the rest: “A man whom the Goddess of Wealth favours need not worry much. He can buy all the knowledge he requires” (*F.E.* 51), but the same Margayya teaches his son Balu to prostrate before Goddess Saraswati. Margayya has secured a small framed picture of the Goddess Saraswati, the Goddess of learning and enlightenment, sitting beside her peacock and playing on the strings of *veena*. The picture is hung up in the study room where Margayya enjoins his son ceremoniously to pray to the Goddess every morning. When his son discovers the fact that Margayya is fond of worshipping Lakshmi instead of Saraswati, Margayya very tactfully answers to avoid further misinterpretation: “It is all the same Goddess. There is no difference between Lakshmi and Saraswati, do you understand?” (*F.E.* 113) Hence, his inner soul cannot escape from the inherent *Sankaras* earned since centuries where learning functions as a pious form. The hidden native consciousness prevents him from becoming mere materialistic man. The striking features of this novel remain an unselfconscious ease and humour through which Narayan has communicated the essence of Indian life.

The novel *Waiting for Mahatma* (1955) relates the love story of Sriram and Bharati aligned with the political background of India during the independence phase of the nation. Sriram joins the Gandhian missionary camp to seek Bharati's love. Sriram is stunned, uncertain and awkward character while Bharati is educated in Gandhian principles and her character seems ascertaining the identity of a true follower and devotee of Gandhi. Mahatma Gandhi (fictional) and his 'Quit India Movement' are placed in the background of the novel. Though, the Mahatma has not been assigned the key role, but Narayan has maintained the special dignity of his character in the novel. The fund is being collected for the reception of Mahatma Gandhi. Sriram actively participates in Gandhiji's tour of poverty stricken villages. The historic movement 1942 breaks out and Gandhiji is arrested. Meanwhile Sriram carries on the propaganda of 'Quit India Movement' also meets Jagdish, a terrorist and national worker and joins in revolutionary activities, notes down the messages and speeches of Subhash Bose from Tokyo and Berlin, circulates cyclostyled copies among soldiers, engages with a group of derailing the trains, cutting telegraph wires and setting fire to the records in law courts, exploding crude bombs and other acts of violence. Sriram is arrested, but released from jail after independence. Soon after his release, Sriram rushes to approach Bharati in Delhi Birla Bhavan and marries her after seeking approval from the Mahatma. Sriram and Bharati remain the witness to the murder scene of Mahatma performed by a misguided youth. Hence, Narayan has depicted the freedom struggle and the assassination of Gandhi woven together with the love story of Sriram and Bharati through this novel.

The novel focuses on colonial alienation and abandonment and an attempt to restore the indigenous culture. For example, Gandhiji (fictional) addresses the people in Hindi as a mark of respect to his mother tongue: "I will not address you in English. It's the language of the rulers. It has enslaved us" (16). He advises the people to practice *ahimsa* (non-violence), truth, *Ramdhun* and spinning of Charkha as a part of his mission: "I see before me a vast

army... We, the citizens of this country, are all soldiers of a non-violent army” (17). Bharati is a daughter of India and is “clad in a Sari of *Khaddar*, white home-spun” (17). Her name itself symbolizes the motherland (*Bharatmata*). Gandhiji advises Sriram not to practice violence to protest the British Rule, but to follow an ideal concept of *Satyagrahi*, a true soldier of truth and non-violence: “Before you aspire to drive the British from this country, you must drive every vestige of violence from your system ... you must gradually forget the term ‘Enemy’. You must think of him as a friend who must leave you. You must train yourself to become a hundred percent *ahimsa* soldiers” (51-52). Here is the concept of an ideal *Vaishnavjan*, a man of truth, as defined in Indian philosophy. Silent protest without a weapon is more impressive than violent attack. Gopad, the follower of Mahatma and a terrorist also states: “Mahatma will not let me be violent even in thought” (50). Such statement delineates the Gandhian consciousness in the colonial and the post-colonial India.

Govind Prasad Sharma in *Nationalism in Indo-Anglian Fiction* remarks that “Gandhian consciousness became a style of living and thinking with notes of spirit of India, a search for identity and Purna Swaraj which gave “a new meaning and a new significance” to the national movements and strengthened the Gandhian touches of “deep faith in love for all” (183). Narayan suggests through the title of the novel that waiting of Sriram comes to an end after his marriage with Bharati, but waiting for Mahatma continues for the people of Malgudi and the entire India. Hence, *Waiting for the Mahatma* is considered a tale of remarkable insight into the upsurge of Indian nationalism as witnessed through the eyes and hearts of Sriram and Bharati, and told with all the genius and compassion we have come to expect from R. K. Narayan (*W.F.M.* cover page).

The Guide (1958) is the most remarkable novel of Narayan. The novel won the Sahitya Academy Award in 1960 and was adapted to film as *Guide*, a Hindi movie directed by Vijay Anand. An English language version was also released. Narayan was not happy with the way

the film was made and its deviation from the book; he wrote a column in *Life Magazine*, "The Misguided Guide," criticizing the film (Guy Randor). The book was also adapted to a Broadway play by Harvey Breit and Patricia Rinehart and was staged at Hudson Theatre in 1968 with Zia Mohyeddin playing the lead role and a music score by Ravi Shankar (Barnes Clive 1968). The novel concentrates on Raju, a railway guide. The profession of tourist guide brings him in contact with Rosie, the dancer and her husband Marco, the fanatic archaeologist. Raju falls in love with Rosie and seduces her in absence of Marco, which is resulting in the separation of Rosie and Marco. Raju transforms her into an icon courted by wealthy and influenced dignitaries wherever she performs her dance. Raju makes a fortune by manipulating her. In order to gain her valuable jewelry, dissipated Raju forges her signature, but the police investigation disturbs his whole plan and sends him to jail. After releasing from jail, Raju takes shelter in a temple on the bank of the river Saryu, a place located a few miles away from Malgudi where the illiterate villagers treat him as miraculous Mahatma. To respect their compassion, Raju too performs the new role of a saint which has been assigned to him by innocent people. In the days of famine Raju is forced to remain on a fast to please the rain-god. Velan, the ignorant villager misinterprets the message conveyed by Raju, creates the chaos and Raju remains helpless against the predicament. Though, Raju's inner spirit awakens him subsequently to sacrifice his life for the sake of the public good. On the twelfth day of his fast, Raju falls down, tired just as there are signs of rain on the distant horizons. "Velan it's raining in the hills. I can feel it coming up under my feet, up my legs. He sagged down" (*The Guide* 247). There seems ambiguity over the concluding part of the novel because it hasn't been clearly mentioned by the novelist, whether Raju actually dies or remains just fainted temporarily. The 'Time' magazine notes that *The Guide* floats as gently as a lily pad on the surface of Indian life and yet suggests the depth beneath. It manages to

describe a saint who is neither born nor made, but simply happens, almost like the weather - Time (*The Guide* cover page).

The famous Mysore drought might have inspired the novelist to base his novels. Narayan writes in his memoir, *My Days*:

A severe drought had dried up all the rivers and tanks, Krishnaraja Sagar, an enormous reservoir feeding channels that irrigated thousands of acres had also become dry, and its bed a hundred and fifty feet deep was now exposed to the sky with fissures and cracks revealing an ancient submerged temple. As a desperate measure, the Municipal Council organized a prayer for rains. A group of Brahmins stood knee deep in water (procured at great cost) on the dry bed of Kaveri, fasted, prayed and chanted hundred Mantras continuously for eleven days. On the twelfth day it rained, and brought relief to the country side. (188-89)

Actually Narayan has considered this incident as a starting point of writing this novel and during his travels to America; this idea crystallized in his mind. The novel was written at Berkeley in a hotel room. Raju has been altered into a spiritual guide from a tourist guide. Through Raju's character Narayan has conveyed the mythical truth of a sinner like Valio, the robber, who, after the realization of his sin transformed into Valmiki, the great sage and writer of the epic named *Ramayana*. The portrayal of Rosie describes the sublimity of the rich heritage of Indian classical dance. Though, she could not preserve the dignity of Indian womanhood. Rosie as an educated woman blends the touch of modernity along with classical talent in her identity.

Rosie's impressive performance as a professional *Bharat Natyam* dancer can be considered obviously a postcolonial phenomenon. *Bharat Natyam* is a part of the national heritage in post-independence India. Raju proves his sainthood by practicing fasting for rain

to the famine-stricken region is an Indian reality. Raju unwillingly accepts the role of a saint, but his fasting serves as a means of self-purification through which Narayan focuses Gandhian Philosophy: 'Suffering for the welfare of others where the dignity of life lies'. Raju wants to search for his true identity. B. S. Yadav in an article on "The Guide- A Psycho-Philosophic and Socio-Ethical Study" states that 'the novel presents a conflict between the Eastern and the Western culture and synthesizes the two through their assimilation which has been symbolized by Rosie's transformation into Nalini and like Anand, Narayan points out that one has to go to the West in order to come back to the East' (Bhatnagar 28). Raju's mother symbolizes the traditional values while Rosie and Raju remain the representative to modernity. Through Raju's character the novelist also satirizes another aspect of hypocrisy that there are many fake Sadhus who misguide the innocent people in the name of religion, but ultimately become the victim of their misfortune. The novelist has also depicted the reality of illiterate mind, e.g. one of the villagers wants to know if the rain falls because the movement of the airplanes ruffles the clouds while the other opines if atom bombs are drying up the clouds. Such statements by rural people reflect the humorous aspect of illiterate minds. It's a true picture of post-war independent India. The features of modernity are a part of the Indian reality as delineated in the novel. For example: the arrival of the train in Malgudi and 'the palace' where film featuring Dietrich, Garbo, Laurel and Hardy are regularly screened. S. P. Swain in an article on "The novels of R. K. Narayan and Indian Reality" remarks that for Narayan, reality is a unity where there is no intrinsic and fundamental schism between its constituent parts (Bhatnagar 17). The novelist has shown religion and faith as linked to social and economic conditions. Natural disasters, famines or social tensions cause people to return to their faith. Hence, the novel mirrors Indian tradition, culture, and spiritual vision.

The Man Eater of Malgudi (1961) by Narayan is an allegory or fable justifying mythical truth that 'evil is self-destructive'. Though, the title of the novel has been slightly

paradoxical since man eater in the novel is not a tiger, but a mighty man Vasu who kills a number of wild animals from Mempi forests. Vasu, the monster is powerful enough to kill a man with a single blow with his hammer fist. The novel is narrated by Natraj, the printer of Malgudi. Mr. Sastri, the compositor and proof reader is his assistant. Krishna, the poet and Mr. Sen, the journalists are his constant companions. H.Vasu: M.A., taxidermist arrives in Malgudi to stay as a tenant in a room in the upper storey of Natraj's printing press. Vasu's terrific stature generates fear among Malgudians. They live in terror of Vasu, the monster whose business is to collect the dead animals in his room for stuffing. Natraj the worshipper of non-violence proves feeble against Vasu's strength. Vasu challenges to shoot the temple elephant Kumar in a festival procession organized to celebrate the poet's completion of a portion of his religious book. Natraj and his companions immediately report to the police authorities, but even police authorities express their inability to take action against Vasu until the crime has actually been committed. Though, the procession passes without any mishap. Natraj learns that Vasu has died eventually. The murder is suspected and all are interrogated, but the medical report declares that Vasu has died of a concussion received on his right temple from a blunt instrument. Afterwards, Rangi, the temple dancer discloses the mystery of Vasu's death that while striking a mosquito settled on his forehead, Vasu slapped his temple and died instantaneously. Hence, Vasu dies of his own blow.

K.R.S. Iyengar suggests "perhaps *The Maneater of Malgudi* was itself meant to be a modern version of one of the Deva-Asura conflicts of very ancient times" (382). Iyengar has equated the character of Natraj with Deva which seems slightly improper because Natraj, the mortal is poor and weak in comparison to Deva while Vasu can be considered Asura according to his physical strength and gigantic figure. He seems to be very much like the Mahishasur at the feet of goddess Durga. Vasu justifies his act of killing innocent animals and stuffing them as "a better method of preserving wildlife" (98). Vasu's utterances have the

resemblance with the colonizing British, e.g. “I think there is a good business proposition here. I can supply them stuffed eagles at about fifty rupees each. Everyone can keep a sacred *guruda* in the *puja* and I’ll guarantee that it won’t fly off” (*M.O.M.* 50). His economic mind knows no mercy. Narayan satirizes the materialistic approach of western culture. In an answer to Natraj’s anxious plea, Vasu calculates his nasty mathematics: “Has it occurred to you how much more an elephant is worth dead? You don’t have to feed it in the first place. I can make ten thousand out of the parts of this elephant- the dusks, if my calculation is right, must weigh forty pounds, that’s eight hundred rupees. I have... and each hair on its tail can be sold for twelve annas for rings and bangles; most women fancy them and it’s not for us to question their taste. My first business will be to take out the hairs and keep them apart, while the blood is still hot; trunks, legs, even the nails- it’s a perfect animal in that way. Every bit of it is valuable” (*M.O.M.* 126).

Narayan conveys the mythical truth that ‘evil is self-destructive’. Sastri emphasis at the end of the novel: “Every demon appears in the world with a special boon of indestructibility. Yet the universe has survived all the *rakshasas* that were ever born. Even demon carries within him, unknown to himself, a tiny seed of self-destruction, and goes up in thin air at the most unexpected moment. Otherwise, what is to happen to humanity?” Natraj states: “the story of Bhasmasura, the unconquerable, who scorched everything he touched, and finally reduced himself to ashes by placing the tips of his fingers on his own head” (*M.O.M.* 182-183). Vasu too kills himself while trying to slap away the mosquito that lands on his head. Hence, belief in myths is a part of the common people’s life in Narayan’s novel.

Rituals are woven parts of Indian culture. “Each morning after taking his dip in the river Natraj sits on the sand reciting a prayer to the Sun to illumine his mind”. Mathu, the tea-shop owner firmly believes that there has not been a single accident on the narrow, twisting road to the mountain “because the Goddess protects us” (*M.O.M.* 9, 42).

Considerably, the novel seems to be an allegory to the colonial invasion of India. Vasu arrives in Malgudi to start a business, seizes the entire upper floor of the press owned by Natraj, Natraj allows him to stay as a tenant and shows his spirit of generosity. In addition to this, Vasu's fondness for hunting symbolizes the habits of the British rulers. The novel is considered purely an "Indian" because it applies an unambiguous reference to Hindu mythology. It takes the form of an imagining of the 'Nation' as the signifier of difference. The idea of non-violence has been framed as the cultural identity of the nation.

Narayan's next published novel, *The Vendor of Sweet* (1967) is viewed as 'inspired in part by his American visits and consists of extreme characterizations of both the Indian and American stereotypes, drawing on the many cultural differences. However, while it displays his characteristic comedy and narrative, the book was reviewed as lacking in depth (Robin Whiter 1967). The novel narrates the story of Jagan, the sweet vendor who seems to be influenced very much by *Bhagavad Gita* and a strict follower of Gandhian philosophy. He wears *khadi* and spins *charkha*. Though he tries to pursue Gandhian way of life, but manages two account books to avoid paying income tax which contradicts his character. Mali is his spoiled and careless son who decides to give up his studies to write a novel. Mali also intends to go to America to learn short-story writing. Despite this, Jagan is proud of his son that his son resides in America, but soon his happiness converts into misery when he receives the news that his son is taking beef. Moreover, Mali returns home with an American girl called Grace. Though not married, but they have been living an immoral life. Mali also wishes to set up a factory for story-writing manufacturing machines with American collaboration. The novelist has satirized here that to what extent man becomes the slave to the machine. Even, stories can be manufactured by electronic devices is a good joke on modern mentality. At the end, Jagan retires to spend his remaining life in an ashram near the river and hand over his business to Mali.

The novel depicts the father-son relationship as well as the differences of outlook between two generations. Jagan is not only a vendor of sweets, but also an agent about selling life-philosophy. He dreams of *Ramrajya* where there are no beggars and beggars he considers “a disgrace to the nation” (22). He has learnt from Gandhiji the ideal of life “simple living and high thinking”. His spinning of charkha is a part of *Swadeshi* movement. He advocates Ayurvedic treatment. As a lover of natural care and natural diet he takes “twenty drops of honey in hot water” (16). He advises people “a twig from margosa tree” and warns everybody not to take bristles which are “made of the hair from the pig’s tail” (26). He considers Margosa tree as ‘Amrita’ “which kept the gods alive” (26). While explaining the natural antiseptic to Grace, his daughter-in-law, Jagan cites an example of his father as a lover of Margosa twig who “died at ninety without a single tooth loose in his jaw” (26). It seems that Narayan here favours the Ayurveda; perhaps it might have derived through his grandmother who also was prescribing certain leaves and its juice to the sick people visiting her. Narayan portrays the most versatile and helpful nature of his Granny in his memoir *My Days*. Granny would first tell the person to remain quiet who is suffering pain terribly: “This leaf is *sanjeevini*, mentioned in the Ramayana. It can save you even from the venom of the darkest cobra. Don’t make that face. Go on, swallow it”. When a neighbor came in a panic over a child having convulsions, she would drop whatever she was doing and hurry away, assuring the visitor again and again: “Nothing to fear. Apply cold pack on the head and hot water at the feet; there will be no trouble unless you reverse the process” (30). The novelist has visualized a cross-cultural encounter between Indianised Jagan and his Americanized son Mali. Jagan the strict vegetarian rebukes his son for eating of ‘beef’. He reminds Mali the sayings of Shastras: “*The Shastras* defined five deadly sins and the killing of cow headed the list” (63). When Mali criticizes Gandhiji’s struggle against elimination of caste-system, Jagan, the lover of motherland warns him not to charge the father of the nation and disrespect

cultural values: “of Ramayana and Bhagvad Gita and all the trials and sufferings he had undergone to win independence” (95). Walsh considers him “a disciple of Gandhi” (146). The novel also mentions the ‘Tonsure Ceremony’ a symbolic act of total surrender where people offer their hair to Lord Venkateswar. Narayan, being a traditionalist often tries to retain the values of religious heritage of Indian civilization. Hence, the novel reflects the Gandhian perception in the post-colonial India.

To conclude this chapter, the researcher would say in context to hypothesis that it is possible to trace the postcolonial discourse of creating an image of native culture through the means of rural locale, language and customs in the work of R. K. Narayan and Pannalal Patel. Perhaps, may not be in its strictest sense, but their novels examined in this chapter can be read fruitfully from a postcolonial perspective. R. K. Narayan’s *The Man-eater of Malgudi* (1961) is an attempt to restore indigenous culture, philosophical discourse and cultural identity, while *The Guide* (1958) presents socio-cultural change, new cultural identity, colonial abandonment and alienation or the conflict between two cultures and socio-ethical study. His *Swami and Friends* (1935) and *Waiting for Mahatma* (1955) also depict colonial abandonment concentrating Indian freedom movement, and *The Bachelor of Arts* (1937) throws light on cultural identity and nationhood. Similarly *The Vendor of Sweet* (1967) and *The English Teacher* (1945) define the cultural collision and introduce the survival of national, religious ethics as well as native educational set up. Likewise Pannalal Patel’s *Manvini Bhavai* (1947) a time-dominated (*Kalpradhan*) love story focuses on an effort to liberate the native culture from its own oppressive structures, misuse of power and exploitation, colonial alienation as well as regional, cultural consciousness. Pannalal Patel’s *Na Chhutake* (1955), though a love story, narrates the Gandhian Satyagrah against the tyranny of state rulers. Patel’s *Pachhale Barne* (1947) shows the changing social and political references and the struggle against the native oppressors to some extent, while *Bhangyanan*

Bheru (1957) presents the themes of religious conversion of tribal youth, the concept of true religion and rural flavour of native culture. Likewise, Pannalal's second novel *Malela Jiv* (1941) too, to some extent approaches the postcolonial note reflecting the hegemonic formation of native people along with regional spirit. Some of the short stories by Pannalal as well represent the postcolonial dimensions.

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