

NOVELS OF KESHAB CHANDRA DASH

– A LITERARY STUDY

A Thesis submitted to
The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda
For the Degree of
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In Sanskrit

Guide:

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VADODARA
SEPTEMBER, 2013



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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that Mrs.Swati Ray has worked and written her thesis **NOVELS OF KESHAB CHANDRA DASH – A LITERARY STUDY** for the degree of Ph.D. in Sanskrit under my guidance.

The above mentioned work is not submitted anywhere else for obtaining any Degree or Diploma from any University or Institution. The said thesis is an original work based on the comprehensive, critical and literary study of the literature.

I forward her thesis with best wishes.

Guide

PREFACE

The present thesis is based on a literary study of the novels of Keshab Chandra Dash attempted for the first time. The thirteen novels of Dr. Dash include Āvartam, Añjaliḥ, Aruṇā, Madhuyānam, Nikaṣā, Oum-Śāntiḥ, Pratipad, Ṛtam, Śaśirekhā, Śikhā, Śitalatṛṣṇā, Tilottamā and Visargaḥ. For a first time, a comprehensive study is aimed to capture the literary aspects of all the novels in a single palette.

With reference to the context of Modern Sanskrit Literature, the works of Dr. Keshab Chandra Dash are analyzed and a critical study is conducted to compare each of the literary aspects of his novels with its relevance to the modern era. In the modern era, novels are studied mostly for being comfortable and entertaining ourselves with fantasy and our curiosity and desire for insight about reality. Novels stand a class apart when appealing to the masses and gaining popularity and prominence among all. I have chosen this topic because of my love for novels and finding an opportunity to work in the field of Modern Sanskrit Literature. I was inspired and amazed to see the use of Sanskrit language to highlight and discuss the socio-economic issues of the modern day.

The author's novels provide an overview of Sanskrit literature produced in post independence period and emphasize on the continuity of the long range stature of Sanskrit and its new perspective of involving modern day realism to create public interest in novel-reading. Various issues such as downfall in moral values of life, immigration of people from villages to cities in search of materialistic luxury, ever increasing male dominance in society and the voice of women amidst that and

absence of economic stability even after half a century of the country's independence.

The present study is divided into six chapters. Of them, the first chapter contains an introduction about the author and his works. The second chapter includes a study of the origin and development of Prose Sanskrit Literature. The third chapter contains a detailed summary of each of the thirteen novels. A literary study of the novels is presented in the fourth chapter. The fifth chapter contains translations in English language for two of the novels, namely, Tilottamā and Saśirekha. The sixth chapter includes concluding remarks about the entire study.

Most of Dr. Keshab Chandra Dash's novels are elongated short stories having only a few characters. The novels are generally 90 – 100 pages long including the author's reflections of the plot and characters. The insights that the author reflect, provides the reader with refreshing content and expression. Dr. Dash is a true magician of words and gambler of feelings. His novels depict his highly thoughtful sensitiveness towards common characters. His thought provoking ideas attract the reader's mind and become a baseline of creative activity. The socio-economic conditions prevalent in the novels can be well related with the modern era. This encourages the reader to subconsciously get involved into the novel and relate any of the characters with his or her own self.

Dr. Rabindra Kumar Panda, Nyāyācārya, Viśiṣṭācārya, Ph.D., my Guru, mentor and research guide, is the Officiating Head and Professor, Department of Sanskrit, Pali and Prakrit, Faculty of Arts as well as the Principal, Baroda Sanskrit Mahavidyalaya, The M.S.University of Baroda. I find myself privileged to have such an iconic guide and mentor continuously motivating and rejuvenating me on my thoughts and work. I express my deepest gratitude to him for encouraging me

throughout this journey. He has provided me with invaluable suggestions from time to time to complete my thesis work. He is a creative writer, poet and critic in Modern Sanskrit literature. He initially advised me to take up the literary study of novels of Keshab Chandra Dash as subject of my research study. In spite of being associated with several academic commitments and other professional duties, he has provided me valuable guidance in my endeavour to work upon my research. I am grateful to him for his contribution and co-operation in my research work. I wish to be blessed by him in my future goals in life.

I am equally thankful to Dr. Sweta Prajapati, Research Officer, Oriental Institute and Syndicate Member, The M.S. University of Baroda for her kind suggestions and co-operation. She has also been a source of inspiration and motivation in my work. Her affectionate care and due encouragement has provided me a congenial atmosphere for academic pursuits and inquisitive study. I am grateful to her for her constructive suggestions and ideas which have added a rich flavour to my research work.

I express a deep sense of gratitude to Dr. Shweta A. Jejurkar, Assistant Professor, Department of Sanskrit, Pali and Prakrit, Faculty of Arts, The M.S. University of Baroda for her encouragement and inspiration.

I also express a deep sense of gratitude to Ms. Varda A. Vasa, Assistant Professor, Department of Sanskrit, Pali and Prakrit, Faculty of Arts, The M.S. University of Baroda for her co-operation and bright suggestions.

I gratefully acknowledge the help I received from Dr. Suma S. Desai, who has always been a source of inspiration and symbol of perseverance. I also record my special gratitude to Dr. Kartik Pandya, Research Assistant, Oriental Institute, The M.S. University of Baroda, Dr. Nehal Pandya, Dr. Daxa Purohit, Mr. Kamaljitsinh

Sindha, Mr.Vipul Patel, Mr.Harshavardhan Shah, Ms. Archana Gamit, Mr.Tejas Vyas for their valuable help whenever I required the same during the course of my research work.

I express my sincere thanks to the authorities of the Srimati Hansa Mehta Library for allowing me to make use of the rich wealth of knowledge.

I would also like to express my sincere thanks from the bottom of my heart to Dr.Urmi Biswas, Post Doctorate Research Fellow, The M.S.University of Baroda, who had hand held me to the M.S.University and showed me a new door in my life to initiate this research work. I also wish to put on record the encouragement I received from my friend and neighbour, Mrs.Mousumi Dutta, M.A., B.Ed., a senior teacher in Navrachana School, Sama.

I have also received encouragement from my relatives in Kolkata. I especially thank my mother, Nita Sanyal, my sister, Somali, my mother-in-law, Mrs.Anjali Ray.

This work could not have been completed without the support and understanding of my seven year old daughter, Hiya, who had many a times, reminded me of my goal to complete my research work inspite of my personal duties and responsibilities.

I also express my thankfulness to my beloved husband, Mr. Rajarsi Ray for his continuous support and encouragement throughout the tenure of the research work.

16-09-2013

Swati Ray

SYNOPSIS OF THE THESIS

STATEMENT NO.1

RELEVANCE OF THE PRESENT WORK AS WELL AS ITS CONTRIBUTION TO THE MODERN SANSKRIT LITERATURE

Dr. Keshab Chandra Dash is one of the prominent and renowned authors from Orissa in modern Sanskrit literature. His works in Sanskrit include novels, poems, short stories and stories for children. Dr. Dash has truly pioneered Sanskrit novels in a modern style. He is a Professor and Head of Nyāya Darśana Department, Sri Jagannatha Sanskrit University, Puri. Dr. Dash has received a number of prestigious awards including Sahitya Academy Award, Bharatiya Bhasa Parishad Award, UGC National Veda Vyasa Sanskrit Award etc.

A novel usually demands very simple yet subtle use of expressions to depict life explicitly. As far as prose literature is concerned, Dr. Dash has penned his novels keeping the modern day affairs in perspective. In fact, novels are fictions which are written to give entertainment to the readers. If this purpose is fulfilled, the purpose of novel is over. But if some novelist imparts teachings apart from entertainment, it is an additional quality of the author. It is with this quality we can really gauge the stature of Dr. Keshab Chandra Dash's literary creations and his immense contribution to modern Sanskrit prose literature.

The socio-economic conditions prevalent in the novels can be well related with the modern era. This encourages the reader to subconsciously get involved into the novel and relate any of the characters with his or her own self.

A literary study of his following novels is attempted for the first time in the present thesis: Āvartam, Añjali, Aruṇā, Madhuyānam, Nikaṣā, Oum-Śāntiḥ, Pratipad, Ṛtam, Śaśirekhā, Śikhā, Śitalatṛṣṇā, Tilottamā and Visargaḥ. The study would aim at summarizing the novels, analyzing the characters, discussing the plot constructions, demonstrating the author's thoughts on feminism and reflecting the descriptions and narrations present in the novels. The study also aims at analyzing Dr. Dash's use of Sanskrit language and his style of writing. An attempt would be made to evaluate the literary merits of his works and to bring to light his valuable contribution to contemporary Sanskrit literature.

The English translations of two of his novels viz Śaśirekhā and Tilottamā are prepared for the first time.

STATEMENT NO.2

METHODOLOGY, SOURCES AND ORIGINALITY

I have divided my study into six chapters with specific sub headings for better presentation. The critical and analytical methods have been adopted in the preparation of the thesis.

I have fully drawn upon all the available relevant published and unpublished literature.

I have studied all the thirteen novels, translated them into my mother tongue, Bengali at first and thereafter attempted to translate them into English and evaluated them critically. While doing so, I have also studied relevant literature to support my work and interacted personally with the author to know his views.

To the best of my knowledge, an attempt is made for the first time to make a comprehensive, literary and critical study of all the thirteen novels of Dr. Keshab Chandra Dash.

The study is presented in the following six chapters based on analysis of the original novels.

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CHAPTER I

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

I.I About the Author

Contemporary Sanskrit literature is a rich area wherein the tones of Sanskrit authors have shifted from romantic imagery to realism. Dr. Keshab Chandra Dash is one of the most prominent and renowned authors from Orissa in modern Sanskrit literature. He was born on the Sixth day of March in the year 1955 (06.03.1955) in the village of Hatasahi in the Jajpur district of Orissa. His father was Narayan Dash and mother Kumudini Devi. He is currently a professor and Head of the Nyāya Darśana department of Sri Jagannatha Sanskrit University, Puri. Professor Dr. Keshab Chandra Dash is a M.A., M.Phil., Ph.D., D.Litt., Acharya (M.A.), Parangata (M.A.), Ratna (M.A.). Dr. Dash is also an eminent educationalist and holds a diploma in Film direction, Computer programming, German and French languages. His works in Sanskrit include novels, poetries, short stories and children's stories. Dr. Dash has been bestowed upon with a number of prestigious awards including Sahitya Academy Award, Bharatiya Bhasa Parishad Award, UGC National Ved Vyas Sanskrit Award etc. Professor Dash has forty books and a number of research papers and articles to his credit.

Prof. Dash had started his career as a lecturer in the year 1980. Since then, he had been attracting students for his excellent teaching. He has produced such good scholars who are now teachers in many schools, colleges and Universities as well. For the last several years, Prof. Dash is heading the post Graduate department of Nyāya Darśana in Shri Jagannatha Sanskrit University, Puri, Orissa. It is a very rare and scholastic area of Sanskrit. In spite of its rarity and abstruseness of the

subject, Prof. Dash is successful in attracting many students to his department for post graduate study. In the recent past, 26 M.Phil scholars, 14 Ph.D. scholars and more than 500 P.G. students have been awarded their degrees in his active guidance. Now 70 P.G. students, 5 M.Phil scholars, 10 Ph.D. and 3 D.Litt. scholars pursue their studies under his supervision.

Prof. Dash commands expertise in the areas of Nyāya Darśana, *Pāṇiniyan* Grammar, Computational Linguistics, Indian Philosophy and Modern Sanskrit Literature. His excellence lies in his contribution to the fields of computer studies related to Sanskrit, stylistic innovation in modern Sanskrit literature and advanced methodology of research in Sanskrit. His approach is interdisciplinary as well as multidisciplinary. Prof. Dash has organized 7 national seminars, 3 Refresher Courses sponsored by U.G.C. & Govt. of India, 2 national & International Conferences and a number of Annual seminars and symposia. Prof. Dash has also participated in 80 National and International Seminars contributing valuable research papers to the journals of national and international repute.

As a poet, novelist and writer of profound depth, Prof. Dash is famous for exploring new dimensions of Sanskrit writings. For his literary contribution, he has been honoured with 20 regional, national and international awards. Integrity of vision for renewal of human spirit is sharp in his works. All his literary works are remarkable for the brilliant flourish of simple expressions, lyrical cadence, sensible indications, aesthetic vigor, intellectual scintillations, spiritual values and transparent emotions.

Prof. Dash has served both outside and inside as the Member, President and Chairman in different authoritative, academic and policy making bodies presenting comprehensive guidance with definitive clarity.

Prof. Dash is also a philosopher of peace taking practices from ancient modes of spiritual sciences. He has also discovered and developed some methods and skills for transfunctional way of living.

His curriculum-vitae are summarized as follows:

Examination Passed	Board / University	Subject	Div.	Per.	Distinct ion / Grade	Year
H.S.C. & Madhyama (P.U.)	B.S.E. Orissa Rastriya Sanskrit Sansthan; New Delhi	English Sanskrit	1 st .	71%		1974
Shastri (B.A.)	-Do-	Sanskrit English	1 st .	70%	Distinct ion	1977
M.A.	University of Pune	Sanskrit (Nyāya Darśana & Linguistics)	1 st .	67%	Grade A	1979
M.Phil.	-Do-	-Do-	1 st .	72%	Grade A+	1980
Ph.D. (Vidyavaridhi)	Sri Jagannatha Sanskrit Vishva Vidyalaya, Puri.	-Do- (Interdisciplin ary)				1988
D.Litt. (Vidyavachasp ati)	-Do-	-Do- (Interdisciplin ary)				1993
Acharya (M.A.)	O.A.S.L.C., Puri	Pāṇini Grammar	1 st .	72%	Gold Medal	1977
Ratna (M.A.)	Wardha, Nagpur	Hindi	1 st .			1977
Parangata (M.A.)	T.M.V., Pune	Pāṇini Grammar	1 st .	60%		1979
Diploma	I.F.T.A., New Delhi	Film Direction			Grade A	1985
Diploma	B.I.E.T., Bombay	French				1987
Diploma	B.I.E.T., Bombay	German				1987
Diploma	D.A.V. Management	Computer Programming				1989

I.II Author's Experience

Teaching and Research Experience:

1. First appointment on 12.11.1980 as Lecturer in Sanskrit, Govt. Women's College, Bolangir, Orissa.
2. Second appointment on 17.01.1983 as Lecturer, Nyāya Darśana, Shri Jagannatha Sanskrit Vishvavidyalaya, Puri, Orissa.
3. Third appointment on 26.04.1991 as Reader, Nyāya Darśana, Shri Jagannatha Sanskrit Vishvavidyalaya, Puri, Orissa.
4. Fourth appointment on 20.12.1999 as Professor, Nyāya Darśana, Shri Jagannatha Sanskrit Vishvavidyalaya, Puri, Orissa.

Publications:

1. Books: 40 numbers including Research works, Sanskrit novels, Sanskrit Short Stories and Sanskrit Poetry.
2. Research papers: 40 numbers including papers on Sanskrit, Linguistics, Philosophy and Interdisciplinary field.
3. General Articles: 100 numbers including articles on Culture, Literature and Philosophy.

Research Guided:

1. M.Phil: 20
2. Ph.D: 22
3. D.Litt: 03

Original Books introduced in syllabus in Indian Universities:

1. + 2 level: 01
2. M.A. level: 01
3. M.Phil. level: 01

Seminar / Conferences Attended: 80

Seminar / Conferences Organized:

1. National Seminars: 07
2. Refresher Course: 03
3. State Level Seminars: 10
4. Annual Seminars: 20
5. Conferences (National & International): 02

Important positions held and Distinguished Membership:

1. Important positions held in different capacities in Shri Jagannatha Sanskrit Vishvavidyalaya since 1983 as:
 - (i) Syndicate member
 - (ii) Senate member
 - (iii) Member of Academic Council
 - (iv) Chairman, P.G. Council
 - (v) Chairman, Subject Research Committee
 - (vi) Chairman, M.Phil Committee
 - (vii) Chairman, Board of Studies
 - (viii) Professor Incharge of Central Library
 - (ix) Warden of University hostels
 - (x) Head of the Department of Nyaya Darshan
 - (xi) Coordinator of U.G.C. Nodal Centre for Computer Application
 - (xii) Member of Finance Committee
 - (xiii) Member of Planning & Development Committee
 - (xiv) Member of Academic Audit Committee
 - (xv) Member of Examination Committee
 - (xvi) Member of Expert Committee
2. Honoured Member: International Society of Poets, Maryland, U.S.A., 1995.
3. Nominated Member of Government of India to Shista Parishad of Rashtriya Sanskrit Vidyapeeth, (Deemed University), Tirupati, 1999-2000.

4. Member, Peer Team, NAAC (National Assessment & Accreditation Council), U.G.C. Bangalore, 2003.
5. Director Incharge of Centre of Advanced Research in Sanskrit, Shri Jagannatha Sanskrit Vishvavidyalaya, Puri, 2001-02 & 2006.
6. Member, U.G.C. visiting team, U.G.C., New Delhi, 2008.

I.III Author's Works

Research Publications (Books)

1. Reference: A Logico-Linguistic Identification, Abhaya House of Publication, Kendrapara, Pin-754211, Orissa, 1986
2. Relations in Knowledge Representations, Sri Satguru Publication, Indian Books Centre, 40/5, Shakti Nagar, Delhi-7, 1991
3. Elements of Research Methodology in Sanskrit, Chowkhamba Sanskrit Sansthan, Post Box no. 1139, K.37/116.
4. Logic of Knowledge Base, Sri Satguru Publication, Indian Books Centre, 40/5, Shakti Nagar, Delhi-7, 1992
5. Logic of Non-Case Relationship, M/s Pratibha Prakashan, 29/5, Shakti Nagar, Delhi-7, 1992
6. Social Justice and its Ancient Indian Base, (Edited): Proceedings of the U.G.C., Sponsored National Seminar, M/s Pratibha Prakashan, 29/5, Shakti Nagar, Delhi-7, 1992
7. Indian Semantics A Computational Model, (Edited): Agam Kala Prakashan, 34, Central Market, Ashok Vihar, Delhi-52, 1994
8. Sanskrit & Computer, (Edited), M/s Pratibha Prakashan, 29/5, Shakti Nagar, Delhi-7, 1995

9. An Easy Approach to Spiritual Science, Smt. Subhadra Dash, Śaśirekhā, Bhoodan Nagar, University Road, Puri-752003, 2004
10. International Conference on Spiritual Science (Ed.), Department of Nyaya Darshan, SJSV, Puri, 2004
11. An Introduction to Oriya Linguistics, Centre of Advanced Research in Sanskrit, SJSV, Puri, 2006
12. Spiritual Attainment (Ed.), M/s Pratibha Prakashan, 29/5, Shakti Nagar, Delhi-7, 2006
13. Unknown Facets of Jagannatha Consciousness (Ed.), Centre of Advanced Research in Sanskrit, SJSV, Puri, 2006

Research Publications (Journals)

1. Sri *Jagannath Jyoti* (An Indological Research Journal), Vol-IX, X, XI (Edited): Sri Jagannatha Sanskrit Vishvavidyalaya, Puri, 2004, 2005, 2006
2. SAMKETA (A Departmental Research Journal), Department of Nyaya Darshan, SJSV, Puri, 2004, 2005, 2006

Sanskrit Publications (Books)

- Poetry

1. *Pranayā Pradīpam* (The Lamp of Love), (प्रणयप्रदीपम्), Sudharma, Mysore, 1980
2. *Hṛdayesvari* (The Goddess of Heart), (हृदयेश्वरी), Sudharma, Mysore, 1981
3. *Mahātīrtham* (The Great Shrine), (महातीर्थम्), Sudharma, Mysore, 1983
4. *Alakā* (The Myth of Destination), (अलका), Lokbhasa Prachara Samiti, Sharadhabali, Puri-752002, 1986
5. *Isā* (The Supreme), (ईशा), Smt. Subhadra Dash, Śaśirekhā, Bhoodan Nagar, University Road, Puri-752003, 1992 (Awarded)

6. *Bhinna-Pulinam* (A Separate Shore)), (भिन्न-पुलिनम्), Smt. Subhadra Dash, Śaṣirekhā, Bhoodan Nagar, University Road, Puri-752003, 1995
7. *Andhasrotah* (Selected Sanskrit Poems with English Translation), (अन्धस्रोतः), Smt. Subhadra Dash, Śaṣirekhā, Bhoodan Nagar, University Road, Puri-752003, 2004

- Short Stories

8. *Diśā Vidiśā* (Direction and Beyond), (दिशा विदिशा), Lokbhasa Prachara Samiti, Sharadhabali, Puri-752002, 1988
9. *Urmi Cuḍā* (The Crest of Wave), (ऊर्मिचुडा), M/s Pratibha Prakashan, 29/5, Shakti Nagar, Delhi-7, 1995 (Awarded)
10. *Shūnyanābhiḥ* (The Empty Navel), (शून्यनाभिः), Lokbhasa Prachara Samiti, Sharadhabali, Puri-752002, 2000
11. *Nimna Pṛthivī* (The Under World), (निम्नपृथिवी), Lokbhasa Prachara Samiti, Sharadhabali, Puri-752002, 2001

- Children's Stories

12. *Mahān* (The Great), (महान्), Lokbhasa Prachara Samiti, Sharadhabali, Puri-752002, 1991
13. *Ekadā* (Once Upon a Time), (एकदा), Lokbhasa Prachara Samiti, Sharadhabali, Puri-752002, 1991

- Juvenile Novelette

14. *Patākā* (The Flag), (पताका), Lokbhasa Prachara Samiti, Sharadhabali, Puri-752002, 1990

- **Novels**

15. *Tilottamā* (Signifies a Name), (तिलोत्तमा), Sudharma, Mysore, 1980, Reprint-2002, Smt. Subhadra Dash, Śaśirekhā, Bhoodan Nagar, University Road, Puri-752003
16. *Śitalatr̥ṣṇā* (Frosted Attachment), (शीतलतृष्णा), Lokbhasa Prachara Samiti, Sharadhabali, Puri-752002, 1983 & 2006
17. *Pratipad* (The First Day), (प्रतिपद्), Lokbhasa Prachara Samiti, Sharadhabali, Puri-752002, 1984
18. *Āvartam* (The Whirl), (आवर्तम्), Devyajyoti, Shimla, H.P., 1985
19. *Arunā* (The Blush), (अरुणा), Sudharma, Mysore, 1985
20. *Nikaṣā* (The Nearest), (निकषा), Devavani Parishad, R-6, Vanivihar, Delhi-59, 1986
21. *Ṛtam* (The Highest Truth), (ऋतम्), Devavani Parishad, R-6, Vanivihar, Delhi-59, 1988 (Awarded)
22. *Madhuyānam* (The Sweet Path), (मधुयानम्), Lokbhasa Prachara Samiti, Sharadhabali, Puri-752002, 1990
23. *Añjaliḥ* (The Supplication), (अंजलिः), Lokbhasa Prachara Samiti, Sharadhabali, Puri-752002, 1990
24. *Visargaḥ* (The Sacrifice), (विसर्गः), Lokbhasa Prachara Samiti, Sharadhabali, Puri-752002, 1992
25. *Śikhā* (The Flame), (शिखा), Lokbhasa Prachara Samiti, Sharadhabali, Puri-752002, 1994
26. *Śaśirekhā* (The Moon Beam), (शशिरेखा), Lokbhasa Prachara Samiti, Sharadhabali, Puri-752002, 1994
27. *Oum Śāntiḥ* (The Peace), (ॐ शान्तिः), M/s Pratibha Prakashan, 29/5, Shakti Nagar, Delhi-7, 1997 (Awarded)

I.IV List of Scholarships, Awards and other Distinctions

1. **Scholarships:** HSC level to M Phil level – Merit Scholarship from Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan (Under Ministry of Human Resource Development), New Delhi.
2. **Distinction:** Distinction has been awarded for securing 70% marks in Shastri (B.A.) level by Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan, New Delhi.
3. **Gold Medal:** Gold medal awarded by Orissa Associate of Sanskrit Learning and Culture (Govt. of Orissa) for securing highest marks in Acharya examination, 1977.
4. **First Prize:** First prize has been given by Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth (Deemed University), Pune for securing highest marks in traditional Parangata (M.A.) Examination, 1979.
5. **Fellowship:** Post-doctoral Fellowship has been received from Bhogilal Institute of Indology, New Delhi, 1989.
6. **Offer:** Offer received as ‘Epistemologist’ from Mahatma Gandhi Centre for Science and Human Values, Bangalore, 1989.
7. **Awards and Honours:**
 - a. Hirakhanda Trust Literary Award, Sambalpur, 1983.
 - b. Film Development Corporation Script Award, Cuttack, 1983.
 - c. Shrivani Sahitya Samsad Honour, Kendrapara, 1984.
 - d. Vidwanmani (Title Award), Cuttack, 1984.
 - e. Tantra Saraswati (Title Award), Cuttack, 1985.
 - f. Dr.V.Raghavan National Prize, All India Oriental Conference, Vishakhapatnam, 1989.
 - g. International Award of Sankara (Sanskrit and Knowledge Base Applications Research Association) instituted by Abhinava Vidya Bharati, 1990, U.S.A.

- h. Orissa Sahitya Academi Award, 1990.
- i. Delhi Sahitya Academi Award, 1991.
- j. Sanskrit Telefilm Script Award (Delhi Sanskrit Academy, Delhi), 1994.
- k. International Poet of Merit Award, International Society of Poets, Maryland, U.S.A., 1995.
- l. Central Sahitya Academi Award, Delhi, 1996.
- m. Bāṇabhaṭṭa Puraskar, Uttar Pradesh Sanskrit Sansthan, Lucknow, 1996.
- n. Kalpavalli Puraskar, Bharatiya Bhasa Parisad, Calcutta, 1996-97.
- o. Pandit Kulamani Mishra Award, Rotary Club, Puri, 1998.
- p. All India Original Creative Writing Award, Delhi Sanskrit Academi, 2001.
- q. Man of the Year -2003, ABI, U.S.A.
- r. Ved Vyas National Sanskrit Award, University Grants Commission, New Delhi, 2003.
- s. American Medal of Honour – Limited Striking, ABI, U.S.A., 2003.
- t. Man of the Year – 2004, ABI, U.S.A.
- u. Bharata-Bharati-Kavya-Samman, Sanskrit Sahitya Academy, Cuttack, 2006.

CHAPTER II

CHAPTER II

ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF PROSE LITERATURE IN SANSKRIT

II.I The Origin of Prose

It has been the eternal wish of mankind to express the thoughts and feelings in a distinct manner. Since very early days, the word ‘*gadya*’ (what is to be spoken clearly) is used to mean ‘prose statements’ as opposed to verified compositions, since prose is the natural form of human articulation and expressions.

Examples of the earliest Sanskrit Prose (*gadya*) are found in the *Samhitās* of *Yajūurvedā*. It consisted primarily of hymns and sacrificial non-metrical formulae (*Yajūs*). However, the language of such prose was very ambiguous and fragmentary. Little could be derived logically out of such prose. So, the earliest prose of significant importance can be traced in the *Brāhmaṇa* portions of the *Kṛṣṇāyajūurvedā Samhitās* (for example, the *Taittirīyasamhitās*, the *Kaṭhakasamhitā* and the *Maitriyainsamhitā*) and the *Brāhmaṇas* proper (for example, the *AitareyaBrāhmaṇa*, the *ShapathaBrāhmaṇa* and the *PañcaviśaBrāhmaṇa*), where it has been employed for narrative purposes in terse composition.

A later presentation of prose is found in the *samhitās* of the *Atharvavedā*. About one sixth of this *Vedā* is in prose composition. As per Macdonell, the prose of this period is even later than the *Brāhmaṇas*.

The *samhitā* period is chronologically followed by the period of *Brāhmaṇas*. Except for some metrical pieces (*Gathās*), the whole of *Brāhmaṇas* are composed in prose literature. The prose of this period seems to be closer to the actual speech

of the people, since it is free from artificialities such as use of puns and long compound structures.

Although simplistic in nature, due to repetition of words and clauses, the structure of sentences used in such prose is very monotonous and is over-explanatory in nature. However, the style of the *Brāhmaṇas*, speak volumes of its natural composition in contrast to that observed in fable literature. The point to be noted is that although the literature is predominantly inornate, coherent, cumbersome and disjointed, a distinct progress is made towards greater facility compared to earlier compositions.

The language of the *Brāhmaṇas* represents an era between the *samhitā* period and the classical Sanskrit of *Pāṇini*. The style of *Brāhmaṇas* itself has undergone a metamorphosis in expressive content. While the prose style seen in *Taittirīyasamhitā*s and earlier *Brāhmaṇas* is characterized by shorter sentence construction, the later *Brāhmaṇas* are characterized by heaps of figures of speech and proper connectives. Honestly speaking and not exaggerating too much, the later *Brāhmaṇas* can be pointed out as the origin of ‘Poetic’ prose.

Here is an example from the *Taittirīyasamhitā*, depicting the construction of expression during that time¹:

मनो न्वा हुवामहे नाराशङ्सेन स्तोमेन पितृणां च मन्मभिः ।

आ न एतु मनः पुनः त्रत्वै दक्षाय जीवसे । ज्योक्च सूर्य दृशे ।

Prose is also found in the *Āraṇyakas*, which are the later portion of *Brāhmaṇas*. The latest portion of *Brāhmaṇa* literature comprises the *Upaniṣads* which are the final parts of *Āraṇyakas*. There is similarity in the prose style of *Āraṇyakas*, *Upaniṣads* and *Brāhmaṇas*. The prose of early *Upaniṣads* (for

¹ Sharma, Nita, *A Literary Study of Bāṇabhaṭṭa*, P.3

example, the *Bṛhadaraṇyaka* and the *Chāndogya*) is more organized and easy to understand.

एषां भूतानां पृथिवी रसः पृथिव्या आपो रसोऽपामोषघयो रस ओषधीनां पुरुषः रसः पुरुषस्य
वाग्रसोवाच ऋग्रस ऋचः सामरसः साम्न उद्गीथो रसः । (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, verse 2)

There are also few prose passages in the *Mahābhārata*, which can be considered as good samples of pre-Pāṇiniyan Sanskrit prose.

In between, the *Upaniṣads* and the classical prose literature, a need was felt for shortening the content of subject matter. This transformed prose literature into a peculiar compressed prose which is referred as *Sūtra* literature. The compression yielded long compound words helpful for memorizing. The essence of *Sūtra* style was a string of short sentences interleaved together in concise form. The origin of ‘artificiality’ as seen in later *Prose-Kāvyas* may be traced to *Sūtra* literature. The style represented by *Sūtra* literature is classical in nature.

The Sanskrit prose developed without any interruption from the *Brāhmaṇas* and the *Upaniṣads* in two streams: as a development of the *ākhyānas* and the *ākhyāyikās* of the *Brāhmaṇas* and the *Upaniṣads*, and as instructive tales and fables written since very early days. Unfortunately, a major part of this literature is now lost except for the *Pañcatantra* in several adaptations.

II.II Prose literature of Classical Period

The writings in Sanskrit prose made great progress towards classical literature at a very early age. It started with the *Nirukta* of Yāska (7th century B.C.), which is an important treatise of the science of etymology and reached perfection in the *Mahābhāṣya* of Patañjali (2nd century B.C.), the earliest commentary on the

Aṣṭādhyāyī of Pāṇini. It is also worthwhile to mention here that prose is also observed in the *Purānas* in an easy and lucid form. Sanskrit prose is also used in the works of Grammar, *Jyotiṣa* and Philosophy. After *Pāṇini*'s refinement of grammatical rules, the nominal style took over the verbal style. The *Mīmāṃsābhāṣya* of Śabarasvāmī, the *Nyāybhāṣya* of Vatsāyana and Śankarācaryā's commentaries (*bhāṣyas*) on the *Upaniṣads*, the *Brahmasūtra* and the *Bhāgavadgītā* deserve mention as excellent pieces of exegetical literature. In the works of Śankarācaryā, it is seen that the sentences are lengthier but the style is rich in elegance and expression. Thereafter, prose is seen to be more artificial in the later philosophical works.

It is difficult to say with any certainty since when the *gadya-kāvya* came into vogue. It appears that Kātyāyana (4th century B.C.), the author of the supplementary rules (*varttika*) on Pāṇini's (5th century B.C.) grammar knew the genre *ākhyāyikā* and Patañjali was acquainted with *ākhyāyikās* such as the *Vasavadattā*, the *Sumanottara* and the *Bhaimarathi*.

In the classical period, proses of different styles are noticed. One of the styles included didactic fables written in easy, clear and natural style. Examples of this form are found in *Pañcatantra*, *Hitopodeśa* etc. The other style is the artificial poetic prose style as seen to be practiced in the *Prose-Kāvyas* of Subhandhu, Bāṇa and Daṇḍin.

Another form of Sanskrit *gadya* is found developed in the epigraphical records. Though the earliest epigraphs of India are in Prakrit and not in Sanskrit (for example, the edicts of Aśokā, the inscription of the Kuśānas, the Besnagar inscription of Heliodoros), however Sanskrit, found its footing in the 2nd century A.D. During this time, the classical examples are evident in both fundamental principles and descriptive references. A study of various inscriptions during this period revealed the existence of numerous '*prasastis*' which go a long way in

proving the development of Sanskrit prose during the 4th, 5th and 6th centuries. An expressive and ornamented prose piece is found in the Girnar edict (130 A.D.) of the western Saka Satrap Rudradaman I. The use of figures of speech and rare use of verbs is evident in this inscription.

The style of prose writing is seen further developed in Harisena's *prasasti* of Samudragupta (4th century A.D.) as inscribed on the Allahabad stone pillar of Aśoka. The prose of Harisena may be recognized as the precursor of the later cultivated *gadyakāvyas*.

Indian Buddhist writers, belonging to both the Mahayana and Hinayana denominations, made significant contributions to prose narratives and Sanskrit literature in general. Both canonical and non-canonical writings are scattered with *gathās* in Prakrit or mixed Sanskrit. The lives of Buddha and other religious personalities were described in the works to demonstrate the teachings of non-violence, compassion, renunciation, etc. The refinement and accuracy of classical Sanskrit took a back seat in these works and the authors greatly used a 'mixed' Sanskrit. The earliest example of this type of writing is the *Mahavastu Avadana*, a canonical text of the *Lokottaravadins*. The language and style adopted in Mahavastu does not conform to the rules of Sanskrit grammar. However, the Buddhists changed their style for prose narratives later on by accepting refined idioms and ornamented style. The outcome of this change in stance for prose narratives is evident in works such as *Avadanaśataka*, the *Divyavadana*, the *Lalitavistara* and the *Jatakamālā*.

After the fourth century, artificiality is seen to increase more and more in prose literature, as we proceed towards the age of Subandhu, Bāṇa and Daṇḍin. Compounds of larger sizes and figurative illustrations are seen to be ruling prose literature.

No other prose kāvya earlier than Subandhu's (6th century A.D.) *Vasavadattā* is available. It is a notable prose romance in Sanskrit. The love episode between the prince Kandarpaketu and the princess Vasavadattā is the central theme of the romantic work. The style of Subandhu's narration is too descriptive and elaborate; as a matter of fact, the *Vasavadattā* represents an exercise of the style in the description of mountain, river, the valour of the prince, the beauty of the heroine etc. Subandhu is less interested in the story and is fond of playing with words. He uses long compounds and almost every syllable contains a pun (*sleśa*). It is well accepted that Subandhu is earlier than Bāṇa. Subandhu has been mentioned with great respect by his successors such as Bāṇa, Vakpatriāja, Kavirāja etc.

The *Kādambari* and the *Harṣacarita* by Bāṇabhaṭṭa (7th century A.D.) are the most celebrated works of Sanskrit *gadyakāvya*. Bāṇa's works are unique in the whole of Sanskrit literature. Bāṇa carefully avoids all the shortcomings of Subandhu's works and established himself as a poet of higher stature with his excellent poetic merits. Bāṇa's *Harṣacarita* is a historic tale, a biography of his patron king Harṣavardhana of Kanauj and contains some autobiographical accounts of the author. His work of *Kādambari* is a romantic imagery. Bāṇa plays here with all sorts of figures of speech, for example, *Anupraśa*, *Yamaka*, *Upamā*, *Sleśa*, etc. But the poetry is nowhere lost. He has demonstrated in the *Kādambari* and *Harṣacarita* an unequalled power of keen observation of human character and an unrivalled art of story telling.

Daṇḍin is renowned as the theoretician of Sanskrit poetry. The chronology of Daṇḍin and Bāṇa is a subject open to controversy. However, it appears in all probabilities that either a contemporary of Bāṇa or flourished a little later. Daṇḍin divides poetry (*kāvya*) into three categories according to the forms – verse (*padya*), prose (*gadya*) and mixed (*mishra*). He defines *gadya* as a form of poetry, the

composition of which is not regulated by the metrical arrangement of the feet (*pada*). *Daśakumāracarita*, by Daṇḍin, is one of the widely read prose romances in Sanskrit. The romance narrates the adventures and exploits of ten princes. The present text of *Daśakumāracarita* is divided into three parts – *Puravapithika*, *Daśakumāracarita* and *Uttarapithika*, the first and the third part being later additions. His style is charming and simple, avoiding the use of long compounds. Daṇḍin reflects a good judgement in arrangement of his works. The characters of the romance represent a cross-section of the contemporary society. He greatly emphasizes on descriptions of human beauty, love being the chief sentiment of his work. There is much didactic material in the *Daśakumāracarita*, which Daṇḍin has incorporated with a view to teach the principles of *Niṭīśāstra*. His wit and humour are also praiseworthy.

As mentioned earlier, there is a great difference of opinion amongst scholars regarding Daṇḍin's age. Based on the evidence of *Kāvyadarśa*, a well-known work on rhetorical canons by the poet, it is held that Daṇḍin flourished after Pravarasena. According to *Rājataranī*, Pravarasena ruled Kashmir in the sixth century A.D. This Pravarasena was probably the author of the poem *Setubandha*. The other controversy is the relation between Daṇḍin and Bhāmaha, another rhetorician of that time. One school of thought opines that Daṇḍin has criticized Bhāmaha's views while the other entertains the opposite view. The relationship between Daṇḍin and Bhaṭṭi, the grammarian poet is yet another controversy. Some scholars are definitely of the opinion that Daṇḍin used the *Bhaṭṭikāvya*. From the evidence of both *Daśakumāracarita* and *Kāvyadarśa*, it appears that Daṇḍin was an inhabitant of South India. He was fairly acquainted with the Kaveri, the Andhra and the Colas².

² Shastri, Gaurinath, *A Concise History of Classical Sanskrit Literature*, P. 132

Many centuries after Alexander (326 B.C.) left India, the country was visited by three Chinese Buddhist pilgrims, Fa Hein (399 A.D.), Hieun Tsang (630 to 645 A.D.) and I Tsing (671 to 695 A.D.). The records of their travels, which have been preserved, and are all now translated into English. These works shed much light on the socio-economic conditions, religious thoughts, generic as well as specific facts about Indian literature during those days. We also have the valuable account of our country during the Mohammedan conquest by the Arabic author Alberuni, who wrote in India in 1030 A.D.

The development of Sanskrit literature also encompasses the short stories in Indian literature. Short stories may be classified under three heads, namely, the popular tales, the beast fables and the fairy tales. The popular tales are again subdivided into two groups – Buddhistic and non-Buddhistic.

The Buddhist popular tales are the Pali *Jātakas* which were current among the Buddhists from the earliest times. Apart from these *Jātaka* stories, there are some popular Buddhist Sanskrit stories.

Amongst the non-Buddhist popular tales, an outstanding work is that of Guṇāṇḍhya's *Bṛhatkathā*. It was originally written in *Paiśāci* Prakrit, a north western dialect of India. Unfortunately, the original work is lost to us and the story is preserved in three Sanskrit works – (a) Budhasvamin's *Ślokaśamgraha* (composed between eighth and ninth century A.D.), (b) Kṣemendra's *Bṛhatkathāmañjarī* (1037 A.D.) and (c) Somadeva's *Kathāsaritsāgara* (1063 to 1081 A.D.). Dr. Keith, however opines that *Ślokaśamgraha* (which is found only in a fragment of twenty eight chapters and some 4,539 verses) is the only authentic translation of Guṇāṇḍhya's works. As per Dr. Keith, Somadeva's *Kathāsaritsāgara* (containing 21,388 verses) and Kṣemendra's *Bṛhatkathāmañjarī* (containing about

7,500 verses) do not translate any portion of the original *Bṛhatkathā*³. Nevertheless, Daṇḍin's *Kāvyadarśa* in the 7th century A.D. also mentions about *Bṛhatkathā* and Dr.Bühler has placed the work as early as the first or second century A.D. Summarizing and not over-estimating, the importance of *Bṛhatkathā* in ancient Indian literature can very well be placed next only to the two Great epics, the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*.

Visnugarman's *Pañcatantra* is an important work of beast-fable literature. This book is said to have an earlier basis called the *Tantrākhyāyikā*, which is again not available with us. The work comprises of five distinct books in a clear and lucid style with a mixture of prose and verse. *Pañcatantra* appears to refer indirectly to *Cāṇakya* and tends to follow Kautiliya's *Arthaśāstra*. It is suggested by Dr.Johannes Hertel that the work was originally conceived as a tool for teaching and preaching political wisdom. However, one must admit that its character and purpose as a political textbook is quite gloomy. The work surfaces to be one where the political teacher and the story-teller are unified in a singular personality. Its importance is nevertheless noteworthy considering the fact that *Pañcatantra* has been translated into numerous languages since its inception. First, it was translated into Pahlavi and Syriac in the sixth century A.D., into Arabic in the eighth century A.D., into Hebrew in the eleventh century A.D., into Spanish in the thirteenth century A.D. and thereafter into Latin and English in the sixteenth century A.D.

Another beast fable literature is literature is *Hitopodeśa* written by Narayana Paṇḍita. The style and methods of arrangement of the work is similar to that of Visnuśarmā. The author used to live in the court of King Dhavalachandra. A manuscript of this work dates from the fourteenth century A.D. However, Dr.Keith is of the opinion that the date cannot be later than the eleventh century A.D., as a

³ Keith, A.B, *A History of Sanskrit Literature*, P. 266

verse of Rudrabhaṭṭa is cited in the book. Also, a Jain scholar made use of it in 1199 A.D. to produce a new version.

The *Kathakautaka* written in the fifteenth century A.D. is another example of a beast fable.

The following three books maybe classified under fairy-tale literature: the *Vetālapañcavimśati* attributed to Sivadāsa, the *Simhāsanadvātrimśikā* of Buddhist origin and *Śukasaptati* of unknown origin. While the former two books are based on the fiction character of King Vikrama, the last one is a collection of seventy tales of a parrot narrating to a mistress who was about to play her husband false.

Some of the lesser prose tales comprise the following⁴:

- a. *Upamitibhāvaprapañca-kathā* – by Siddha or Siddharsi, a Jain monk belonging to 906 A.D. – written in prose intermingled with verses – a didactic tale.
- b. *Kathārṇava* – by Sivadasa, containing thirty five tales primarily of thieves and fools – an unknown date.
- c. *Puruṣapariṣkā* – by Vidyapati, containing thirty four stories belonging to latter part of the fourteenth century A.D.
- d. *Bhojaprabandha* – by Ballalasena of the sixteenth century A.D., chiefly demonstrating the legends of the court of King Bhoja.
- e. *Campakaśreṣṭhikathānaka* and *Palagopalakathānaka* – by Jinakirti belonging to the fifteenth century A.D.
- f. *Kathakoṣa* – Collection of tales of unknown date composed in Sanskrit.
- g. *Samyaktvakaumudī* – by an unknown author characterized by its doctrines.

⁴ Shastri, Gaurinath, *A Concise History of Classical Sanskrit Literature*, P. 138

- h. *Katharatnakara* – by Hemavijaya-gani of the seventeenth century A.D. containing 258 different short tales, fables and anecdotes.

II.III Prose Works of Daṇḍin, Subandhu and Bāṇa

Classification of prose *kāvya* in Sanskrit is based on its division as *ākhyāyikā* and *kathā*. According to Bhāmaha, *ākhyāyikā* deals with factual experiences with scope being extended for poetic invention with the hero narrating the story. The tale may contain subjects such as abduction of a maiden, fighting, separation and the final triumph of the hero. The tale is divided into *ucchvāsas* and verses in *vaktrā* and *aparāvaktrā* metres suggestive of future courses of events. It is marked by a peculiar sign indicating the poet's particular intention and above all, it is composed in Sanskrit in fine and elegant diction. In *kathā*, the theme is generally an invented story where the narrator is someone else other than the hero. Here, there is no division into *ucchvāsas*, *vaktrā* and *aparāvaktrā* verses and the medium is in Sanskrit, Prakrit or *Apabhramsa*.

The definition of *ākhyāyikā* and *kathā* is further illustrated below:

अपाद पदसन्तानो गद्यमाख्यायिका कथा ।

इति तस्य प्रभेदौ द्वौ तयोराख्यायिका किल । (*Kāvyadarśa*) I / 23

The sequences of words which do not fall into (metrical) feet in *Gadya* (prose) are subdivided into two: *ākhyāyikā* and *kathā*. Of the two, one is put in the mouth of the hero alone; the other may be put in the mouth of others also. Praise one's own virtues in this mode (*ākhyāyikā*) being only a narration of what really existed is no blemish⁵.

⁵ Sastrulu V.V., *Translation in English*.

तत् कथाख्यायिकेत्यका जातिः संज्ञाद्वयान्किता ।

अत्रैवान्तर्भविष्यन्ति शेषाख्यानजातयः ॥ (*Kāvyadarśa*) I / 28

Therefore, *kathā* and *ākhyāyikā* form one class though stamped with two different names. Other forms of *ākhyāyikā* all fall within this class.

Bhāmaha's defines as follows:

प्रकृतानुकूलश्रव्यशब्दार्थ पदवृत्तिना ।

गद्येन युक्तोदात्तार्था सोच्छ्वासाऽऽख्यायिका मता ॥

वृत्तमाख्यायते तस्यां नायकेन स्वचेष्टितम् ।

वक्त्रं चापरवक्त्रं च काले भाव्यार्थशंसि च ॥

केवराभिप्रायकृतैः कथनैः कैश्चिदङ्किता ।

कन्याहरणसंग्रामविप्रलम्भोदयान्विता ॥

न वक्त्रापरवक्त्राभ्यां युक्ता नोच्छ्वासवत्यपि ।

संस्कृते संस्कृता चेष्टा कथाऽपभ्रंशभाक्तया ॥

अन्यैः स्वचरितं तस्यां नायकेन तु नोच्यते ।

स्वगुणाविष्कृतिं कुर्यादभिजातः कथं जनः ॥⁶

II.III.I Daṇḍin's works:

Daṇḍin conflicts with Bhāmaha's school of thoughts. Although he is silent about the nature of subject matter, Daṇḍin allows a *kathā* to be narrated by a hero

⁶ Bhāmaha, *Kavyālaṅkāra*, I. 25 to 30, P.9-10

and likewise an *ākhyāyikā* by some one other than a hero. He also notices the name *lambha* for chapters in a *kathā* and mentions *āryā* metre with reference to this form. Daṇḍin does not encourage the twofold division and opines that the two are formal variations without any essential marks of distinction⁷.

Daṇḍin writes:

अपादः पदसन्तानो गद्यमाख्यायिका कथा ।

इति तस्य प्रभेदो द्वौ तयोराख्यायिका किल ॥

नायकेनैव वाच्याऽन्या नायकेनेतरेण वा ।

स्वगुणविष्क्रियादोषो नात्र भूतार्थशंसिनः ॥

अपि त्वनियमो दृष्टस्तत्राप्यन्यैदुदीरणात् ।

अन्यो वक्ता स्वयं वेति कीदृग्वा भेदकारणम् ॥

वक्त्रं चापरवक्त्रं च सोच्छ्वासत्वं च भेदकम् ।

चिह्नमाख्यायिकायाश्चेत् प्रसङ्गेन कथास्वपि ॥⁸

Daṇḍin has rejected all the distinguishing marks by practising his theory in generating two prose *kāvyas* which cannot be rigidly classified in any one of the divisions as mentioned earlier. Both the works deal with an invented story and there is no uniformity with the personification of the narrator. While *Daśakumāracarita* follows the division into *ucchvāsas* which is used in *ākhyāyikā*, the other romance has no divisions. Both the works contain *āryā* metre allowed only in *kathā*. Also, *Avantisundarikathā* has a *vasantatilakā* verse which is not theoretically recognized in either form.

⁷ Singh, Mann, *Prose Works of Daṇḍin & His art*, P.283

⁸ Daṇḍin, *Kāvyadarśa*, I. 23 to 30, P.12-15

Applying the technical requirements of an *ākhyāyikā* and a *kathā*, we find that the extant *Avantisundarī* agrees strictly to neither of the categories⁹. Considering the concepts presented in Bhāmaha's *Kavyāṅkārā* and countered by Daṇḍin himself in *Kāvyadarśa*, it is found that the work is not divided into chapters and does not contain the verses in the *vaktrā* and *aparāvaktrā* metres, inspite of some of its stories such as *Mandakini*, *Pushpodbhava*, *Ratnodbhava* and *Somdattā* being narrated by the heroes themselves. Hence, it cannot be classified as an *ākhyāyikā*. When we judge the extant *Avantisundarī* on the lines of the distinction laid down by later rhetoricians like Rudraṅga¹⁰, the work however approximates to the *ākhyāyikā* class, modeled on Bāṇa's *Harṣacarita* (which is a specimen *ākhyāyikā* with Rudraṅga's distinction). Like *Harṣacarita*, it contains an introduction in verse with twenty six stanzas in *anuṣṭubh* and one in *āryā*, bowing to the famous trinity of Gods and paying homage to the great poets and writers like Vālmiki, Vyāsa, Pāṇini, Bhāsa, Kālidāsa and Bāṇa. However, the inclination towards the *ākhyāyikā* class terminates here. Some of the stories such as *Rājahamisa*, *Ripunjaya*, *Potāpa*, *Vararuci*, *Vyādi*, *Indradattā*, *Upavārsa*, *Saunaka*, *Sudraka* and *Rājavāhana* are not narrated by the heroes themselves. Hence, the *Avantisundarī* is styled more as a *kathā* than an *ākhyāyikā*.

Now we come to the *Daśakumāracarita* proper, which does not have the introductory part preserved. Had it been there, we would have been able to determine the form of the romance more precisely. Its text also does not adhere to the requirements of either of the forms – *ākhyāyikā* or *kathā*. Applying the older definition, it is found that the work is composed in Sanskrit, is divided into *ucchvāsas* and all stories except the *Rājavāhana* are narrated by the heroes

⁹ Singh, Maan, *Subandhu and Daṇḍin: Their Works*, P. 107

¹⁰ Gupta, Dharmendra, *Critical Study of Daṇḍin*, P.282

themselves, just like an *ākhyāyikā*. The work is also named as ‘*carita*’, probably at the instance of *Harṣacarita*, an *ākhyāyikā*. However, *Daśakumāracarita* lacks verses in the *vaktrā* and *aparāvaktrā* metres, thus characterizing it to be a *kathā*. According to the later definitions, we notice that the work does not have any obeisance to Gods and elders (*Gurus*) and praise of older poets, has no statement of motive of its authorship and does not contain two *āryā* verses at the beginning of each *ucchvāsa*. However, it is divided into *ucchvāsas* just like an *ākhyāyikā*.

As a matter of fact, it seems that as a writer, Daṇḍin held a true revolutionary spirit and only followed the old traditions that suited him. He boldly discarded the rigid conventions which stood in the way of his poetic charisma and cherished to deliberately challenge the superficial marks of distinction between the two forms. Judging from a modern viewpoint, Daṇḍin deserves all the credit and applause for his logical stand. Daṇḍin’s *Daśakumāracarita* also reflects upon the then prevalent corrupt practices of society like gambling, theft, fraud, murder, impersonation, abduction and rape. It differs to a great extent from the prototype specimen of prose *kāvya* which usually encompasses a good subject and delineate a noble hero.

Daṇḍin writes:

तदनन्तरमसौ नितम्बवतीवृत्तान्तमप्राक्षीत् । सोऽहमब्रवम् – ‘ अस्ति शूरसेनेषु मथुरा नाम
नगरी । तत्र कश्चित्कुलपुत्रः कलासु गणिकासु चातिरक्तः मित्रार्थं स्वभुजमात्रनिर्व्यूढानेककलहः,
कलहकण्टक इति ककशैरभिरव्यापितारव्यः प्रत्यवात्सीत् ।¹¹

According to Webster’s English dictionary, 1961 edition, a novel is defined to be ‘an invented prose narrative of considerable length and a certain perplexity

¹¹ Daṇḍin, *Daśakumāracarita*, *Uttarpithikaya*, Chapter 6, I. 42, P.366

that deals imaginatively with human experience through a connected sequence of events involving a group of persons in a specific setting.’ The two works of Daṇḍin come in the category of prose fiction and may be closely approximated to be novels. W.H. Hudson calls this class of literary composition ‘the loosest form of literary art’ and ‘the most elastic and irregular of all forms of literary expression’¹². Granting the aforesaid concessions, the prose *kāvyas* of Daṇḍin can legitimately be termed as novels, though all characteristics of modern day novel may not be critically viewed in the old classics. The differences in art, style, conceptualization, plot construction, characterization with today’s novels should not cause an eyebrow to rise considering the time gap of centuries in scripting the works. The following remark by W.H. Hudson on the origin of novel affirms beyond doubt that Daṇḍin’s prose compositions share all the characteristics of modern day Sanskrit prose literature. Hudson remarked, “Novel owes its existence to the interest which men and women everywhere and at all times have taken in men and women and in the great panorama of human passion and action.” Daṇḍin’s works closely approach in content and spirit, if not in form and technique to the adventure novels of modern literature wherein there is a series of almost independent tales, finally related to, or string with the adventurous deed of a hero.

The Sanskrit prose *kāvyas* are generally styled today as prose romances. The term romance which is defined as a prose tale based on legend, chivalric love and adventure on the supernatural is very appropriate when applied to the prose *kāvyas* of Daṇḍin. However, the recent concepts of romance as a prose narrative, highlight romantic characteristics like delineation of imaginary characters unrelated to everyday life or treatment of the remote in time or place, the heroic, the adventurous and often the mysterious. Although these modern day concepts did not suit to Daṇḍin’s prose *kāvyas* in the literal sense, the allied features of a romance can be figured out in almost all the prose *kāvyas* of Sanskrit in general and in the

¹² Hudson, W.H., *Introduction to the Study of Literature*, P. 129-130

works of Daṇḍin, in particular. The story in a romance insistently enters the sphere of poetry and unfolds itself through the medium of poetic elements and there is a confluence of various streams of episodes coming from different directions and all crowded with a large number of characters belonging to this very world, though to be very rarely seen in actual life. There are adventurous and brave personalities helping the wretched and specially the ladies in distress and defeating their rivals in matters of love. An emotional atmosphere persists in the whole of a romantic work. The romantic interest takes us to a marvelous world through the works of Daṇḍin, where the poet's attitude is both romantic and realistic. These two elements dwell in perfect harmony in Daṇḍin's works. Daṇḍin's approach to loose principles in life is satirical rather than serious. His real aim is to expose the darker aspects of social life and practicality, realism, romance, optimism blend perfectly in the works of Daṇḍin.

II.III.II Subandhu's works:

Subandhu is the predestinator of the trend which does not put as much stress on incidents as on descriptions, however of digressive nature. Subandhu's style is typical of lesser attention to the narrative and greater interest in the depiction of the lover and beloved and of the frowns and smiles of fortune in store for them. He richly carves these descriptions with romantic commonplaces of poetry which constitute the bulk of his work. In the course of elaborate depictions, he amply displays his *śāstric* learning and technical skill. It may be noted here that Subandhu's long chain of puns (*sleśa*) is also followed later on by his successors Bāṇa and Daṇḍin with the net effect of often straining the language and diction. Subandhu believed in a cult of style which prefers the extraordinary way of expression and suppresses the ordinary way. He cares more for the ornamental aspect of art than for the poetic possibilities of his core subject.

Inspite of his weird style, Subandhu demonstrates great mastery of the Sanskrit language which is evident from his difficult diction. He evinces wide and profound learning in his prose romance¹³.

II.III.III Bāṇa's works:

Bāṇa happily commands the supreme gift of poetic imagination which compensates for all his weakness for stylistic accomplishments. Although like his predecessor, he delights in elaborating his narratives with lengthy and digressive descriptions; his sense of proportion often comes to his rescue and saves the plot from boredom.

गद्यं कवीनां निकषं वदन्ति ॥

This is best illustrated in the works of Bāṇa. Undoubtedly Bāṇa holds an unparalleled stature in the whole of Sanskrit prose literature. Fortunately, Bāṇa's works seem to be a pillar in the times of ancient Sanskrit prose literature. The *Harṣacarita* and *Kādambari* are classified into the *ākhyāyikā* and *kathā* categories respectively.

In comparison to Subandhu, his outstanding merits are reflected in his observation skills, graphic description, his love of nature with its charming colour and music, the richness of his fancy and definitely his skill of wonderful command over the language. Bāṇa skillfully depicts romantic and youthful love in its joys and sorrows, hopes and fears amidst his deep sentimental and poetic touch in his works. Bāṇa shows his mastery of florid style wherein he is able to convert the rough stones of popular literature into gems of literary beauty.

In the following paragraph, we can see a beautiful sketch of Mahāśvetā that is the speciality of Bāṇa:

¹³ Singh, Mann, *Subandhu and Daṇḍin*, P. 19-23

दक्षाध्वरकियामिवोद्धत गण कच ग्रह भयोपसेवितत्रयम्बकाम् रतिमिव मदनदेहनिमित्तं
हरप्रसादनार्थं मागृहीतहराराधनाम् क्षीरोदाधि देवतामिव सहावास परिचित हर चन्द्रलेखोत्कण्ठाम्
इन्तुमूर्त्तिमिव स्वभानुभयकृतत्रिनयनशरणगमनाम् ऐरावतदेहाच्छविमिव गजाजिनाव-
गुण्ठितशितिकण्ठविवन्ति तोपन्ताम् पशुपति दक्षिण मुखहासच्छविमिव वहिरागत्य कृतावस्थानाम्
शरीरिणीमिव रूद्रोद्धूलन भूतिम् आविर्भूताम् ज्योत्स्नामिव हरकण्ठान्धकारविघट्ट.....¹⁴

II.IV Prose Literature of Medieval Period

Taking the discussion further, we come across Campū literature as a perspective composition of mixed prose and verse in Sanskrit. Although the subtle mixture of prose and verse can be traced back to the *Brāhmaṇas* in Vedic literature, the origin of Campū is held in its predecessors, the fables and romances. Although, stray verses are noticed in the works of Subandhu and Bāṇa, the intermingling of prose with verse became a characteristic feature of the then contemporary literature at a much later date. The literature of *Kathā* and *Ākhāyikā* also uses a number of verses in its otherwise exclusive prose medium. The distinguishing feature of the Campū from the mentioned types is its prominent proportional mixing of prose with verse. Also, the employment of prose and verse does not follow any fixed principle in Campū literature and the authors are given a license to be indifferent towards the logical use of prose and verse for various purposes. The use of verse is not restricted to passages of poetic description or impressive speech or sentimental outburst. Prose and verse are equally employed as a medium in Campū literature. Although Campū literature does not possess any noteworthy literary work, it is known to have flourished in Southern India, the Bengal Vaishnava School and the Jain religious propaganda. No Campū literature earlier than the tenth century A.D. is existent today.

¹⁴ Bāṇabhaṭṭa, *Kādambari*, P.379

Macdonell, in his book, '*A History of Sanskrit Literature*' speaks sadly on the condition and state of affairs of Indian History. He laments, 'History is the one weak spot in Indian literature. It is, in fact, non-existent. The total lack of the historical sense is so characteristic, that the whole course of Sanskrit literature is darkened by the shadow of this defect, suffering as it does from an entire absence of the exact chronology. So true is this, that the very date of Kālidāsa, the greatest of Indian poets, was long a matter of controversy within the limits of a thousand years, and is even now doubtful to the extent of a century or two. Thus the dates of Sanskrit authors are in the vast majority of cases only known approximately, having been inferred from the indirect evidence of interdependence, quotation or allusion, development of language or style. As to the events of their lives, we usually know nothing at all and only in a few cases one or two general facts. Two causes seem to have combined to bring about this remarkable result. In the first place, early India wrote no history because it never made any. The ancient Indians never went through a struggle for life, like the Greeks in the Persian and the Romans in the Punic wars, such as would have welded their tribes into a nation and developed political greatness. Secondly, the Brāhmaṇas, whose task it would naturally have been to record great deeds, had early embraced the doctrine that all action and existence are a positive evil and could therefore have felt but little inclination to chronicle historical events.'

Some of the other reasons why Sanskrit prose literature development is still not imprinted in a very systematic and chronological manner may be explained as follows.

Around 1000 A.D., medieval Sanskrit literature abounded in creative production of several varieties, all being rich both in quantity and quality. It is this period that mostly represents the origin and development of modern Indian languages (barring one or two exceptions). The overflowing Sanskrit literary stream must have inspired their creation and evolution. Medieval Prakrit is divided

into four dialects. The valley of Indus holds the Apabhramsa while Doab holds the Sauraseni with Mathura as its centre. The eastern Prakrit appeared as Magadhi (now Bihar) and Ardha-Magadhi with Benaras as its centre. The Sauraseni got further subdivided into Gaurjari (Gujarati), Avanti (Western Rajputani) and Maharastri (Eastern Rajputani). The Sindhi, Punjabi, Kashmiri, Hindi and various dialects of Bengal also started developing from the various dialects of Medieval Prakrit. These modern vernaculars started forming interesting parallel and developed literatures of their own. Similarly, the non-Aryan languages of the Deccan, Telegu, Kannada, Malayalam and Tamil, borrowed words from Sanskrit and developed a parallel model. Although, all these vernaculars were entirely based on Sanskrit, parallel developmental work may have caused Medieval Sanskrit literature to take a beating.

Another important fact during this era was the prolonged and successive waves of invasion and conquest by Persians, Muhammedans, wherein Persian, Arabic and other foreign languages started flourishing in the peninsula. The development of literature of the Indo-Aryan race remained blocked and unchecked for a substantial amount of time down to the era of British colonization. As per Macdonell¹⁵ ‘No other branch of the Indo-European stock has experienced an isolated evolution like this.’

Here, we may discuss the question whether the Sanskrit prose *kāvya* exhibits any foreign influence either during its origin or in its long developmental course¹⁶. Peterson tried to prove Greek influence on the prose romances of Sanskrit on the basis that they exhibit a new spirit in richly embellishing the simple narrative dealing with swift but monotonous chain of adventures. He quoted in support of his view some characteristics common to Sanskrit and Greek romances. We do observe certain common features; both for example, depict:

- i) Ideal love and wondrous beauty as also charming objects of nature.

¹⁵ Macdonell, Arthur A., *A History of Sanskrit Literature*, P. 7

¹⁶ Gupta, Dharmendra, *op.cit.*, P. 268-269

- ii) Love at first sight.
- iii) Lovers revealed to each other in vision.
- iv) Affectionate letters of courtship.
- v) Pathetic lamentations of afflicted lovers.
- vi) Fighting for forceful possession of a maiden.
- vii) Passion of love in inanimate objects.
- viii) Fickleness of fortune.
- ix) Adventures and encounters on land and at sea.

Again there are in both the romances, the device of tales within tales, erudite and often obscure allusions and enumeration of precedents and the employment of long compounds, alliterations and figures like paronomasia (*Sleśa*) and antithesis.

Such points of similarity, however, which maybe held to be co-incidental rather than based on any actual contact, cannot positively prove borrowing on either side. As a matter of fact, there is a fundamental difference between the two romances. While in Sanskrit romance, supreme emphasis is put on formal decoration and minute depiction of nature and the thread of narrative is broken at places and characterization often neglected, in Greek romances, stress has been laid on the continuity of narrative and the rhetorical embellishment and depiction of nature have been entirely overlooked. The Sanskrit romance as we have seen, derives its inspiration, with regards to both content and form, from native sources, be it either folktale literature or the metrical *kāvya* and it is futile to try to find an alien influence thereon¹⁷. As a matter of fact here should be solid grounds for proving influences on the delicate basis of similar points or characteristic which are often observed in literature belonging to quite different times and climes.

Hence, this period has not yet received the distinction of chronologically arranging Sanskrit prose literature in a fashion it perhaps deserves. More and more

¹⁷ Gupta, Dharmendra, *op.cit.*, P. 268-269

is required to be done to disseminate the aesthetic value of Sanskrit literary creations in this period.

II.V Prose Literature of Modern Period

During the eighteenth century, inspite of the step-motherly attitude shown towards the language, Sanskrit continued to enjoy a pre-eminent place among the languages and literatures of India as the most refined and learned medium of the cultured classes all over the subcontinent, even in the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries. English education tried to reduce its importance as a result of policy of the British rulers. However, the traditional esteem of classical Sanskrit was so high that even before they thought of establishing universities, the English had founded the Sanskrit College, Calcutta and the Queen's College, Varanasi, in the early nineteenth century to promote Hindu culture. This was in pursuance of the declared policy of the English rulers to encourage and promote Hindu learning which was held to be the key to the nation's heritage over the centuries in all fields – religious, philosophical, ethical, literary, artistic and cultural.

During this period, the long narrative poem or court epic was the most prestigious literary work, drama, campū were next ranked in importance and then came up *Gadya* (ornate prose). The themes were restricted to myths and legends about Gods and epic heroes along with some prints of historical patron-kings, saints or godmen.

According to H.L.Shukla¹⁸, 'the period lasting from 1784 to 1919 is an extremely glorious chapter in the history of Sanskrit literature. In this period, there was a stimulating change in every sphere of Indian life on account of the new awakening of India and new radiant ideas were born... The years between 1784 to

¹⁸ Shukla, H.L., *Modern Sanskrit Literature*, P.9

1919 witnessed the life palpitations and the revolutionary fervor of the Renaissance, which blossomed enormously... After the year 1919, this activity crystallized into a fixed concrete form.

Sir William Jones founded the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1784. This society was responsible for salvaging invaluable Sanskrit manuscripts and starting research work on the subject. We see a series of translation works taking place during this time. *Dharmaśāstra*, *Bhagvadgītā*, *Hitopodeśa*, *Śakuntalā*, *Manusmṛiti* etc. were all translated into English which fetched great popularism of the works in foreign countries. The influence and participation of the foreign elements cannot be denied during the period of modern Sanskrit Renaissance. A noticeable change surfaced in Sanskrit literature after the middle of the eighteenth century. The style, plot, background and theme of writing underwent a significant change from that of the past era. The way of writing became more varied and natural and gradually the bondage of heroic couplet was shaken off. Writers began to find romance in objects other than mere human characters. Nature seemed to be a huge source of inspiration. The writings started referring to country life, mountains and scenic beauty. The objectives of national unity were described with great enthusiasm and sympathy. Heralded by the study of different literatures, the new founded spirit took different shapes in Epics, Lyrics, Dramas, Novels and Stories.

The rise of nationalism in new literary forms like the novel in modern Indian literature and the cultivation of prose as an effective medium for the literary essay, biography, short story and drama came to be indistinctly and indirectly felt even by the purist Sanskrit pandit – he could not ignore the insistent new trends surrounding him. An example is *Saralā* by Haridasa Siddhantavāgisa, which is a novel in Sanskrit modeled after Bankimchandra's Bengali novel and published in the last decade of the nineteenth century. Quite a few pundits with an open mind tried their hands at translating novels, plays and essays from Bengali, Marathi etc.,

while a few University products attempted Sanskrit renderings of Shakespeare's plays from English and Rabindranath Tagore's poems and essays from Bengali. Earlier during the years 1808-1811, the Serampore Mission Press published the Sanskrit translation of the New Testament in three volumes under the Superintendence of William Carey. But these works of translation, unfortunately, did not leave a footprint in the growth of new literature in Sanskrit.

A few interesting facts are inked below: Bart's catalogue of Native Publications in the Bombay Presidency up to 31st December, 1864 (second edition, Bombay, 1867) contains no modern printed book in Sanskrit. The Bibliotheca Indica series started by the Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1849 runs into hundreds of printed titles, but without mentioning a single modern creative Sanskrit work. Same is the case with several other publishing agencies like the Trivandrum Sanskrit Series (started in 1911), Gaekwad's Oriental Series (started in 1916) and those of Mysore, Bombay, Varanasi, Poona, Srinagar etc. Even renowned private publishers such as Nirnaya Sagar Press, Bombay and the Chowkhamba Publishers, Benaras are not found to have published creative new works in Sanskrit. A creative writer of the orthodox school, Y.Mahalinga Sastri of Tamil Nadu, in the English preface to a Sanskrit play, *Udgaṭṭ-dasanam* (Tiruvalangadu, 1958), bemoans the plight of Sanskrit letters, which bears quoting here¹⁹: "It is not surprising that in the endless winter nights for Sanskrit which is refrigerated with the Antarctic temperature in the minus grade, the thawing of hearts has not set in too soon in spite all the warmth of endeavour which I have carried with me for more than a quarter of a century. I have taken refuge against the chill-blasts at the sanctum-sanctorum of chillness itself, through locating the action of the play at the loftiest and most holy of the snow-clad peaks of the Himalayas."

¹⁹ George, K.M., *Modern Indian Literature, an Anthology: Surveys and Poems*, P. 356

II.VI Political, Social and Religious Conditions in Modern Sanskrit Literature

It would be worthwhile to pause at this juncture of the discussion and take a view of the various conditions prevalent at the dawn of modern Sanskrit literature to appreciate the context in a more critical fashion.

II.VI.I Political conditions:

Feudalism had greatly weakened the fragmented nation by the middle of the eighteenth century²⁰. Inspired by the political turmoil, anarchy was rampant during this time. The East India Company had already made its entry in the political frame of India. The Diwani of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa was bestowed upon Lord Clive in the year 1765, through the good graces of Emperor Shah Alam of Delhi. The English soon started to extend their dominance, neglecting the native rulers of the country. In a few years time, with great administrative and political skills, the English became the rulers of the country towards the beginning of the nineteenth century. This new rule set the stage for different views of language, thought, manners and culture. In the year 1857, the Sepoy Mutiny took place, which is also sometimes referred to as the country's First War of Independence. After the failure of the revolt, British sovereignty was established all over the country.

In 1858, an Act was passed to transfer the Government of India from the Company to the Crown. The transfer of governance to the Empress Victoria expressed feelings of justice, impartiality and religious tolerance creating an ambience of assurance amongst countrymen. Gradually with the impregnation of foreign culture and technology, literature started flourishing once again. Various writers such as Surendra Mohan Tagore, Sripati Thakur, Baldev Singh, Bharatendu Harishchandra, Sampatkumar Narsimhacharya, Maheshchandra Tarkachuramani,

²⁰ Shukla, H.L., *op.cit.*, P.9

Brijnath Shastri, Ramswamy, and Ramavatar Sharma wrote panygyrics to commemorate the British regime.

Gradually, allergic of the foreign slavery, feelings of patriotism aroused in the hearts of various Sanskrit poets. The partition of Bengal in 1905 by Lord Curzon aflamed the minds of all. “Boycott” and “Swadeshi” emerged as the watch-words and slogans of the agitators and freedom fighters all over India. The song ‘Vande Mataram’ was invested with a nationalistic glow. The writers strongly supported the boycott of foreign goods by fiery lectures, articles and books. The underlying ideas of the patriotic Sanskrit writer aroused from deep national feelings.

Thereafter Mahatma Gandhi stepped into Indian politics in the second decade of the twentieth century. Before that the years in the political scene of India were the years of stress and strain.

II.VI.II Social conditions:

Sanskrit scholars played a vital role in implementing social reforms in the country²¹. The distinguished Sanskrit scholar, Raja Ram Mohan Roy opposed the ill-practice of the ‘Sati’ and with the help of Lord William Bentick, it was declared as illegal in 1829.

The greatest social agitation of this age was started in the favour of widow-remarriage. In Bengal, Raja Ram Mohan Roy columned the ‘*Bangamātā*’ to start this agitation. In 1854, he wrote an important book on this vital social problem and in 1856, the English Government passed, legislation in favour of widow-remarriage. In Maharashtra, Dadoba Pangdurang joined the movement by writing a famous Sanskrit book “*Vidhabashrumārjanam*”. Thereafter, Bishnu Shastri led the movement by focusing the attention of mass towards this important issue in

²¹ Shukla, H.L., *op.cit.*, P.26

Maharashtra and South India. The widow-remarriage movement became the paramount activity in his life and in the year 1865, he established 'Punarvivahottejaka Mandalī'. Nilkanta Sharma, Ramavatar Sharma, Madhusudan Sharma Maithil, Kavyakanth Vasisth Ganapati Muni, Paramananda Shastri, Devdattā made magnificent contributions towards the widow-remarriage movement.

People supported the abolition of child marriage also. In 1891, Lokmanya Tilak strongly opposed the law of fixing twelve years as the minimum marriageable age for girls. Various writers supported the views of Tilak by writing *Uddwahnirnaybyabasthā* (Jaychandra Sharma, January 1985), *Boyonirnayā* (Gajapati Shastri, Madras 1910), *Parinayamīmamsā* (K.G. Natesh Kadyam, 1913), *tumati bibāhabidhīṇīṣedha pramānāni* (K.G. Natesh Kadyam, 1913), *Vivāhasamayamīmamsā* (Anantakrishna Shastri, Bombay, 1913), *Uddwahnirnayabyabasthā* (Hrishikesh Bhattacharya, 1899), *Vivāha* (Surendra Mohon, 1915). Various dramas and novels were written and they had widow-remarriage, polygamy and marriages as themes.

II.VI.III Religious conditions:

The novel ideas of Vedic religion were eroded with the passage of time and the society was flooded with artificial rites and rituals²². Like the British rule, religious cruelty was playing havoc amongst countrymen. The gradual advent of English education had metamorphosed the outlook of Sanskrit scholars.

The highlights of this era were the voluminous translations of religious Christian books into Sanskrit to promote the spread of Christianity. Gradually with the publication of several translated works, the Hindu society was thoroughly shaken. The minds of Indian students were richly influenced by the British

²² Shukla, H.L., *op.cit.*, P.35

education system. Hindus were getting converted into Christianity in thousands. The writers of Sanskrit, being pre-eminent Vedic followers, were deeply grieved by such downfall of Hinduism.

Various writers expressed their intolerable anguish by means of dramas, novels, stories, epics, scholarly discourses and essays. Some of the works during this era are as follows:

- a. Novels: *Makarandikā* by Upendranath Sen (Calcutta, 1894), *Kundamālā* by Upendranath Roy (Calcutta, 1894) and *Ādarśamāni* by Mathuranath Bhatt (1905).
- b. Stories: *Pallīchavi: Sanskritcandrikā*, Vol.III. No.1 by Upendranath Sen.

In the history of Sanskrit literature, the period 1784-1919 has witnessed a unique cultural reawakening or Renaissance which marks its independent place in the whole of Sanskrit modernism. The texture and material of such Renaissance varies from that of other countries on account of the cross-fertilization of Medieval devotion and current rationalism in terms of thought, imagination and action. Some of the noteworthy works were presented by Ganapati Shastri, Appashastry Rashiwedkar, Madhusudan Ojha, Sudhaldev, Ramavatar Sharma, Punnashowrie Nilkanth Sharma, A.R. Rajrajverm Koitamburan, Annadacharan Tarkachuramani. This period has experienced an undreamt progress of Sanskrit literature, including a vigorous and lusty growth in various branches of the subject. Revolutionary creations appeared in epics, dramas, novels, stories, autobiographies and letter writing. The writers of the Renaissance period were in no way inferior to Kālidāsa, Bhoja and Bāṇabhaṭṭa.

Broadly speaking, the period of 135 years in the Renaissance of Modern Sanskrit literature was spent in a state of political, social, economic as well as religious turmoil. The era speaks in its own way and confirms the truth about the

increasing misery suffered by the people of the nation in the process of transition. Complex problems of varying degree and depth spread across the society. With such a backdrop, the development of Sanskrit literature was more reactive than proactive. At the same time, it was more realistic than imagery. People could easily relate the context by referring to the current situation rather than exploring into the deep sea waters of philosophy. As evident from the earlier context setting, there are reasons to believe that Sanskrit literature's preferred path of growth was ripped apart from idealistic grounds and thrown into the puddle of cultural battleground.

II.VII Prose Literature in the Nineteenth and Twentieth century

We now approach to a section of writings which can be undoubtedly classified as modern and shaped by western influence, the novel. There is a distinct transition from a background and theme like that of Bāṇa's '*Kādambari*' to a modern social environment as seen in eminent writer Visheshwar Pandey's '*Mandārmañjari*'. There has been a series of translations from different regional languages. However, novels have been value added in translations, adaptations as well as original productions.

The first translated novel in modern Sanskrit literature is '*Shivarājvijaya*' written by Ambikadutta Vyas in 1870. The history of Sanskrit literature abounds in examples of several poets who failed in imitating Bāṇa because of wrong choice of theme. Vyas realized this and chose for his subject the great Maratha ruler Shivaji and his heroic exploits to create a world of romance, filled with suspense and intensity of passion. The novel is well accepted for its simplicity of style and has even been recognized as part of syllabi in Universities thereafter. This novel was in fact translated from Rameshchandra Dutta's '*Mahārāṣṭrajīvan – Prabhāt*'. Mahavir Prasad Trivedi had in his letter to Appasastry dated 5th March, 1900, mentioned to draw the attention of Ambikadutta Vyas to this fact of translation

which he had apparently admitted. However, due to the untimely death of the author, the preface of '*Shivarājvijaya*' does not include the mentioning of this fact of translation.

Subsequent to Ambikadutta Vyas, some of the noteworthy novelists were Saila Tatacharya (1863-1926), Appasastrī and Haricharan Bhattacharya. Appasastrī rendered Bankim Chandra's *Lāvanyaamayī* (1906) in his journal *Sanskrita Candrikā* and later on published it as a separate book too.

Rajrajverm Koitamburan (1863-1928) is known for his contribution for western translations and transformation into novels. He successfully converted the Shakespearean play 'Othello' into '*Uddalcaritam*'. Thereafter, Kalyanarama Sastri translated Shakespeare's 'Lucrece' into a fine romantic prose and named it '*Kanakalatā*'. Kadambari Tirumalacharya translated another Shakespeare's work 'Comedy of Errors' and named it '*Bhāratbilasam*'. Rangacharya translated 'Vicar of Wakefield' into '*Premarājyam*'. During this period, several Sanskrit stories and romantic novels appeared in different Sanskrit journals: *Atirūpā* by Gopal Sastri, *Vijayinī* by Parasurama Sarma, *Simantini* by Narayana Sastri, *Kamalākumari* and *Sati Kamal* by Chidambara Sastri, *Suśilā* by R.Krishnamachariar and *Suloconā* by Kappuswami. Regional translations continued to contribute heavily to Sanskrit novels. Bankim's Bengali works were translated and published in *Samiskṛita Sāhitya Pariṣad Patrikā*, Calcutta (SSPP). *Rajanī* by Renudevī (1928-29), *Rādha* (1922), *Durgeshnandinī* (1922-23), *Rādharaṇī* (1930-31) were some of the notable translatory publications. Srisaila Tatacharya also translated *Durgeshnandinī* and *Kshaitriyaramanī* (1908). A novel entitled *Dattā* was also published in the same journal in 1935.

During this time, two Tamil novels were also translated into Sanskrit. Kumar Tatariya had translated Doraswamy's Tamil novel '*Menakā*' by the same name. G.Ramacharya serialized the story Devi Vasanti in *Madhuravanī* much like a

modern day concept. In the Maharajah's Sanskrit College Magazine, Mysore, N.Narasimhachari wrote a heroic romantic tale – *Kirtīsena* (1948-49). The *Mandāravatī* of K.Krishnamacharya (Madras 1929) is based on one of the stories in the *Bṛhatkathāmañjarī*. Compositions such as the following also flourished in this era. Kavyakantham Ganapati Sastri (1850-1936) wrote the novel *Purna*, Vidhusekhar wrote the romance *Chandraprabhā*. Medhavrata wrote *Kumudinī Chandra* (1920). Gangopadhyaya also wrote a new novel, *Sīmāsamaya* featuring a leftist youth (November 1950).

Towards the fag end of the nineteenth century, Pratipradibhayankar Anantacharya wrote '*Samsārcaritam*' and Vasudev Atmaram Latker wrote '*Balidānam*'. The former work is a translation of a novel of the Hindi writer, Jagannath Prasad while the latter is based on Narasimha Chintamani Kelkar's Marathi novel. Bidhusekhar Bhattacharya translated Rabindranath Tagore's *Jayparājaya* in 1906. *Mṛttikāvṛṣabhakathā* of Narasimhacharya Punekar and *Viyogini Bālā* of Balabhadra Sarma were fictions published in the *Sanskrita Candrikā*. Haridasa Siddhanta Vagisa penned a novel called '*Saralā*'. A.Rajagopala Chakravarti adapted another Bengali novel and published *Śaivalinī* (Mysore, 1917). He also wrote *Kumudinī* and *Vilāsakumārī Sangara*. *Madanalatikā* was written by Chintamani Madhava Gole (Bombay, 1911).

Apart from the translated novels, during this period some novels were also written which were based on the epics – *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Mahābhārata*. The ones worth mentioning over here are Laxman Suri's (1859-1919) '*Rāmāyaṇsangraha*', '*Bhīṣmavijayam*' and '*Mahābhāratsangrām*' (1904). Among the various epic novelists, Shankarlal Maheswar (1844-1916) had pioneered works such as '*Anasūyamyudam*', '*Bhagawatibhāgyoday*', '*Candraprabhācaritam*' and '*Maheshwarprāṇapriya*'. Gopal Sastri's (1853-1924) '*Atirūpcaritam*' was published in 1908. The mention of *Aṣṭabakra* is found in Sheshayee Shastri's

(1870-1932) ‘*Aṣṭabakriyam*’ while Saila Tatacharya’s ‘*Menakā*’ is based on a Roman epic. Mudumbay Shrinivasacharya’s ‘*Kayarvini*’ novel is also based on devotional traditions. Longer stories encompassing historical episodes were also seen to be captured in novels.

Krishnamacharya had written two historic novels – firstly ‘*Bararuci*’ and secondly ‘*Candragupta*’. Both were published in the *Sahridaya* magazine (1908-09). Narsimhacharya Purnekar wrote a novel called ‘*Saudamini*’ in 1905, depicting the love and romance between Raja Sursen, the King of Magadh and Saudamini, the princess of Vidharbha. *Vangavīra Pratāpaditya* by Devendranath Chattopadhyay (SSPP, 1930-31), *Gauracandra* by Indranath Bandopadhyay (SSPP, 1932-33) and *Viralabadham Pārītoṣikam* by R.Ramamurti from Chola history are some of the other compositions. Shorter stories using historical episodes were seen in *Vīramati* (*Samskṛta Ratnākara*, 1909), *Atyācarinaḥ Parināmaḥ* (SR, 1942), *Ajantā* (1956), *Dvirasvamedhajayī* (1955) etc. *Candramaulī* of A.Rajammal, Madras uses an old type of social theme with the introduction of drama and sarcasm into the story. Sri Jagadrama Sastri produced a prose fiction in his *Chatrasalvijaya*.

Novels highlighting social problems were also not left behind. Krishnamacharya wrote three such novels which were published in the *Sahridaya* magazine – *Patrivratā*, *Pāṇigrahanam* and *Suśila*. Thus, we find a series of novels mushrooming across the length and breadth of the country in the first half of the twentieth century.

Appa Sastri Rasiwadekar, in his relatively short life (1873-1913) achieved literary excellence in all his attempts and his touch is unmistakable in all that he wrote. He is best remembered as an essayist who has something personal to say and says it well and memorably. Hari Charan translated Bankim Chandra’s Bengali

novel *Kapālakuṇḍalā* (1918). Appa Sastri also published *Devikumudwatī* (1903) as well as *Kriyānakāntasya Nirvāṇa* (1907) and *Indirā* (1904) narrated autobiographically.

The strange hold of the formalist tradition on Sanskrit writers is indeed so pervasive that the stray cases of any reformist activity perhaps went unnoticed. Though the epic genre had outlived its utility in all the literatures of the world (except for the lessons which are applicable even today), epic writers in hundreds were found in Sanskrit language in the first half of the twentieth century. Though fiction had become a very popular trend globally and in India too, hardly any good Sanskrit fiction could be found at that time. No Sanskrit work seemed to have captured realistically the complexity of life as a whole.

Since the middle of the twentieth century, some novelists started experimenting with contemporary style, thoughts and descriptions. The modern day novelist characterized by having the ability to blend and use all the elements of the history of Sanskrit prose literature into a single composition. There are many novelists who harp upon these conditions and a representative of this rejuvenated group stands out to be Orissa's Dr.Keshab Chandra Dash who has brought modernity and reality in the theme and style of Sanskrit writings.

CHAPTER III

CHAPTER III

SUMMARY OF THE NOVELS

All the thirteen novels of the author have been summarized in this chapter. The summarization of the novels has been done to synthesize the author's key objectives in writing the novel while keeping the content and mood intact.

The role of the main characters and interaction between them to form the plot and the author's message through the novels is captured below.

III.I *Āvartam*

'*Āvartam*' (48 pages) captures the modern lifestyle through the mythological saga of Indra and Vṛttasura. The novel depicts the conflicting and disturbed existence of human life. The novel has 20 short chapters to cover 48 pages. The development of ancient civilization is presented through the stories of Indra and Vṛttasura in the backdrop of modern materialistic world. The novel presents the dilemma between the cultural value system and the modern era with the problems that arise due to the same.

Jājāvari has two sons. She is a victim of the male lust, whereby she was physically tortured with force. Jājāvari had taken her revenge by blocking the path of the cave forever with a large boulder where the culprit was taking rest. The author presents a scene where Jājāvari is sitting by the riverside and cherishing her life. She stops her two sons from quarreling against each other. The two sons were totally different from each other in all respects. Jājāvari comes across a group of nomads. She brings her two sons in front of the tribe and seeing their hair and clothes of bark, they are named as Indra and Vṛtta.

The novel hits a fast forward when Indra is seen to be lost in the beauty of Urvaśi and follows her till her cave. There, he meets Gr̥tsamad, who tells him that he would get Urvaśi only if he is successful in becoming a king. He also assured Indra that he would become his assistant if the aforesaid thing matured. He asked Indra, whether he would follow his instructions or not. Indra agreed.

In the meantime, mother Jājāvari instructed Vṛtta to follow younger maiden Jājāvaris. Accordingly, Vṛtta went to follow a young Jājāvari who was healthy sized. He got excited at the thoughts and many questions aroused in his mind.

Urvaśi tried to maintain her relationship with Indra. If Indra is not able to lead the tribe of nomads, then he would lose the opportunity of having Urvaśi. Everyday, she used to follow up with Indra on his progress on whether the nomads are following him or not? Indra responded – ‘to some extent’. Indra had to hide his strategies in order to know the permanent staying place of the tribe. Urvaśi was extremely pleased in getting to know about Indra’s intelligence in the progress of his assignement. When Gr̥tsamad sat for his meditation, Urvaśi offered herself to Indra.

Meanwhile, Vṛtta considered himself a strong person and accordingly, adjudged himself to be the king of the group of nomads. Once, he entered a cave, where a young female nomad was lying down. Vṛtta made her to give herself to him through a lot of persuasion. The young lady called all the other nomads and identified Vṛtta as the King of the Cave. Thereafter, the nomadic tribe used to offer Vṛtta various useful things.

Indra and Urvaśi’s guarded love continued. Gr̥tsamad appreciated Indra’s mental condition and ordered him to take Urvaśi’s responsibility. Indra was very happy with this decision. The two of them started to lead a happy and prosperous married life.

Vṛtta, in the meantime, ordered his followers to wage war - defeat the enemies and capture their possessions. Indra was highly disturbed by this and spent his time reflecting in the cave. He was down with varied diseases and got critically ill. Urvaśi's life started to move southwards. Sitting in the cave, Indra could see the permanent staying place of the nomads. He could hear the cheering of the people with his name. They felt that Indra was their leader. Hearing this, Indra asked them about the whereabouts of Gr̥tsamad and goes to his house. However, Indra fails to find him. Urvaśi was pleased and Indra also felt a sense of accomplishment on being a people's leader. He also had a sense of gratitude for Urvaśi.

Suddenly, the shouts of some nomads were heard, who were trying to capture the entire river. Indra also went downtown to prepare his own force. On the other hand, Vṛtta was in a tired and demoralized state. Vṛtta called the nomads and asked them to get prepared for victory. Indra also called the nomads and asked them to fight for protecting their ancestral property and agricultural land. Indra bathed in the morning and remembered his mother. Vṛtta felt weak at heart and observed a large intense battleforce on the other side of the river ready to attack him. He immediately ordered his own force to wage war. Indra was tensed. The war was his first one. Whether he faces victory or defeat, he realizes that many nomads would lose their lives, there would be loss of infrastructure and wealth, homes and civilization would be destroyed. Whether he is doing the correct thing? How does one win over the opponent and protect his own self? All such questions raise a storm within Indra. He thinks whether all such things were required – showing strength or disturbing peace. Thereafter, a deadly war followed. Many people died in the war and there was huge loss of property.

Indra and his army won the battle and wanted to go to Urvaśi's cave where he would be coronated. The captured prisoners of war would be punished. Meanwhile, Vṛtta lied beside the river, hurt and injured badly. Gaining life, he got

immersed in his thoughts at the foothills. He tried to open his eyes and saw some nomads were shouting. He closed his eyes.

Urvaśi decorated her cave with lights. Hearing everything about the deadly war, she was very saddened. Many Jājāvaris had been assaulted. The captured females had been made slaves. Indra turned out to be an arrogant character who had lost dignity to her. She lied down in her cave when Indra came to her. Indra thought that Urvaśi would grace him and respectfully accept and welcome him. He repeatedly tried to embrace Urvaśi but the latter pointed out that she never imagined that Indra would win in such a bloody fashion. Indra became angry. He forcefully attacked Urvaśi. Urvaśi was surprised and turned speechless and motionless.

Some nomads were in the process of rebuilding their homes after the war. After relishing his victory, Indra could not find Urvaśi any more. He searched Urvaśi frantically. The aggrieved common people started feeling afraid of Indra. All the people came together and thought about searching for Urvaśi. They went to the cave and saw blood over there. They thought that Indra must have beaten her and hence started beating Indra. Disappointed and hurt, Indra goes away.

Indra spends his time searching only for Urvaśi. The pride of the victory in war is washed away from his mind. He thinks that his mother, Urvaśi and Gṛtsamad have all left him and gone away. He felt thirsty. On going to the river, he finds naked Urvaśi in it and he feels saddened. He also finds himself in naked condition and is surprised by it. Everything came in front of him in a naked manner. He began thinking of his childhood. His dress had been the root cause of all his problems. Urvaśi had committed suicide only due to his coronation dress. He could not carry its weight. Indra turned blank in his speech and thoughts of mind. On the mountain peak, he saw his mother Jājāvari trying to build some new civilization by removing the boulder from the mouth of a cave.

III.II Añjaliḥ

‘*Añjaliḥ*’, (100 pages) means divine offering. Añjaliḥ is an outright family drama with many of the characters offering their comfort to the feet of time for the sake of self-esteem and truth. This story depicts the struggling family life of an honest and simple man named Vimala and his trusting, witty and devoted wife named Milī. The couple had two children named Liḍī and Mitu, who loved their parents.

Vimala works as a lecturer in a city college and stays away from his family in the village. He is only able to meet his family over the weekend during Saturdays and Sundays when he comes to the village. Milī managed the family all by herself taking care of the daily family needs as well as the children. Vimala did not have economic prosperity and Milī often used to complain about the same to Vimala during his weekend visits. Vimala loved his family very much and assured Milī of a brighter future for all.

During his course of work, Vimala refused to perform dishonest deeds for the Principal. In spite of being pursued by his colleague, Vilāsa, he strongly felt that it is against his moral values and held onto his decision. Vimala was ultimately transferred to another college in a new city which was far off. Milī was surprised and sad upon hearing the entire incident.

Vimala joined the new job and gradually discovered that his new colleagues were not co-operative and helpful at all. However, one lady named Kakalidevī helped Vimala very much by allowing him to stay over at her home. Kakalidevī was also a lecturer at the same college. The other colleagues started ridiculing and laughing at Vimala’s decision to stay at Kakalidevī’s home, since she was

unmarried and loved a married man. Kakalidevī, on the other hand, had no evil intentions and she and Vimala were very good friends.

One day, Vimala received a letter from his children – Liṅṅ and Mitu, stating that Milī is not keeping well. Vimala went home to his village on receiving the letter. When he reached home, Vimala came to know from his son, Mitu that he is frustrated with his monotonous village life and wanted to go outside to study. Vimala agreed to Mitu's proposal after appreciating the reason for his anger. Milī also started teaching in a nearby school. Under the changing circumstances, Vimala felt that their daughter Liṅṅ would be left alone at home and hence decided that time is appropriate for Liṅṅ's marriage. In the meantime, Vimala again received a transfer order to a college nearby Milī's school. Naturally, Milī was very happy when she first heard the news but became disappointed when the reason for transfer was known. The transfer order was a result of punishment for the friendship between Kakalidevī and Vimala. Milī trusted her husband and decided to move on in life.

The new college principal, Bidhu, was a friend of Vimala and agreed to help him with his daughter's marriage. Bidhu assured Vimala five thousand rupees from some college fund and also made him sign certain papers as a procedure of granting the same. However, Bidhu cheated Vimala as he did not turn up with the assured money on the marriage day. The family was ultimately saved by Kakalidevī who was an invitee for the marriage and gave them the money which helped them see off their daughter, Liṅṅ respectfully. Mitu also went off to study away from the village after Liṅṅ's marriage.

After the marriage, a letter came from the college authorities demanding five thousand rupees from Vimala. Milī proposed to sell off all her ornaments to pay for her husband’s false debt. In spite of being innocent, Vimala went to the college to repay his untaken loan. Bidhu was not present and his position was temporarily occupied by Nirañjan who was a good person and refused to take the money, knowing Bidhu’s character. Nirañjan asked Vimala to wait for the repayment until Bidhu joins college.

In the meantime, Mitu’s letter comes to Vimala stating that he does not want to return to village and that he has found his life partner. Mitu also wanted his parents to come over to his place. After waiting for many days, Vimala forced Nirañjan to take the money along with his resignation letter.

Vimala came back home to Milī and started a fresh life all over again.

III.III Aruṇā

‘*Aruṇā*’ (36 pages) is a novel in and around the story of a few individuals – Varuna, Yamini, Nīlmaṇi who see ups and downs in their professional lives in the backdrop of a downfall in societal values. ‘*Aruṇā*’ refers to the redness of the rising sun and it depicts the inner potential and strength of the characters portrayed by Dr. Dash.

Varuna is shown as an individual without any family ties. He has been thrown out of his home on account of his irresponsible nature and improper behaviour. Varuna is also fed up of life and gasps at the thought of being the best. He feels that being the best decreases one’s scope for improvement and wonders if being ‘the best’ is another form of approaching ‘one’s end’. His thoughts span through the night and Varuna finds himself in a poor locality in downtown. The locality is formed as a conglomerate of mud huts with drains passing by.

Nīlamaṇi lives in this locality. He is better known as ‘Nīludā’ (*Dā* referring to somebody being like an elder brother). Nīludā is respected by one and all and people come to him for various needs. Nīludā is an artist and makes pictures for his livelihood. His house is filled with colourful pictures and he lives alone.

Varuna goes to Nīludā’s place. Nīludā expresses to Varuna that he has lost everything over a period of time due to the people around him. He becomes excited narrating his story and Varuna calms him. Nīludā asks Varuna to stay over the night at his place. Nīludā tells Varuna about Yaminī who comes to Nīludā’s house to dance and play the flute. Yaminī is also called Baṇśeswari (Baṇsha meaning bamboo). She also entertains the people by her tricks with bamboo and rope. She has an accompanist – Lallū who plays the ‘*dhāk*’ (a form of drum).

Yaminī starts her day with the rising sun and returns home at dusk. The redness of the sun, both at dawn and dusk has an interim story – the story of hardships of human life, of the daily ups and downs, for which the author has aptly named the novel as “Aruṇā”. The author narrates nicely the natural acts of various commoners such as an old man searching for his spectacles, a hungry elderly woman washing her face, a housewife going outside, a young lady dressing casually, jumping of an young girl and running of young boys. Nīludā whispers into Varuna’s ears – ‘This is my Yaminī’. There is a nice little paradox in the name Yaminī which means night but the character brings along with her, all the activities which the day starts with. Thus the name Aruṇā and Yaminī are very symbolic in their perspectives.

The storyline continues with Nīludā advising Varuna to do something for livelihood. He tells Varuna that he possesses some works of art, which if sold, can earn money for some days. Varuna ponders over his newly acquired profession and goes to the city to sell the articles. Many people pass by in the marketplace, but Varuna was unable to sell any of the pictures. In the market, many people gather to

enjoy Baṇśeswari's dance and applaud the same. Varuna gets lost in his thoughts seeing the dance – when he comes back to self; he finds to his utter disappointment that all the pictures are stolen. He returns back to Nīludā and being ashamed, expresses that he wants to leave Nīludā's place. Nīludā tells Varuna that situation is the same everywhere and requests him to take his dinner. At night, Varuna overhears Nīludā's conversation with some businessmen regarding his remuneration for some advertising work.

The next morning, again Yaminī comes to Nīludā's place and starts her day with a dance. Varuna feels her love for Yaminī but again thinks of his weak financial condition. Varuna decides on giving up all his moral values. He feels that money is the way to social success and any means to earn the same is fair and right. He also feels that luxury can only be experienced with quick earned money, even obtained through wrongful deeds. Gradually, Varuna becomes a street vendor sacrificing all his social egos. He becomes successful in life. He makes new friends and relationships. He flourishes in his trade and earns materialistic wealth.

Later, Varuna indulges in a debate with Nīludā regarding his profession. Nīludā terms Varuna's profession as a stealing profession. Varuna protests and responds that ethics, morality and justice are all theoretical in nature and are only present in the word of mouth.

Sometime later, Varuna falls ill. Meanwhile, Nīludā is also attacked by some people – Nīludā repents his situation but remains calm. Varuna visits Nīludā and informs about his illness. Nīludā warns Varuna for his increasing solitary nature. Varuna expresses to Nīludā that he wants to marry Yaminī. Nīludā remains neutral on the proposal. Nīludā mentions that he is expecting some clients and asks Varuna to take rest. On client's arrival, Nīludā starts discussing about the pictures and storyline of a book. However, to his utter surprise, Nīludā discovers that his client's name is not appearing in the book although he is writing the story aided by

Nîludā's pictures. Nîludā learns that his client is using Nîludā's fame and reputation for his book but hiding his own name as the author, since the story is not of good taste. Nîludā gets angry on the issue and considers his client to be unethical traitor. He asks him to leave for the day and immerses himself in deep thoughts.

On inquiry from Varuna, Nîludā reveals that his client was an erstwhile teacher but the downfall of society and value system has rendered that teacher to become a drunkard and dishonest person. Both Nîludā and Varuna go to sleep discussing the degraded value system of modern era.

Thereafter Nîludā introduces Yaminî to Varuna and the duo engages in a dialogue. Varuna asks Yaminî about her teacher and the origin of her profession. Yaminî mentions of a megalomaniac youth who died in his own hands while showing tricks in public. That youth had in turn, learnt the trick from a crane and its fishing techniques. It is to be noted here that the author has nicely used nature as a source of learning for earning one's livelihood. It is in sharp contrast to the context of the plot, where the degradation of value system is discussed for earning one's livelihood. Coming back to the storyline, Yaminî was further motivated by the villagers with her dancing skills and all this spiraled as a means for her living. When Varuna asks Yaminî about why she has not married as yet, Yaminî subtly replies that she is married to her dancing profession. Yaminî tells that an artist has no individuality – she has sold everything to her profession and she would like to live her life that way only.

While returning home at night, Varuna comes across the dishonest teacher who had cheated Nîludā. He follows him and finds him reaching Nîludā's home. The teacher shouts at Nîludā abusing him and ends up in beating him up. Nîludā falls down and dies in the incident. Varuna enters and finds Nîludā lying down –

he takes him in his lap and starts mourning and lamenting. Varuna asks for help from the neighbours but nobody comes to help him.

The next morning, Varuna cries a lot. The advent of dawn brings the reflection of Nīludā's treaded path and author uses this theme to name the novel as 'Aruṇā' which signifies transformation – from night to day and from darkness to light.

The neighbours try to steal Nīludā's belongings. Varuna is left deeply hurt by the turn of events. Varuna begins his life as a vagabond and a new struggle starts.

Meanwhile, Yaminī is also seen not to be doing well. Lallū, her assistant is sick and without the drummer, Yaminī's show is incomplete.

Varuna changes his lifestyle, comes to the city and establishes himself. Varuna comes across a sick and weak Lallū who describes that Yamunā has gone out to get his medicines. Lallū also requests Varuna to get him some liquor. Dejected Varuna, leaves Lallū and moves out when he hears the sound of drum at a distance. He finds Yaminī showing her dance with the aid of another drummer. However, her dance is unable to attract the crowd, as it did in the past. Making things worse, Yaminī falls down while showing her bamboo tricks. Varuna gets to know about Yaminī's poor condition. He goes to find food for her but returns later only to discover that the new drummer had fled stealing Yaminī's belonging and left her alone.

Yaminī gains conscience and proposes to Varuna. She suggests Varuna to become her new drummer so that she can begin dancing. So the duo start a new life after due practice.

The storyline ends with Yaminī herself being referred to as ‘Aruṇā’ with the transformation of her life.

III.IV Madhuyānam

‘*Madhuyānam*’, (105 pages) is one of the early novels of the author which is a love story on the backdrop of hard austerity of Jainism. The background of the story is printed in the decadent phase of Buddhism and Jainism in India.

Samajña, a young Brahmin comes across a Jain monk Arhat Pudgala in a festival. He inquires on the various traits of Jain culture such as wearing white garments, torturing body, fasting, constant travelling and residing in hill caves. Arhat Pudgala explains him the theory of Triratna – perfect character, perfect knowledge and perfect philosophy which enables the spiritual upliftment of an individual. The theory also explains that a *Jīva* attains *Nirvāṇa* through knowledge of seven categories – *āśrava*, *bandha*, *samvara*, *nirjara*, *moksa*, *jīva* and *ajīva*. Samajña was deeply influenced by Pudgala’s theory and initiated into Jainism. With his deep faith and active participation in spreading the message of Mahavira, he later became the leader of the religion and turned famous as Arhat Sāmapratim.

Once on the way of return to his hermitage, Sāmapratim rescued a young and rich businessman whose leg was trapped under a fallen tree. He further took the man to a Jain Brahmin’s family in the nearby village and advised the Brahmins to heal the young man. The young man, named Śīlaprajña is taken special care by the family’s young and beautiful daughter, Nilañjanā. She falls in love with Śīlaprajña and prays to Lord Mahāvira for his speedy recovery. She also takes oath to initiate him into Jainism on his recovery. Gradually, the duo’s love matures in the light of Jain spiritualism.

Arhat Sāmapratim visits the Brahmin's family once gain and feels irritated with the closeness of Śīlaprajña and Nilañjanā. He advised Nilañjanā to bring Śīlaprajña to the hermitage for his initiation. Since Nilañjanā had already taken an oath for the same, both of them went to the hermitage without knowing the nature and consequences of initiation. Arhat Sāmpratima was once again displeased with the proximity of the duo on that full-moon day. Śīlaprajña enters the initiation chamber while Nilañjanā is made to wait outside – probably an eternal wait.

Śīlaprajña's hair was neatly razored, he took bath, wore white garment and recited mantra from palm leaf. Then he was made to close his eyes while the initiator imprinted three marks on his body with deep and long red hot burning iron rods. The inhumane act was enough to cause Śīlaprajña to lose consciousness. Meanwhile, Nilañjanā returns home after a long wait with a guilty feeling and heavy heart.

Śīlaprajña stays in the unrelenting routine of the hermitage. The barbaric environment and daily torturous lifestyle add to the burning pain of Śīlaprajña. He is compelled to speak about human values and individual opinions against the method of body torture as a means of attainment of *Nirvāṇa*. But Arhat Sāmpratima rejects his arguments on the ground that individual opinions have no place in the hermitage.

Nilañjanā comes to the hermitage to meet Śīlaprajña and talk about her marriage with him. But before her arrival, Śīlaprajña is out to attain higher realization in the form of begging. Again Nilañjanā returns empty handed only to return once more after three years after her father's death. She continues to wait for Śīlaprajña's return. After a long wait, Arhat Sāmpratima advises Nilañjanā to get initiated, supported by the argument that her attractive costumes distract the mind of the monks. After her initiation, Nilañjanā's beauty is reduced to a moving skeleton when she goes for begging. Śīlaprajña happens to meet her and asks her

about Nilañjanā. It is such irony of fate that Nilañjanā, after her initiation, is so transformed that she does not reveal her true identity and suppresses all her desires. Śīlaprajña recognizes Nilañjanā only after her departure but tries in vain to find out her.

Meanwhile Śīlaprajña discovers more truth while begging. He collects money for the poor by begging and becomes famous for his discourses to the people. He discovers the path of sweetness which is the title of the novel – *Madhuyānam*. To him, life is beautiful and each person has a beautiful desire. So he is *sāhasthya*. This *sāhasthya* is the beauty of life. Religion simply controls the excess of *sāhasthya*. Man's liberation is his realization of the beauty, *sāhasthya*.

Śīlaprajña returns to Sāmpratima's hermitage. With his long hair and beard, his identity is not revealed. He discusses the religious path and upholds the value of love. He condemns Sāmpratima's theory of self-inflicted torture and criticizes his arrogance. However, he is soon recognized by Nilañjanā who rejects his marriage proposal. Nilañjanā also rejects his philosophy of *sāhasthya* and *madhuyāna* and perfectly identifies herself as a matured Jain *sanyāsini*. Śīlaprajña departs and builds a hermitage near Nilañjanā's village.

He continues to serve and console the people around the village in the hermitage and gradually his hermitage becomes famous. With the persisting influence of Śīlaprajña in the backdrop, Nilañjanā realises that she is pursuing a mirage of *nirvāṇa* through her hard austerity, discipline and fasting. She argues with Sāmpratima that *nirvāṇa* cannot be attained by torturing the body and soul and questions as to how *nirvāṇa* can be attained after death. Nilañjanā argues that when body is absent after death, soul can neither feel the pleasure nor the pain without the body. All her protests go into vain, when Sāmpratima again advises Nilañjanā to go out for begging for higher realization.

Nilañjanā gradually feels her bodily desires and goes to Śīlaprajña's hermitage with her ill health and fatigue. She dies on the lap of Śīlaprajña with great love and satisfaction. The latter disappears after the cremation.

Sāmpratima is deeply touched by the series of events and gets converted to Buddhism. He succeeds the Buddhist leader Yogadeva after his death. But gradually, Buddhism also dies with the rise of tantric cults and lack of physical discipline. Sāmpratima is left alone in the caves of Puspagiri hill.

The background of the novel well depicts the downfall of Jainism and Buddhism due to extremities of discipline and the entrance of a woman into monasteries. The author has given importance to the humanitarian values as a pre-requisite to belief in any religion. A tantric touch is also seen in the storyline with the value of physical pleasures even in the path of realization.

III.V Nikaṣā

'*Nikaṣā*' (40 pages) is a short story depicting the problems of near ones. It is portrayed in a typical village environment wherein the characters are plotted with reference to the socio-economic conditions prevailing in poor and rural areas. The story highlights the problems that are near to the central characters of the novel.

Govinda, the central character is an old priest in a dilapidated temple. The temple is Govinda's ancestral property and he stays along with his old widow sister, Yamunā, in a broken portion of the temple. Govinda is old too; yet enthusiastic with his work. Yamunā remains sick for most of the time and waits for her imaginary daughter named Māyā. The naming of the character is symbolic with the author's intent to reach the mind of the reader. Māyā is actually not a real character but an imagination of Yamunā who thinks that Māyā is her daughter who is growing up in her maternal uncle's place and has grown up to an age suitable for

marriage. Yamunā always asks Govinda about Māyā's wellbeing. She requests Govinda to make proper arrangements for Māyā's stay in their temple.

Although poor Govinda thinks about constructing two rooms in the temple – one would be meant for their own use while the other would be let out on rent for visitor devotees. He plans to use the rent for his livelihood. However, with the passage of time, Govinda manages to build only one room and plans to use it for letting the devotees stay in it. In this way, Govinda thought that he would be able to collect money for construction of the second room. Govinda and Yamunā continue to stay in the broken temple. On the other hand, Yamunā believes that the new room is built so that Māyā is able to stay in it. Yamunā always dreams about Māyā – her childhood, her adolescence, her youth, etc. She continues to be very sick and expresses her last wish to see Māyā. Govinda brings an astrologer and convinces Yamunā that she is passing through a bad phase and still has considerable amount of life left in her. Mīnākṣī, a neighbour, who is also a widow, visits their place and informs them about a doctor. Mīnākṣī's husband was a teacher and currently she is also in the same profession – like others, she also has her eyes on Govinda's newly built room. Mīnākṣī proposes to have Govinda's new room on rent but Govinda refuses to let out the same.

The next day, Govinda goes to the young doctor, Charaka and narrates the story of his ailing old sister. He persuades Charaka to come to their village. Seeing Charaka, Yamunā imagines him to be her son-in-law, but Govinda corrects her. Charaka examines Yamunā and prescribes medicines which are too expensive for Govinda to buy. Govinda, however, proposes Charaka to stay in his new room so that he is able to use the rent for purchasing medicines for Yamunā. Charaka agrees to the proposal and returns the next day to stay on rent in Govinda's new room. Yamunā heals gradually, again inquires about Māyā and thinks about

Māyā's marriage. Charaka uses his time to roam about in the village jungle in search of medicinal herbs. He happens to meet Sūci, who is Mīnākṣī's daughter. Sūci is concerned about Charaka and Charaka realizes Sūci's love for him.

In the mean time, Govinda continues to be bombarded with Yamunā's madness – her questions on Māyā, 'When will she come? What about her marriage? Where will she stay? How is Charaka as a groom?' Govinda expresses to Yamunā that he will discuss with Charaka on the marriage proposal and then arrange for bringing Māyā. Govinda, at last, narrates the proposal to Charaka, who instantly reacts by leaving the room and going away. Govinda continues to explain Charaka about the fakeness of the character Māyā and narrates to Charaka that Yamunā's husband had passed away before Yamunā had given birth to a girl child. The child had also passed away and Govinda took shelter of a false upbringing of Māyā to prevent Yamunā from facing a shock. Govinda makes Charaka promise about not revealing the truth to Yamunā. Charaka goes and visits Yamunā carrying a sentimental feeling for the old lady.

Yamunā, continuing with her thoughts, takes the advice of an astrologer about fixing up the date and time of Māyā's marriage with Charaka. The astrologer tells Yamunā that Māyā is to be seen before deciding upon the same. Charaka, however, had a soft corner for Sūci. He was convinced that both Govinda and Yamunā were mad – one for constructing rooms and one for Māyā. Yamunā again fell sick and noticed Charaka's indifferent attitude.

Sūci meets Charaka and informs him about Mīnākṣī's sudden illness. She requests him to pay a visit to their house. Charaka notices that Sūci's house is flooded with dirty water and the ambience is unhygienic. He recommends them to change their house. Charaka goes to Govinda and inquires as to why the new room was not given on rent to Mīnākṣī? He realizes that Govinda had done so in order to

extract more money from foreign visitors compared to local residents. Charaka was disgusted with the idea and plans to leave the place by telling Govinda that he was going away for sometime to bring medicines from headquarters. He silently remembered about Sūci and Yamunā. Charaka never returned.

Few days later, Mīnākṣī inquired from Govinda about Charaka only to learn that he had left. She again requested Govinda to allow her to live in the new room but Govinda refused again. Later Sūci notices that Govinda is bringing along with him a person to the new room, but he is not Charaka! She repents.

The author uses the various characters in the novel to describe individual motives in life. All the characters highlight the downfall in our value system to fulfill the desires for a more steady and stable life.

III.VI Oum Śāntiḥ

‘*Oum Śāntiḥ*’ (120 pages) is an engrossing novel whose plot is another edition of a commonly found film plot. The quest and search for peace has been an eternal problem for mankind. Every person tries to get hold of peace and serenity. It is in the very search of this rare element, that mankind has developed civilization and culture but still life has not been peaceful. Through an entire lifespan, one searches for peace but the more he tries, the more he becomes restless!! *Oum Śāntiḥ* is a novel that maneuvers through this search and quest for peace.

‘*Oum Śāntiḥ*’ is a combination of three novels namely, *Oum Śāntiḥ*, *Aruṇā* and *Āvartam*. All the three novels deal with the restlessness and disturbance in human life. *Aruṇā* captures the struggle of lower middle class in urban cities. *Āvartam* captures the modern lifestyle through the mythological saga of Indra and Vṛttasura. Both of the novels depict the conflicting and disturbed existence of

human life. The purpose of human struggle is peace and happiness; however, the results are seldom in line with the goals. Infinite desire, limitless wish lists, endless ambitions and dissatisfied nature are the prime reasons for loss of tranquility. Human life shall only be peaceful, provided selflessness prevails and all deeds are done for the benefit and betterment of others. The author has tried to communicate this message to his readers through various characters portrayed in his novels. Here, in this section, we would take the opportunity to discuss *Oum Śāntiḥ*, the first novel.

In the village Madhupur, lives a poor lady Dhārā with her son Cakradhara near an old temple. Poverty lets her child go with a middleman who sells him off to a contractor. Cakradhara later flees from the construction site of the contractor and finally settles as a doorkeeper in the office of the manager, named Mahendra, of a big industry. The novel hovers around this industry with all the characters having individual motives. The industry belongs to Chandanaswāmī. Trapped in the net of beauty, Chandanaswāmī is married to the beautiful Caruśilā who happened to be his classmate. The base of the marriage is lust and not love. Chandanaswāmī and Caruśilā give birth to an invalid son and later on a daughter named Candrā, who is not looked after by them. Caruśilā falls in love with another youth named Devendra. Through a conspiracy, both Devendra and Caruśilā are killed by a sage named Devrāj. Meanwhile, without proper parental care, Candrā develops to be an ill-mannered child.

When Cakradhara grows up as a labour leader, Mahendra turns out to be the villain who wants to grab the whole property of the industrialist Chandanaswāmī. Chandanaswāmī finds Cakradhara a faithful man and appoints him as the special manager. This is opposed by Candrā who is already in the love-trap of Mahendra. Candrā also displays another side of the disturbed human nature. Candrā represents the selfish side of modern women.

Meanwhile, Mahendra gets arrested after failing to kill Cakradhara in a bomb blast that killed a driver and the bodyguard. Cakradhara manages the industry with honesty and love of the labour folk. Chandanaswāmī, although a wealthy man, is an unhappy man as his daughter wishes to marry Mahendra. He is an insulted father when he expresses his desire before her that she should rather get Cakradhara as her life-mate.

Candrā requests Cakradhara to release Mahendra on bail. Mahendra, once out of jail, marries Candrā in a plan to get the whole property of Chandanaswāmī. But after returning from the honeymoon, he finds that all the property is willed in the name of Cakradhara. He divorces Candrā and as a next plan of action, pressurizes Chandanaswāmī to cancel the will for a remarriage between them. But Chandanaswāmī dies of a heart attack. Frustrated Mahendra sets the industry on fire and dies in that fire after stabbing Cakradhara with a burning stick.

Candrā is now a changed lady. She realized Mahendra's ill motives of confiscating their property. Candrā falls in love with Cakradhara by looking at his simplistic attitude and selfless lifestyle. She brings Cakradhara back to her house for giving him personal care. But Cakradhara passes on entire Chandanaswāmī's property to Candrā and goes back to his village by a car driven by his friend Vikram. Lately informed about this, Candrā follows him and catches him up only when he dies in his old mother's lap.

Candrā builds a monument in Madhupur in Cakradhara's memory and renders a permanent stature to his sacrifice. Madhupur turns to be a pilgrimage due to Cakradhara's memories.

III.VII Pratipad

‘Pratipad’, (59 pages) is one of the novels of the author which is a triangular love story written on simple lines. The storyline describes the reawakeing after a period of dormancy.

Udbhava lives in an orchard with his aged parents. The orchard belongs to them and the family takes utmost care of the orchard. Mānā is a neighbourhood girl who had been playing in the orchard since her childhood. Udbhava is always very pleased to hear Mānā’s voice. The orchard is life to Udbhava. If the trees are hurt, Udbhava also feels hurt. He is very sensitive to the trees in the orchard. How many different kinds of trees are there, which tree has grown how tall – all such things are known to Udbhava. He leads an involved family life in the vicinity of his parents as well as Mānā.

The image of Udbhava also rises in Mānā’s mind. She also remembers Udbhava at all times. One day, Mānā was waiting for Udbhava by the window-side, when he came and informed that classes are going to start in the orchard soon. Udbhava also informed that his parents had given heir consent to materialize the same. Udbhava’s parents had been discussing about his marriage. Udbhava thought that this might be the ideal time to bring Mānā’s name on the table. His parents could not reach any conclusion and started quarelling with each other. In fact his mother informed that unless something is fixed, she would go ahead and fix up her son’s marriage all by herself.

Mānā continued to follow the rigorous and disciplined routine alongwith the students. Udbhava’s love for Mānā increased. Mānā was the responsible teacher in the orchard. A blind person came alongwith his wife to Mānā in the orchard to beg. Mānā insulted them and asked them to go away. Then the blind duo went to Udbhava. He was kind to give them some money. They inquired from Udbhava whether it was the right place for begging. Udbhava was surprised with the

question and sympathized with the blind beggar and his wife. Thereafter, he went to Mānā. Looking into Udbhava's facial expressions, Mānā informed that her work is completed at the orchard and she was leaving. Udbhava remained silent and Mānā went away silently.

Mānā was disturbed on her way back. Udbhava was a very kind person – but he did not know much about discipline and the ways of life. He was knowledgeable but did not know the application of it. He was not having a vision. He himself was a symbol of shelter of hunger. His mother asked him to take care of the farming, since same was avoided for sometime. Udbhava's father is old. Earlier villagers used to pay them a portion of the harvest after farming in their fields, but currently the fields had turned to be theirs. This was mainly due to their ignorance.

Mukunda's flute was heard in the orchard. Mukunda used to study in the morning from Udbhava. Thereafter he spent the day taking care of the grazing of cattle. He was intelligent, well built and attracted all through his flute playing abilities.

Mukunda informed Udbhava that people were not paying royalty after farming in their fields. Udbhava had a socialistic mindset, wherein he informed that he desires that all should live. That day onwards, Mukunda took the responsibility of looking onto Udbhava's fields. Udbhava was also very satisfied with this. He had Mānā's eyes in front and Mukunda's flute behind him. He was very happy.

Mānā was surprised to see the beggars on her return. The next day Mukunda came to the orchard keeping in mind, his loyalty for Udbhava. On his conversation with Mānā, Mukunda failed to realize that her liking for Mānā had increased. Both got attracted to each other. Once, Mānā greeted Mukunda with flowers on hearing his flute. This inspired Mukunda very much and his liking for Mānā continued to

increase. Meanwhile, Udbhava came and informed that he was taking his parents for pilgrimage – it had been their longtime desire and hence he entrusted the complete responsibility of the orchard on Mukunda and Mānā. The love of the blind man's wife towards her husband filled Mānā's mind. She tried to find out Udbhava's virtues through Mukunda. The tussle in Mānā's mind continued for sometime and the music from Mukunda's flute overtook Udbhava over a period of time.

Mānā's parents were concerned about her marriage. They did not discuss about Udbhava as the prospective groom, instead they discussed about Milinda. Mānā was surprised. Milinda came from a respectable family. He was an able portion of a decaying family. He was involved in hunting. Today Milinda belongs to the middle class and his income is not enough. He is not in favour of his marriage but chose not to protest as a mark of respect for the elders in his family.

Meanwhile, Mānā desires of the blind couple's love, Udbhava's face and Mukunda's body within Milinda. She gets married. Mukunda is aggrieved by the turn of events and spends a lonely time in the orchard. Udbhava's father dies in pilgrimage. After performing the rites, Udbhava becomes anxious of his father. He wishes to return and tell Mānā everything. He wishes to see if Mukunda is looking after the orchard properly.

Mānā turns to be a mother. Her earlier desires succumb. But Milinda remains as he was. His conflict with Mānā continues to increase. Milinda does not believe in being intimated by anyone. But Mānā wants the financial condition of her family to improve. Mānā's family encountered new problems and conflicts everyday. Amidst all this, the thoughts of Udbhava's calm self and eyes rise in Mānā's mind. Mānā ponders about the condition of the orchard and the whereabouts of Mukunda. Mānā waits for Udbhava.

Udbhava would return after one year from the pilgrimage after completion of performing rites associated with his father's death. Udbhava continues to think about Mānā and the orchard. Udbhava's mind is filled with hunger. In order to live, work and money is required. So he desired to get some work from an eminent master. He wanted to stay in house and also earn something. The master exclaimed that Udbhava is speaking like a mad person. Udbhava replied that he always did whatever he thought to be correct. Meanwhile, the young daughter of the master came in and inquired about the answer to some question. The old master decided to keep Udbhava as a tutor to her daughter, Itiśrī and asked her to arrange for his food. Udbhava was satisfied. Itiśrī came in with food. The master told that after their lunch, they would discuss further.

Udbhava wanted to impart education to Itiśrī in subjects such as science. Itiśrī was interested about the universe. Udbhava mentioned that it was not possible to go from one place to the other with weak health. Itiśrī was surprised and observed Udbhava fully. Udbhava saw Mānā in Itiśrī. In Itiśrī's eyes, Udbhava is a water-filled container. She wants to purify herself in that water, but all such thoughts are vain in her mind.

Meanwhile, not hearing about Udbhava for quite sometime, Mukunda thinks that Udbhava might have met with an accident and hence he declared the entire property to be his own. Subsequently, it is observed that the entire orchard is treated poorly by all. Even Mukunda's flute does not bring in harmony. Mukunda turns aggrieved. He fears that if Udbhava returns, he would also be very angry upon finding the orchard in this poor condition. Mukunda wanted to find solace in Mānā. He finds Mānā's kohl pot from the orchard. With this, Udbhava was wished by Mukunda's mother before his journey to the pilgrimage. Mukunda finds a reason to go to Mānā to return the same and becomes happy.

Milinda is arrogant about his manliness. He often enters into family conflicts with his wife and child. His son also quarreled like him. One day, Mānā found Milinda to be hitting their child constantly and abusing Mānā. She asked Milinda to go away. She closed the door on Milinda's departure. Mānā's condition was maddening at that time. Mānā also turned angry on her child due to their neighbour's complaint. Her bangles were blooded with her child's blood. The mother and the son calmed thereafter.

After a year, Udbhava took leave of the master and her daughter after completing all the formalities of his father's last rituals. It was the first day after full moon and a good day for his new journey. Itiśrī bowed towards Udbhava. She had a desire for Udbhava in her belly but bid adieu to him. Udbhava went away thinking about Mānā, Mukunda and the orchard. Udbhava had in mind settling down with Mānā and beginning a happy family.

Upon his return to the orchard, Udbhava became suspicious looking into the poor condition of the orchard. He searched for Mānā. The neighbours could not tell anything about her whereabouts. He was surprised in finding his slippers and Mānā's kohl pot in the orchard alongside Mukunda's flute. Suddenly, he met Mānā. He heard Mānā's entire story. Mānā wants everything to be just as before and seeks Udbhava's help in settling down. Mānā wants her child to become Udbhava's disciple. Udbhava returns to reality. He thinks the day was the first day and let that day be a new beginning for the child.

Udbhava gives the entire orchard to the child and asks him to play. The child was surprised by the sudden turn of events. Udbhava became one with the western sky at sunset. A new beginning to all the characters results in the naming of the novel as '*Pratipad*'.

III.VIII Rtam

‘*Rtam*’, (91 pages) is a closely knit family drama penned by Dr.Dash. It reflects upon the path of truth to be treaded upon by various characters in the story. The novel is characterized by its high level of drama that is built into it.

Kulabhadra, one of the central characters in the story is a simple man who promises to fulfill all the wishes of Shannodevî during his marriage to the lady. After the marriage, however, Shannodevî loses two sons in succession and plunges into a sorrowful life being affected by a weak health. The couple becomes thoughtful about how to carry forward their family tree. With these thoughts, Kulabhadra marries Avani without the knowledge of Shannodevî and brings her home to take care of Shannodevî. With Avani’s nursing powers, Shannodevî gradually heals and gives birth to Subhāṅka.

After Subhāṅka’s birth, Shannodevî’s relation with Avani becomes cold and Kulabhadra tries to advise both of them but to little effect. Subhāṅka is sent to a *Gurukula* (a boarding school) and time passes on. Shannodevî’s jealousy of Avani gradually dies down and both wives maintain a healthy relationship. Once, Kulabhadra inquires to Avani about Subhāṅka’s return and Avani grows angry with a view that Kulabhadra is over concerned about Subhāṅka. She tells Kulabhadra that it is time to fix Subhāṅka’s marriage as per Shannodevî’s wishes.

Subhāṅka almost finishes his studies at the *Gurukula* and becomes ready for marriage as per his mother’s wishes. Kulabhadra is also worried about the marriage. Avani, however wants her child Ananta to inherit Kulabhadra’s property inspite of Subhāṅka being the rightful heir. It is also a matter of fact that Avani’s opinions carry much importance in the family. Ananta is innocent of all such

intentions of his mother while Subhāṅka's life is centred on his hermitage. Matters related with inheritance of property are not of importance to Subhāṅka.

Uparka is Subhāṅka's friend in the hermitage and both of them perform all the work at the hermitage of Alekh, their Guru. An elderly person named Upkantha visits the hermitage with his daughter, Avidhā and Uparka meets Avidhā. They develop a friendly relationship. They also meet Subhāṅka. Their conversation does not please Avidhā about Subhāṅka. However, Subhāṅka happens to develop a soft corner for Avidhā.

Meanwhile Kulabhadra and Avani come to the hermitage and ask about the wellbeing of Subhāṅka. Both Kulabhadra and Avani request the Guru, Alekh to give permission for Subhāṅka and Avidhā's marriage. After a lot of persuasion, Alekh agrees to the proposal.

Kulabhadra asks Avani to decide upon Subhāṅka's place of stay after his marriage. Avani tells Kulabhadra that Subhāṅka shall stay at Upakaṇḥa's place and look after his father-in-law's property, while Kulabhadra's property shall be looked after by Ananta. Avani's proposal bares her thoughts and Shannodevi also comes to know about Avani's mind. Kulabhadra too disagrees to Avani's proposal.

Uparka meets Avidhā and comes to know that Subhāṅka is not in Avidhā's good books. This pleases Uparka as he also likes Avidhā. The love triangle gradually develops in the storyline. Meanwhile Alekh asks Uparka to go to Upakaṇḥa's place to invite him to the hermitage. Kulabhadra had also visited Upakaṇḥa earlier on three occasions but could not finalise Subhāṅka's marriage with Avidhā. Uparka comes to invite Upakaṇḥa and brings Subhāṅka along with him. Upakaṇḥa comes to know that Subhāṅka is Kulabhadra's son and Avidhā

also comes to know of this fact. Upakaṇṭha agrees to Uparka and Subhāṅka's invitation of going to the hermitage.

Not getting the expected response from Upakaṇṭha for the finalization of the marriage, Kulabhadra gets frustrated and decides to call off the marriage. Shannodevī and Ananta try to cool down Kulabhadra. Ananta feels that probably due to Kulabhadra's ageing, he is burdened with the family pressures and also volunteers to help his father. However, he is demotivated by her mother telling him that he is too young for the job – this rages Ananta further. The drama ends here with Ananta coming to know that it is Kulabhadra's worry about Subhāṅka's marriage and not anything more serious. The news of Subhāṅka's marriage pleases Ananta.

Uparka gets restless about Avidhā. Subhāṅka is also restless and worried about his family problems, that is, the proposal of him staying at his in-law's place after marriage. Subhāṅka requests Uparka to go to his place and inform all about his agreement for the same to avoid further problems. Uparka hides the news to buy time and delay the entire process. Uparka visits Avidhā when his feelings further deepen his desperation. Uparka's distance with Subhāṅka increases. Just as Subhāṅka gets ready for the marriage, Uparka surprises by mocking him with a marriage invitation card announcing Uparka's marriage with Avidhā. Subhāṅka gets unhappy and curses his ill fate for the incident.

Avanī also gets worried on the turn of events. Ananta expresses to Avanī that he does not have any greed for Kulabhadra's property and he wishes the property to be inherited lawfully and rightfully by Subhāṅka. Avanī gets very angry on Ananta's behaviour. Kulabhadra curses himself for the state of affairs and identifies himself as the root cause of all problems.

Uparka and Avidhā's married life is not very happy. Day-to-day problems irritate both of them. One day, Subhāṅka comes to Uparka's place as a monk expressing his inability to attend their marriage. Avidhā treats Subhāṅka as a guest of honour. Hearing that Uparka is not at home, Subhāṅka takes Avidhā's leave reassuring her of coming to their place again.

Subhāṅka meets Ananta at the hermitage and comes to know about the worries of all family members regarding his marriage. Ananta wants to take Subhāṅka along with him to home but Subhāṅka tells that Alekh is not present in the hermitage and assures Ananta that he will return home after Alekh's return from pilgrimage.

Uparka gets angry upon Subhāṅka, feeling jealous about Avidhā's nice behaviour with him. He goes to the hermitage and insults Subhāṅka even after the latter's forgiveness and friendly attitude. Uparka takes Subhāṅka's assurance of never coming in front of Avidhā. Uparka's family problems continue to mature in all respects and Avidhā also grew unhappy day by day.

Ananta continues his perseverance for Subhāṅka's rights of inheritance and confronts Avanī. He expresses that Subhāṅka's coronation ceremony must happen on the full moon day of *Vaisākha* month. Avanī finally agrees.

Kulabhadra comes to Alekh's hermitage to invite the monk on Subhāṅka's coronation and asks for his blessings. Alekh accepts Kulabhadra's invitation.

Alekh meets Uparka and curses him for his wrong doings on Subhāṅka. He advises Uparka to follow the path of truth. Uparka realizes the truth and feels sorry for Subhāṅka. He quickly returns to Avidhā, who seeing water in Uparka's eyes forgives him for all his misdeeds. They settle peacefully. They are intercepted by Ananta who comes to invite them for Subhāṅka's coronation ceremony.

Dr. Dash has thickened the plot by suitably creating a meaningful climax to the story. The climax is narrated by him as follows:

Ananta is very enthusiastic of Subhāṅka's coronation. Shannodevī feels strongly for Ananta. Subhāṅka is all dressed up. Among the many guests, Uparka and Avidhā have also come to attend the ceremony. Uparka and Subhāṅka exchange greetings with each other. Kulabhadra brings Alekh to the occasion. Alekh reminds Kulabhadra of his promise. Kulabhadra seeks Alekh's advice to follow the path of truth. Shannodevī also supports Kulabhadra for his actions. Avani cracks the suspense by reminding Kulabhadra of his promise. During his marriage with Avani, Kulabhadra had promised to Avani's father that Avani's son would inherit his full property. Also, Shannodevī had once promised that she would sacrifice Subhāṅka on a full moon day of the Vaisakh month. All eyes opened on the path of truth. Ananta was coronated while Subhāṅka went along with Alekh as a monk away from family life.

The story is dramatic in all respects with various elements of surprise, joy, sorrow, romance and selfishness. The author has interleaved all these elements into a storyline with a great climax. The author emphasizes that the path of truth is eternal even among the inevitable ups and downs of family life.

III.IX Śaśirekhā

'*Śaśirekhā*' (87 pages) brings out the ill-effects of arrogance in human nature. The novel also indulges in exposing the readers to the metaphor of moonlight in the path of darkness traversed by various characters in the novel.

Abhrapad is a proud megalomaniac who is elated about his wealth. His neighbour Raghupati had a daughter Lipsā who was also very arrogant in nature and did not believe in the theme of marriage and male dominance in the society. Abhrapad had proposed to Lipsā with high hopes but Lipsā had rejected him. This

enraged Abhrapad who thought of taking revenge on Lipsā. Dinamaṇi, the old servant of Abhrapad, came to know about the incident and tried to counsel Abhrapad about accepting the refusal of his love proposal.

The author introduces other characters Medinī and Śrāvaṇī, who are mother and daughter and live in the same village named Madhugram. They are very poor and Medinī is always very concerned about Śrāvaṇī's future. Śrāvaṇī had attained her youth which was perhaps her only possession, all the other material belongings being already sold off to run the household.

Śrīmukh, an old friend of Abhrapad came to the village. He is a vagabond and a great believer of divine existence. He also knew Śrāvaṇī, who happened to be his childhood friend. Śrīmukh became nostalgic on visiting his old house, where he happened to meet Raghupati, who granted him permission to stay as a guest in his own house. Śrīmukh, however, was having thoughts of Lipsā at the back of his mind on his arrival at Raghupati's house. Consequently, Medinī who came to meet Śrīmukh at Raghupati's house also had in her mind, Śrīmukh's pairing with Śrāvaṇī. Medinī's thoughts could not come to her lips due to the arrival of Raghupati, Lipsā and Bhavāni to the scene. Bhavāni was Lipsā's mother and did not prefer Śrīmukh due to his absence of wealth. Bhavāni was also an arrogant mother providing full support to Lipsā on all her decisions.

On the other hand, Raghupati liked Śrīmukh very much and thought about marrying his daughter, Lipsā with Śrīmukh. This was contrary to his wife's preference and as such resulted in divergence of opinions. Raghupati tried to explain both Bhavāni and Lipsā about the latter's marriage proposal with Śrīmukh and ultimately succeeded in convincing both mother and daughter.

Meanwhile, Dinamaṇi advised Abhrapad to marry Śrāvaṇī. Abhrapad was astonished at Dinamaṇi's proposal and asked for an explanation as to why

Dinamaṇi had selected a poor woman's daughter to be Abhṛapad's bride. Dinamaṇi explained to Abhṛapad that the latter had already been rejected by others (Lipsā) and marrying a poor girl would secure Abhṛapad's self esteem and pride. Abhṛapad was already infuriated with Lipsā and seemed to be convinced with Dinamaṇi's logic. Dinamaṇi carried his master's marriage proposal with Śrāvaṇī to Medinī's house and gave a bright picture about Abhṛapad and Śrāvaṇī's future after the marriage. He also assured that Medinī would stay at Abhṛapad's house after the marriage. Śrāvaṇī was ecstatic on hearing about Abhṛapad's proposal – it was like moonlight (*Śaśirekhā*) in Śrāvaṇī's life. Although Śrāvaṇī knew about Abhṛapad's arrogance, being a poor girl, she could not opine much. Abhṛapad's marriage with Śrāvaṇī and Śrīmukh's marriage with Lipsā happened to be on the same day. Abhṛapad did not like Śrīmukh and felt that it was a nice revenge on Lipsā, since Śrīmukh was not a wealthy person. Both the marriages took place without any commitment from brides and grooms.

After marriage, Śrīmukh entered Lipsā's room, only to be rejected. Śrīmukh felt humiliated at Lipsā's actions and left her on that very day. Both tried to maintain their ego, position, superiority and did not hesitate in the separation.

Śrāvaṇī was submissive in nature and tried to maintain a peaceful married life. But Abhṛapad's arrogance and dominating nature became a repellent for peace. He even discouraged Śrāvaṇī's speaking with Medinī, who in his eyes was a mere servant and reserved no rights to talk with her daughter, since Śrāvaṇī was now his wife. Medinī continued to be anxious about Śrāvaṇī but had to accept her fate. Dinamaṇi continued to be the faithful housekeeper who cared for both Medinī and Śrāvaṇī. Śrāvaṇī tried to help her husband in various matters, but Abhṛapad was reluctant to take her help, discarding and ignoring her due to the poor upbringing and her lack of intelligence. Śrāvaṇī led a sorrowful married life.

Meanwhile, Raghupati was not keeping good health after Śrīmukh's departure and blamed himself for the mishap. He tried to persuade Lipsā to find out Śrīmukh. The latter had found shelter with an old and established person named Induketan and served him. Śrīmukh was ordered to visit various places established by Induketan to bring in updated news. Raghupati passed away thinking about the reunion of Lipsā with Śrīmukh. This further enraged Bhavānī. Lipsā has softened a bit towards Śrīmukh after such long gap, but was still perplexed on what needs to be done.

Śrāvaṇī gave birth to a girl child which was against Abhṛapad's wishes. He wanted to have a male child so that he is able to accrue more wealth. Śrāvaṇī thought about ending her life in misery but could not actually do so considering her mother and new born child. Abhṛapad was determined in making money out of his child and named her Urvī.

Śrīmukh continued with his assignment of visiting the places told by Induketan. He visited a temple, few villages, schools, hospitals and various other places. Everywhere, Śrīmukh found misery, poor maintenance, dilapidated conditions and malpractices. He was very disappointed on inspecting all this and started for his return journey.

Medinī died of fever and Śrāvaṇī became unhappy. She felt that she is no better than a servant in Abhṛapad's household. Against Śrāvaṇī's wishes, Abhṛapad trained Urvī to become a dancer, so that she can earn money for him. Gradually, Urvī came to realize her father's true nature. She was a good dancer and Dinamaṇi guarded her against all odds.

Śrīmukh narrated his experiences to Induketan and both discussed about the well being of villages and schools. Meanwhile, Lipsā was frustrated and realized her mistakes. Her brothers acquired the parental property after Raghupati and

Bhavāni's death. Lipsā was only left with a hut. Abhrapad came to know about Lipsā's condition and found happiness in it. It was a nice revenge for him. Śrāvaṇī however did not encourage Abhrapad and advised him not to make merry on somebody's ill fate.

Śrīmukh met an affectionate motherly lady named Candrāmaṇi who counseled him to return to his wife, Lipsā. Meanwhile, Induketan was invited by some people to establish a *Nāṭya-maṇḍira* (Dance academy) for which he decided Śrīmukh as a representative. Śrīmukh visited the academy where he witnessed a dance performance by none other than Urvī. Śrīmukh observed immense similarity between Urvī and Śrāvaṇī and decided to meet her in person. He was surprised to find out Dinamaṇi alongwith Urvī and they exchanged identities. Śrīmukh inquired about Lipsā but could not gather much information.

After Induketan's death, Śrīmukh rose to his stature and position. Śrīmukh was aged by this time and desired to have Lipsā back in his life. Urvī returned to Madhugram after the function with the money received for dance performance. Abhrapad was delighted while Śrāvaṇī was disturbed. She blamed Abhrapad for his misdoings and misguidance. During the confrontation, Abhrapad beats Śrāvaṇī and the latter loses her voice. Abhrapad repented his actions after cooling down.

Śrīmukh returned to the village and Urvī decided to meet him. Dinamaṇi and Śrāvaṇī were afraid of Urvī's visit, keeping Abhrapad's temper in mind. Lipsā was also very excited in getting back Śrīmukh in her lonely life.

Abhrapad came across Urvī's interaction with Śrīmukh and characteristically got infuriated. Abhrapad could not control his temper and in the rush of blood, hit Śrīmukh. Lipsā tried to save Śrīmukh – meanwhile all came to hear Śrāvaṇī's scream. Abhrapad was also astonished and overwhelmed at his wife's recovery. He realized his mistake once again.

The story ends on a happy note with reunion of both the families. Śrīmukh returned to Lipsā's house while Abhrapad, Śrāvaṇī, Urvī and Dinamaṇi also returned happily. The false pride and ego of all individual characters had faded and it was again Moonlight (*Śaśirekhā*) in the path of darkness travelled by individual characters.

III.X Śikhā

'*Śikhā*', (66 pages) is one of the novels of the author which is based on a village boy's ambition to adopt urban lifestyle, his life in the city, his northward and southward journey in life. The storyline describes the mindset of the rural middle class who have an affinity for making it big in the cities.

Kulamaṇi is an old widower Brahmin who has a son, Vilāsa and a daughter Rajanī. He remained busy with his involvement in worshipping God. Murmu was a poor orphan whom Kulamaṇi rescued from the temple. Murmu was very aggrieved with his mother's death and Kulamaṇi took care of him by giving him shelter. Since then, Rajanī was the sister and Murmu, the brother. Vilāsa was more of a trader. His attachment to home was lesser due to his business. He is always in conflict with his father. While the father believes that one could get in touch with divinity from the position of poverty, Vilāsa did not believe in poverty. Vilāsa's yardstick was economic prosperity. Rajanī was a widow. She spent time taking care of the old in the village. In spite of nurturing a wishlist, she concentrated in prayers, fasting and devotion to God. In front of her, were many other fortunate girls. Such was Śampā, who was an educated girl. Śampā was the wife of Niśānt, who was Vilāsa's friend.

Niśānt worked in the minister's office. He was a corrupt individual who did not differentiate between ethical and unethical practices. He believed in dumping people for self-benefits. He did not bother to care for his family.

Once, Kulamaṇi returned from pilgrimage carrying holy water in a container. Instead of taking blessing from him, Vilāsa sarcastically mentioned that he would have been happier if Kulamaṇi had brought the container full with money.

Kulamaṇi expelled Vilāsa on hearing his remark. Rajanī and Murmu could not follow what was right. Since then, Vilāsa used to live away. Rajanī also understood with the passage of time, that her chances of remarriage were very lean. Murmu understood Rajanī's situation and requested Kulamaṇi to arrange for Rajanī's remarriage. Kulmani entrusted the responsibility of searching for a groom with Murmu. Murmu tried his best, but could not find a suitable match for Rajanī. Then Kulamaṇi explained that in recent times, marriage was a big problem and many unmarried girls were leading lives like widows. So it would naturally be very difficult to find a match for a widow. Meanwhile, Kulamaṇi became thoughtful on seeing the successful children of neighbours.

Vilāsa and Niśānt discuss about their means of earning money. Both opine that they would be able to earn money till the time they are dishonest. Vilāsa thinks of establishing a women's rights organization for his publicity. He also decides to appoint Śampā as the Secretary of the organization. Both Niśānt and Śampā became happy and excited about it.

Gradually, Śampā turned a puppet in the hands of Vilāsa. Śampā was beautiful – the reason for Niśānt's pride. She went from door to door speaking about women's rights. She finds out that women are exploited everywhere – at homes and even at workplaces. Women should have better education and thoughtfulness. They should rise above all narrow mindedness. While Śampā leaves the house for a noble cause, Niśānt leaves the house for working dishonestly.

Vilāsa was too busy to think about his family. He only had the thought of Rajanī's remarriage. His modern mindset allowed him to think that being a widow does not necessarily imply leaving all wordly pleasures and spending the rest of one's life in misery. Most men would not do so. In fact, maximum men would restart their family lives afresh. But Vilāsa's thought process would never match with that of Kulamaṇi's. Śampā supported Vilāsa's thought process.

Śampā travelled to Vilāsa's village. She inquired about Vilāsa from Kulamaṇi. In turn, Kulamaṇi abstained from responding and ordered Rajanī and Murmu to look after the guest. When Śampā came to know about Rajanī, she informed her that she was the secretary of a women's organization and her organization arranges for the remarriage of widows such as Rajanī. She also informed Rajanī that Vilāsa was the sponsor of such an organization. Śampā tried to explain matters to Rajanī and motivates her but goes away after some time being apprehensive. Rajanī continued with her dreams.

Śampā became more involved in running the organization and started to return home late. This led to her conflict with Niśānt and the same reached extremities. Śampā started to speak about equality of rights. During their conflict, Vilāsa's name also came up. Śampā expressed that it was due to Vilāsa that Niśānt was well off. Niśānt asked Śampā to leave and Śampā informed that she was going away to her father's place. Niśānt was drunk and expressed that he wanted to kill both Śampā and Vilāsa.

Meanwhile, Vilāsa was unanimously selected to contest the election for the position of Mayor. He came out for his election rallies propagating that he would eradicate everybody's unhappiness. He also thought about using Śampā in his campaign to attract more women. Śampā came and informed him that she had left Niśānt and requested for more organizational work. Vilāsa tried to explain her but she was firm with her decision.

Three ladies come to work for Vilāsa – Rajanī, Rojā and Śāmpā. Another girl, Varjā was the second wife of the village head. Earlier, Varjā loved Chinmay, but when he went to his uncle's place, Varjā's father got her married off to the village head to return his loans. Chinmay was saddened by the turn of events and became a sage. Varjā was dissatisfied with her marriage. Some days later, Varjā came to know about Chinmay's death and became restless. She also died in grief. Vilāsa tried to think about Śāmpā in Varjā's backdrop. He tried to think about his father and sister. Rojā gave him peace. Vilāsa fell in love with Rojā and inquires whether she is married or not. Rojā informed in turn, that she belonged to a different religion and their marriage was not possible. Vilāsa tried to explain logically to Rojā. Rojā agreed and Vilāsa married Rojā by giving her a ring and his necklace. Rojā began to wait for Vilāsa but the latter seemed to forget her. He was running after new excitements. Consequently, Śāmpā and Nīśānt had a divorce.

Kulamāṇi was ailing and Murmu and Rajanī looked after the household. Rajanī was saving money for her father's pilgrimage to Puri during the full moon day of the month of *Kārtika*. Meanwhile Vilāsa won the election, which displeased Kulamaṇi. He thought that his son must have won by evil means. He was content with his simple lifestyle. Murmu was thoughtful about Rajanī's marriage and continued to discuss the issue with Kulamaṇi.

Vilāsa thanked Śāmpā for her assistance to the former in fighting for the election. Śāmpā was pleased. They came across ailing Nīśānt's letter seeking aid from Vilāsa, if required. Śāmpā condemned Nīśānt's approach. To divert the topic, Vilāsa informed Śāmpā about the higher state election and again requested for her help. Śāmpā confirmed to help him. Vilāsa spends time in sorting out various labour issues.

Murmu organized for the pilgrimage to Puri. Kulamaṇi counted his days and Rajanī got converted to be a disciple of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Murmu did everything for the household dedicatedly and took his father and sister to the pilgrimage.

Śampā continued to campaign for Vilāsa relentlessly. She ultimately fell sick and reflected upon her past life. She recollected that she had undergone abortion during her early days and that is the reason she was childless till date. It was irony of fate that she now campaigned to control population growth. Feminism boils within her.

Vilāsa suffered defeat due to conspiracy by his associates. He went to Śampā who refused to speak with him. He also remembered Rajanī and Rojā. Amidst all this, Śampā came to know about Niśānt's death. She turned mad and lost conscience.

Murmu, Kulamaṇi and Rajanī used to spend their days in Puri. Kulamaṇi did not differentiate between Murmu and Vilāsa. At night, Kulamaṇi called Murmu and told him that he would inherit the property after Kulamaṇi's death. He also informed Murmu that he had to take care of Rajanī after his death. Murmu disagreed to take the property. Kulamaṇi also requested Murmu to perform his last rites. Murmu had to give away Kulamaṇi's sacred hair and other things of prayer in the Ganges River. Murmu agreed. The next day, Kulamaṇi died. Murmu performed all the last rites as per his commitment.

Vilāsa returned upon hearing the death news. He spoke foul to Murmu and asked him to return the property to Vilāsa. Murmu was composed – he came with a box with the will, the sacred hair etc. and requested Vilāsa to take over everything. Rajanī also came to the scene on hearing the shouting. Seeing Rajanī, Vilāsa returned to his conscience. He wanted to leave everything but Murmu tried to explain matters to him.

Leaving everything, Vilāsa went away and nobody was able to trace him further. Śampā also thought about the past and lamented.

III.XI Śitalatṛṣṇā

‘Śitalatṛṣṇā’, (76 pages) as the name suggests is a story of suppressed human desires, unfulfilled appetite for lust and lack of physical desires of the central male character, Ṛtwik. The novel illustrates a strained relationship between a husband and wife and how unfulfilled desires continue to haunt the central characters in the plot.

Ṛtwik is married with Ṛti and the couple shares a peculiarly cold relationship. Ṛtwik’s love for Ṛti is purely platonic and he strongly believes that real happiness does not exist in momentary physical relationships. However, Ṛti did not believe in Ṛtwik’s theoretical approach to their married life and always desired to have a carnal relationship with her husband. The divergent opinion of the couple led them to arguments and both Ṛtwik and Ṛti tried to put forward each other’s logic but to no good effect.

The story continues in Ṛtwik going to sleep and Ṛti sitting sleepless by the door. Ṛtwik dreams of a sage about to make love with Ṛti and frightened, he wakes up to shout for Ṛti. He finds Ṛti to be safe and both husband and wife continue the night without any physical relationship. Ṛtwik was an academic person and the next morning he starts his journey for a village along with some manuscripts. On his way, Ṛtwik takes a boat to cross the river. On the boat ride, Ṛtwik learns about the love of the boatman for his wife, Sumatī. He comes to know that the boatman had two children out of his happy family life. It was late in crossing the river and the boatman and his wife offered Ṛtwik to stay over at their house for the night.

That night, Sumatī offered a flower to Ṛtwik. She mentioned that the flower had both fruits and seeds in it and asked Ṛtwik to search for it. The author creates

an impression in using a paradoxical analogy of R̥twik's search for flower, fruit, seed and his cold physical desires. During his night stay, R̥twik also happened to see the boatman making love to his wife. However, he was determined with his coldness and lack of thirst for sex.

Bidding adieu to the boatman and his wife, R̥twik returned home to R̥ti the next day and gifted her with the flower. R̥ti was feeling happy to see R̥twik gift her with a flower but she was abruptly stopped in her thoughts by R̥twik who bluntly responded that the flower was not a gift signifying of any carnal romance or desire. R̥ti felt depressed on R̥twik's behaviour.

Next, R̥twik proposed R̥ti to go with him in search of wealth, child and fame. They started off their journey and first came across an old man who was very upset with his own son. The old man expressed that his son had not taken care of him and hence he was disturbed. R̥twik explained to R̥ti that the old man was not satisfied with life because he possessed desires to spend more.

Then they meet a farmer, Rāmdās whose wife is about to deliver their fifth child. Rāmdās was worried about his wife who was suffering from pain and asked the couple to bless them. R̥twik explained to R̥ti that once the baby is delivered, the couple would once again indulge in meaningless momentary bodily pleasures which would again, in turn, lead Rāmdās and his wife to a similar situation. The author is successful in bringing out R̥twik's pessimism for lust, desire and sexual pleasures.

R̥ti was tired and they decided to take some rest by the shades of the palace of Śilāditya, who is a rich and ill-natured person. There, they hear the shouts of a girl and decided that it is better to move out of the area. Again, the author is successful in bringing out the adverse side of the subject matter.

Searching for water, R̥twik and R̥ti visit a temple, where they find a sage propagating the cardinal principles of philosophy and life. In the meantime, the sage was attacked by a local bull and in turn, the sage managed to escape with the accumulated money from the proceedings. R̥ti understood that the sage was a fraud and it was only by his mischievous acts, that he was trying to build fame.

R̥twik and R̥ti continue their journey till they hear the melodious sound of flute being played by a boy named Mohan. Soon, they see Vasumatī, a girl approaching Mohan and the couple end up having sex. R̥ti was excited and held R̥twik's hand, who again scolded her and explained that such deeds are momentary and do not yield real happiness.

It started raining suddenly and R̥twik and R̥ti were forced to take shelter in the balcony of a closed house. The old house owner provided shelter to the couple along with food and clothes. Both R̥twik and R̥ti were taking the old man's gestures with much apprehension. However, the old man continued to narrate the story of his sorrowful life where he had lost his family due to his own business and natural calamities. The old man had to accept the fact that his wife was no longer his own but belonged to another person who had provided her shelter during a flood when the old man happened to be out of the village for personal business. Hearing the dreadful story, R̥ti started crying and felt that she is suffering from fever. The old man was now a teacher in a local school and spent his time with the school children thinking them to be his own children. Although, R̥ti was not keeping good health, the couple started their return journey the next day.

They returned home and R̥ti fell terminally ill. R̥twik cared for R̥ti, sat besides her and rubbed her whole body. He started thinking of various incidents including that of Mohan's flute tune and felt aroused. It was an irony that R̥ti was now too ill to respond to R̥twik's expressions. R̥twik wanted that R̥ti should not leave him so soon and also desired to spend his next life with R̥ti. With all her

unfulfilled desires, R̥ti passed away and left behind R̥twik with both of them drowning in the cold thirst for lust and physical desires.

III.XII Tilottamā

‘*Tilottamā*’ (102 pages) is a novel describing a complete love story of two young college students – Puṣṭpavallava and Tilottamā. Puṣṭpavallava is an honest human being while Tilottamā is a pretty lass. He is promoted as a leader by his hostel mates – Aśutoṣa and Vadrikeśa.

Once, the friends decided to organize a picnic in the Kālijaṭ hills for the entire batch of students. Puṣṭpavallava falls in love with Tilottamā during the college picnic, where their love blossoms during a boat ride in the Chilka Lake. After returning to their respective native places during vacation, they are forced to marry in different places due to compelling circumstances.

Tilottamā gets married to Bhāgyadatta who is a rich and capricious youth but not at all gentle in nature. On the first day of their marriage, Bhāgyadatta comes across a letter and some photographs of Tilottamā and Puṣṭpavallava sent by the latter himself, wishing Tilottamā a happy and prosperous wedded life. Bhāgyadatta, being possessive was infuriated with all this and decides to take revenge on Tilottamā.

After spending the night with Tilottamā, who was innocent of all this, Bhāgyadatta elopes with a village girl named Nīlimā who was a former classmate of Tilottamā and always envied her. Nīlimā’s eyes were always upon Puṣṭpavallava and she discouraged Tilottamā of having any relationship with Puṣṭpa. Bhāgyadatta takes Nīlimā to a holiday home in a jungle where both of them are unfortunately

killed by tribal people. The tribals had suspected that Bhāgyadatta glanced lustfully at their women and girls. Tilottamā also leaves Bhāgyadatta's home and spends life as a hermit named Madhusmitā in a hermitage near Dhauli hill. She is also well looked after by Padmakāñcana, another hermit.

On the other part of the story, Puṣpavallava, after knowing about Tilottamā's marriage, gets married to Madhuchhandā under social pressures from near ones. Madhuchhandā happened to be a beautiful girl. The two were leading a peaceful life, while all of a sudden, Madhuchhandā's death happens while giving birth. Puṣpavallava broke down both mentally and physically after his wife's death.

Aśutoṣa and Vadrikeśa, who happened to be Puṣpavallava's college friends, are teachers in a school at the foothills of Dhauli hill nearby Tilottamā's hermitage. One day, the two friends travelled to the hermitage hoping to meet lady hermit and happened to meet Tilottamā by surprise.

The two friends travelled to Puṣpavallava's village to convey Tilottamā's sad and unique story. Having found Puṣpa in a broken down condition, the two friends convince him to think about rebuilding his life with Tilottamā.

Tilottamā hears everything from Vadrikeśa and Aśutoṣa but is not sure about accepting the marriage proposal. She felt that having lost her purity, she was inappropriate for Puṣpavallava. She requested for a week's time so that she can prepare herself for marriage. When the three friends reached the hermitage to meet Tilottamā after five days, they find her dead of silent fasting in her room.

III.XIII Visargaḥ

‘*Visargaḥ*’ (78 pages) is a novel whose plot hovers around a potter’s family and the struggle for escaping the shooting pain of life. Nakula is a potter. His family comprises of his wife – Avinā, son – Jina and ailing father – Kapila. He also had a daughter Ilā, who has died. The family is struck with poverty and Nakula goes for a suicide attempt. Avinā interferes and saves Nakula. She tries to bring back normalcy in Nakula’s life.

Nakula reflects that even after a decade of their marriage, there has been no financial stability to their family and he blames himself for that. Kapila advises Nakula to stay away from such sorrowful thoughts. Kapila is a symbol of traditional values, patience and of oceanic thoughts. Meanwhile, Avinā asks Nakula to sell the dried utensils and meet her parents on the way. On his way to the in-law’s place, Nakula remembers her dead daughter Ilā and also ponders upon the reason for his very existence. His mind was again motivated for another suicide attempt. So, he climbed a tree at the river banks and consequently, a piece of cloth fell down onto a passerby. The person below was astonished at the turn of event and thought that Nakula was a thief. Nakula consoled him and realized that he was blind and none other than Kalanidhi, a distant relative of his. All the family members of Kalanidhi had earlier died in a fire which resulted in the turn around of Kalanidhi as a *Sanyāsi*.

Kalanidhi also explained Nakula and tried to divert him from his suicidal objective. He pointed out, that even committing a suicide would neither make Ilā return, nor get rid of his financial distress. Nakula was surprised by Kalanidhi’s transformation. Nakula went on to his initial destination of his in-law’s place. When his father-in-law tried to explain him, Nakula expressed that Ilā was creating hinderances in his livelihood. After seeing his father-in-law, Nakula met his sister-in-law, Suparnā and started his return journey.

On returning home, Kapila and Avinā were relieved to have Nakula back. They inquired about his in-laws, while Nakula responded in counter-inquiring about their son. He laments with the thought of his financial incapability to buy medicines for his son.

The absence of Ilā is predominant in the first thirty pages of the novel. Both the parents deeply miss her and plunge into the ever-diffusing thoughts of life, death and their dreadful state. In order to create sensations in the novel, the author creates two suicide sequences for Nakula as an attempt to break away from the thoughts of their deceased child, Ilā. Suicide has been articulated to be an effective theme in the novel.

Nakula wanted to discontinue their family business of pottery and proposed to start a brick business – however, Kapila did not agree to it. One day, after selling the earthen pots, a dejected and tired Nakula goes to Kalanidhi's hermitage and asks for solace. Avinā is also in search of means for ending their impoverished state of life.

Meanwhile, Nakula tells Avinā to organize for her mother's 'shradh'. Kapila recalls that her wife had earlier died of hunger and feels sorry for it. After the 'shradh', Nakula goes out to find a girl running for a suicide attempt. Nakula saves her and finds that it is none other than Suparṇā, who had lost conscience. After regaining her sense, Suparṇā feels ashamed and sorry. Fed up with her husband Sukarṇa's wayward and distressing behaviours, Suparṇā was forced for the suicide attempt. Nakula successfully rescues Suparṇā and brings her home. Avinā consoles Suparṇā. She thinks to herself that both Nakula and Suparṇā are similar in their suicidal tendencies.

Nakula informs Avinā that Sukarṇa had undergone change after his migration to the city – hence, the problems. Avinā instructs Nakula to visit the city and explain matters to Sukarṇa. On his way to the city, Nakula stops over at

Kalanidhi's ashram and describes everything to him. Kalanidhi blames everything on materialistic wealth and advises Nakula to read Sukarṇa's mind effectively. After meeting Sukarṇa in the city, Nakula comes to know that the origin of the problem is that Sukarṇa is continuously being compared by Suparṇā with Nakula and hence the dissatisfaction. Nakula requests Sukarṇa to return and informs that presently, Suparṇā was at his residence. Hearing this, Sukarṇa gets agitated and enters into a conflict with Nakula. Nakula turns sad and concludes that Sukarṇa does not have any wish to return back.

Nakula returned home and tells Avinā about his meeting with Sukarṇa. However, Suparṇā remains unaware of the incident. Avinā started taking extra care of Suparṇā, since she was pregnant. One day, after doing his pottery, when Nakula was washing his hands, he overheard neighbours discussing about an improper relation between Nakula and Suparṇā. Nakula was disheartened by this.

Nakula's father, Kapila was very sick and Nakula took him to Kalanidhi's hermitage. Kapila died over there. Suparṇā and Avinā came over to the hermitage to attend the last rites of Kapila. After returning home, Nakula turned sad remembering the discussion of neighbours. Avinā explained not to worry. Suparṇā also turned sad, but mentioned not to pay heed to such discussions. The couple turned happy thinking that Ilā may return through the new born baby of Suparṇā. Avinā again requests Nakula to inform Sukarṇa about the pregnancy. However, Nakula disagrees to go anymore and informs that he would take all responsibilities of Suparṇā and the new born. He took his son to Kalanidhi's hermitage.

Meanwhile, Suparṇā gave birth to a girl child. Nakula and Avinā, both thought that Ilā had again arrived in their family. Avinā again asked Nakula to inform Sukarṇa. Nakula found out that Sukarṇa had remarried and gone elsewhere. He informed back the same to Avinā disappointedly. As the child grew, Suparṇā also understood that Sukarṇa would not return. Hence, she explained her situation

to Nakula and Avinā and took their leave alongwith Bula, her daughter. Nakula lost her Ilā (Bula) for the second time.

CHAPTER IV

CHAPTER IV

CRITICAL EVALUATION OF THE NOVELS

The present chapter incorporates a critical evaluation and literary study of all the novels. Discussions have been made about characterization, elements of feminism, style, language, sentiments, plot construction and other literary aspects of the novels.

IV.I Characterization

Various Main and supporting characters are created by the author to knit and develop the plot in the novels. The characters are of varied nature and majority of them leave an identity for themselves. These characters reflect many of our acquaintances in daily lives and hence they help in creating a more realistic plot in the minds of the readers.

IV.I.I Āvartam

The characters Indra and Vṛtta are mythological characters and are quite opposite to each other in terms of their nature. While Indra is seen to be more of a romantic character, Vṛtta has the instincts of torture.

While Indra has a softer side to his character represented by opposing the ideology of war, Vṛtta is of more desperate nature.

IV.I.II Añjaliḥ

Vimala plays the main character in the novel. He is a family person belonging to the middle class who faces a hand to mouth situation in meeting with the demands of his family. He lives away from his family to earn a livelihood. He is very honest and does not succumb to the pressures of a job to adopt dishonest means. He even faces a transfer order for not agreeing to be dishonest. Later on,

Vimala is cheated by another person, when he signs papers for five thousand rupees but does not receive the same. Vimala's character representative of the middle class crisis is described by the author as follows:

विमलः संसारस्य प्रवृत्त्या सह परिचितः । सोऽपि बोधिशीलः । अतो मनसि न दाहः । किन्तु तापः । तन्निराकर्तुं सः सद्यो न समर्थः । अद्य अग्रे अवधिमान् भावी कालः । तत्र कृतिः सीमिता । इयति अवधितले सत्यसेवायां किं वा कर्तुं शक्यते ? पुत्रः, कन्या, पत्नी, परिवार इति समेषां दृष्टिः एकस्योपरि । (P. 53)

Kakalidevî is a complete professional woman who lends out a helping hand to Vimala by letting him stay in her place in the new environment. She is a very open hearted woman with immense maturity. When Bidhu, the college principal, dumps Vimala of five thousand rupees, Vimala is left in a sea of trouble when he is unable to arrange the sum of money during his daughter's marriage. Kakalidevî comes to the marriage and helps Vimala by giving him the money.

IV.I.III Aruṇā

The main characters in the novel are Varuna, Nîludā and Yamini.

Varuna is the central character of the novel, who has been thrown out of his own home and lands up in a village where he is helped by a person called Nîlamanî. Varuna's irresponsibility is displayed when the pictures given to him by Nîlamanî were stolen in the market, since he was deep immersed in his thoughts. This is in contrast to his understanding of ground realities, when he realizes that he is financially not sound enough to marry Yamini.

वरुणस्य दुर्वलता मार्गान्तरमभजत । स यामिनीं मनसा निजीकर्तुं प्रवृत्तः । किन्तु स्थातुं गृहं
कुत्र ? मिलनं मधुरीकर्तुं धनं कुत्र ? नहि, चिन्ताऽस्मिन् वृथा । प्रथमतः कौशलम् आहर्त्तव्यम् । येन
केनोपायेन धनं संग्रहणीयम् । धनमद्यत्वे जीवनम् । धनम् आभिजात्यम् । धनमेव आनन्दस्य
प्रशस्तमर्यादा । (*Oum Śāntih*, P. 132)

He becomes a street vendor, feeling that money is a measure of social success, even at the cost of unethical practices. However, after Nīludā's death, the soft side of the character is revealed when, he feels bad about the circumstances under which Nīludā had passed away. Dr. Dash has also brought forward a strength in Varuna's character with the fact that he has established himself on more than one occasion in the span of the 36 pages. He is also flexible enough in leaving everything to become a drummer for his love.

Nīlamanī, alias Nīludā, is a man with a big heart. He is depicted as a character which has larger than life image. People come to him for all sorts of help. He is an artist and he readily gives away his pictures to Varuna for putting them up for sale just to earn their livelihood. Nīludā is depicted by the author as a character who stands by his principles and is an ideal example of 'Walk the talk'. Nīludā gives more importance to art compared to money in his existence. Nīludā is seen to be concerned about the degradation of value system in society and discusses the issue with Varuna at various points. When an unethical person approaches him for his pictures, he enters into a quarrel with him and later on explains to Varuna as follows:

अयं प्राचार्यः रमणः। उच्चशिक्षायतने वरिष्ठशिक्षकः। जनोऽयं निष्ठापरकर्मी आसीत्। परमधुना उत्कोचप्रेमी पिशाचः। मद्यम् अस्य जीवनम्। सुरापानेन सर्वमस्य नष्टम्। इदानीं केवलमभिनयति। पाश्चात्यपरिच्छदे सः प्राचार्यः। प्राच्यरुधिरे तु विप्लवी दुर्वासाः। स्वयं नश्यति सहस्रं च नाशयति।.....इदम् आधुनिकं जगत्। सुखलोभेन यत् किमपि कर्तुं जनः सन्नद्धः। अत्र सर्वमुपादेयम्। सर्वं च आदेयम्। (*Oum Śāntih*, P. 141)

The character remains iconic even after his death, since it is Varuna who carries forward his ideology and message of transformation.

The character of Yamini is representative in the novel as a symbol of the beginning of a day when she comes to Nīludā's place to perform her dance. Her name is subtly chosen by the author as a paradox to the actual trail of events. She depicts the state of 'Aruṇā' or redness of the sun during the transformation from night to day. She is intelligent and independent. She possesses multiple talents in the form of being able to dance, to play the flute as well as show bamboo tricks for the enjoyment of people. She is also called Baṇisheswari (Baṇisha meaning bamboo). She is described in the novel as follows:

वरुणनयने यामिनीयम् आदियुगीया। उदरार्थं तस्या अभिसारः। चरणे संचरणस्य छन्दः। देहे अभ्यस्ता भङ्गि। कृशकटिदेशे युगापेक्षिणी शैली। वक्षोदेशे प्राकृतनपरिच्छदच्छटा। कण्ठे म्लानकुसुमानां गलन्माला। अधरे अर्धभग्नं स्मितम्। नयने नवीकृतः स्वप्नांशः। मुखमण्डले तथापि आधुनिको याच्जालेशः। तथापि यामिनी यायावरी। (*Oum Śāntih*, P. 127)

Yaminī is also a symbol of dedication towards one's profession. Even being fully self motivated and independent, she explains that her individuality is lost to her profession.

IV.I.IV Madhuyānam

The main characters in the novel are Sāmpratima, Śīlaprajña and Nilañjanā.

Sāmpratima is an orthodox Jain preacher, who believes in strict discipline, torturing of the body to attain *Nirvāṇa*, fasting and all other austerity measures. He is always seen to be looking for an opportunity to induct an individual into his web of 'initiation' for Jainism. In fact, his character is so portrayed that he also does not like the proximity of the other two main characters of the novel, namely, Śīlaprajña and Nilañjanā. Sāmpratima is also depicted as a megalomaniac. His self estimation of being a religious *guru*, a master of religious rules, being neutral – being of renouncing nature – being focused on *Nirvāṇa* is all together smiled away gently by the soothing words of Śīlaprajña. At later stages of the novel, Sāmpratima is even seen to be grasping for answers to the fundamental question raised by Nilañjanā. The author has clearly brought out through this character that sustainability of ideology is only possible if there is correct intent of purpose and lesser imposition of practices. At the end of the novel, Sāmpratima is seen to have lost faith in Jainism and got converted into Buddhism.

Śīlaprajña is a noble person who falls in love with Nilañjanā. He is innocently drawn into Jainism by Sāmpratima. He undergoes all the tortures of a monk in the hermitage of Sāmpratima. However, he had never favoured extremism. He had put in his protest towards the modalities of Sāmpratima but to no positive effect. After returning from his search of truth, under anonymity, he appeared in the hermitage in the form of a respectable person – not as a Svetambara, not as a *Yogi*, not as a *Brahmacāri*, nor as a person sent to exile. His gait carries boldness. His dress is a symbol of peace and his face reflects the

happiness of non-violence. Śīlaprajña's thoughts represent maturity and his approach is friendly. He focusses on work more than the orthodox nature in the name of religion. He advises Sāmpratima to get rid of his pride, stating that the common person looks out for love, motivation and pardonment which are not seen in his preachings. Śīlaprajña builds a hermitage near Nilañjanā's village and gathers wealth for the welfare of the poor, arranges for shelter for the needy, work for the orphans and playground for the children. He builds school for the young, hotels for the travellers and hospitals for the ailing. With all his social work, he gains immense popularity. The author has characterized Śīlaprajña as the tragic hero of the novel, since he is unable to unite with his love.

Nilañjanā is the heroine of the novel Madhuyānam. In the first half of the novel, she is represented as a young adult who holds expertise in household work. She is thoughtful, has a beautiful smile and nurses Śīlaprajña to recover from his accident. She falls in love with Śīlaprajña but fails to convert it into a marriage, since she leads Śīlaprajña to Sāmpratima's hermitage. Later on, Nilañjanā also gets initiated into Svetambara, a sect of Jainism and leads a difficult life. Her beauty is turned into a moving skeleton when she goes for begging. She is bold enough to question Sāmpratima on the basic philosophy and approach towards *Nirvāṇa*. At last, he dies in Śīlaprajña's lap.

IV.I.V Nikaṣā

The main characters in the novel are Govinda and Charaka.

Govinda is an old priest who has served his life in playing the role of a priest in a dilapidated temple in the village. He has to take care of his aged and ailing sister and is down with poverty. His role is centered on the sole motive of constructing a new room to be let out to foreigners who come to the village. In this way, Govinda feels that he would be able to earn a handsome amount to bring him some financial freedom. Govinda is also shrewd enough in refusing his village

people to live in that room, since they would be paying less than that expected to be earned from people outside the village. Govinda's character reflects the moral downfall of modern-day man, whose sole motive is to lead a better lifestyle even at the cost of poor relationship with neighbours.

Charaka is a young doctor, who is dutiful and compassionate. He readily agrees to live on rent at Govinda's place, when the medicines recommended by him for Yamunā turned out to be too costly for Govinda to buy. In this way, he was dutiful to the society. His character, however showed weakness in proposing to his love, Sūci and parted the novel to save himself from the madness of both Govinda and Yamunā.

IV.I.VI Oum Śāntiḥ

Cakradhara is the main character in the novel.

Dr.Dash has skillfully grafted Cakradhara's immense sacrifice and Candrā's transformation to explain that peace, sacrifice and helping nature would bear fruits for the search of human life. Cakradhara treads the path of peace and gives more importance to the good of others rather than his own self. On the other hand, Chandanaswāmī, Mahendra and Candrā are all desirous of wealth and always felt unhappy. The solution to their unhappiness lies in the nature of Cakradhara. The meaning of peace, reasons for violence and means for attaining peace are critically analyzed in this novel.

Candrā's upbringing had the deficiency of the caring nature of parents and a healthy environment in one's childhood days. Candrā grew up to be an arrogant lady. The relationship between the father and daughter is a stretched one. When Mahendra gets arrested and Candrā approaches her father, the first question that is uttered by Chandanswāmi is presented as follows:

चन्द्राया मनोभावं सम्यक् आकलितवान् चन्दनस्वामी । ततः सः अपृच्छत् ।

– तर्हि? किं धनमावश्यकम्? अद्य कार्यक्रमः ?

– भवत्पार्श्वे?

चन्दनस्वामी अहसत् ।

– धनग्रहणं विहाय मम पार्श्वे कदाचित् ते कार्यान्तरम् आसीद् वा ?

– माम् इतस्ततो न भ्रमयतु ।

– तर्हि, किं पृच्छसि ?

– कथं महेन्द्रः वन्दी संजातः ?

गम्भीरोऽभूत् चन्दनस्वामी । तस्य नीरवतामालक्ष्य चन्द्रा अपृच्छत् ।

– कथं न वदति भवान् ?

चन्दनस्वामी सोच्छ्वासमुक्तवान् ।

– सः अपराधी ।(P. 59)

The beauty of Cakradhara's character is his hidden divinity. Unlike many of his novels, Dr. Dash has given freedom to his characters to communicate through dialogues. So the novel looks lively. But it is confusing to interpret how an illiterate person like Cakradhara can be appointed as a manager of a huge industry.

Dr. Dash also inspires his readers to suspend their reasoning when Cakradhara is proved omniscient to have escaped an explosion in his car in a systematic manner. Police investigation has proved that Mahendra is the culprit in the car explosion but it has to wait till Cakradhara drags Mahendra from his house to Chandanaswāmī's residence – as if police cannot arrest Mahendra unless Chandanaswāmī says to do so. However, *Oum Śāntiḥ*, despite thematically being on the beaten track, is a readable novel and has earned applause for the author.

IV.I.VII Pratipad

The main characters in the novel are Udbhava and Mānā.

Udbhava is a very noble character who is a dutiful son of his parents and takes care of the orchard. He is fully in love with Mānā, the neighbour's daughter but decides to take his parents to pilgrimage leaving behind Mānā and the orchard. He even engages Mukunda the flute blower to take care of the orchard. When his parent dies in pilgrimage, he goes to the extent of staying away for a year to fulfill all the rituals and formalities after death. There, he works as a teacher for Itiśrī. Udbhava returns back only to find that Mānā is trying to cope up with a shattered marriage and Mukunda having left the orchard in a poor state. However, his nobleness and greatness allows him to take care of Mānā and her child, whom he gives away the orchard. The story is successfully named as the New Day when the little boy starts afresh in the orchard and Udbhava also starts his life afresh. Infact it also gave Mānā an opportunity to make a new start.

The character of Mānā is shown typically as a confused girl who at times, loves Udbhava, then falls in love with Mukunda's flute and ultimately marries Milinda. She tried to find all the good features of individual men in Milinda which may be a probable reason for her dissatisfied life. However, she shows practicality when she demands a better economic condition for the family.

IV.I.VIII R̥tam

The main characters of the novel are Kulabhadra, Subhāṅka, Ananta, Uparka and Avani̇.

Kulabhadra is the elderly character in the novel who has two wives, namely Shannodevī and Avani̇. He is seen to be a feeble character with little or no control over his wives. Getting worried over continuing his family tree, he ended up with his second marriage. However, he showed an honest attempt to counsel Avani̇ for the treatment of his first wife, Shannodevī. The weakness in Kulabhadra's character is proven when he turns panicky on Shannodevī's behaviour after the birth of Subhāṅka. Kulabhadra displays helplessness on numerous occasions. Kulabhadra displays frustration, when he does not get an intended favourable response from Upakaṇṇha on the proposal of Subhāṅka's marriage with Avidhā. He also identifies himself as being core to the problem of the tussle between Ananta and Avani̇ on the issue of Ananta's denial to inherit his property. Kulabhadra is depicted as a short sighted person who had promised to Avani̇'s father during their marriage that Avani̇'s son would inherit his property inspite of knowing that he had an elder son in Subhāṅka from his first marriage with Shannodevī.

Subhāṅka is a man of high character whose life hovered around the hermitage. He is the man who pays the price for treading the path of truth in every step of life. The author has sarcastically used this character to depict the status of modern day society. Firstly, he was unable to impress Avidhā on their first introductory conversation. Thereafter, his love was deluded by his friend Uparka who took advantage of his innocence and got better off in being able to marry Avidhā. His forgiving nature is seen when he pays a visit to their place as a monk with the feeling of repentance for not being able to attend their marriage. It is also

Subhāṅka's ill fate which disallowed him to inherit Kulabhadra's property due to some promise made by Kulabhadra earlier.

Ananta, who is Avanī's son, is seen to a person who has immense consciousness for his rights, duties and responsibilities. He is equally concerned about his father's worries as he is about his unethical inheritance of Kulabhadra's property. He takes special drive to organize Subhāṅka's coronation ceremony. Ananta is also courageous enough to confront his mother, Avanī on the issue of property.

Uparka is displayed as a cunning friend who deceives Subhāṅka in the love triangle and succeeds in marrying Avidhā. The author characterizes Uparka as a smart young man capable of mesmerizing young women (such as Avidhā), very much in line with a typical modern day hero. However, the point to be noted here is that he does not travel the path of truth and thus ends up in an unhappy married life. He is also seen to envy Subhāṅka, when the latter turns up at his home in his absence and meets his wife to have a pleasing conversation. However, he too is shown the path of truth by Alekh.

Avanī is the real strategist in the entire novel. She has the qualities of healing Shannodevī as well as being shrewd enough to deprive her son of inheriting Kulabhadra's property. Avanī is also a woman who has enough say in family matters. She carves out a ladder for her son by proposing to firstly place Subhāṅka at Upakaṇḥa's place and also revealing during coronation ceremony that it is Kulabhadra's promise that would lead to the ultimate succession of Ananta to the property.

IV.IX Śaśirekhā

The main characters in the novel are Abhrapad, Śrīmukh, Lipsā, Śrāvaṇī and Dinamaṇi. Minor characters such as Urvī and Medinī are also present.

Abhrapad is an angry and arrogant character. He is also a proud megalomaniac who is elated about his wealth. Upon rejection by Lipsā, he is revengeful. His character is illustrated below:

अतः स नितरां विक्षुब्धः। अतिशयेन च विचलितः। परन्तु किमपि कर्तुं न प्रभवति।
निजमर्यादां लंघयितुं न शक्नोति। अहङ्कारमवनमयितुमपि न पारयति। पुनश्च विरक्तो भवति।
कुपितो भवति। मनसा तां भर्त्सयति। इतस्ततो विचिन्त्य कलहायितुं सन्नद्धो भवति।
प्रतिशोधपरायणो भवति। किन्तु कथमपि क्रोधं बहिरानेतुं न पारयति। अहङ्कारस्तस्य इतस्ततः
प्रकाशयते। भावनया स विक्षिप्तो दृश्यते। अस्थिरतया च चिन्तयति - अहं मर्यादासम्पन्नः। अहम्
अभिजातः। अहं समाजस्य प्रतिभूः। अहमनुष्ठानस्य मुख्यः। अहं मनुष्येषु अग्रगण्यः। (P.1)

Abhrapad's nature is also such that he does not consider his mother-in-law as one of the family – he considers her as a servant. He does not have regards for his wife and even makes his daughter dance for wealth.

Śrīmukh is depicted as a noble person. His childhood remained a mystery with the villagers. In his speech to the villagers, vanity was reflected.

प्रवचने स्फुटं प्रतीयते ज्ञानच्छलना - अहं ज्ञानी अहं तत्त्वनिष्णातः अहं विमर्शसिद्ध
....अहं च सर्वेषामुपरिस्थः कश्चित् उत्तमपुरुषः पापपुण्यविचारत ऊर्ध्वस्थः कश्चित्
विकारविहीनो देवप्रतिनिधिः - (P.6)

Śrīmukh is however filled with male ego when he is seen to be in doubt on the honeymoon night. Another side of his character is portrayed by the author,

when Śrīmukh goes to various places established by Induketan and turns philosophical in his thoughts. He gains knowledge and insights during his tour and illustrates the nobility of his character with the following speech.

मान्याः! जीवनयात्रा विनिमयबिन्दुतः प्रारभ्यते। समाप्यते संगतिकरणे....। परं, जीवनस्य मार्गं प्रतिरुणद्धि अहङ्कारः। स एव नानारीत्या प्रकाश्यते। कदाचित् मोहरूपेण....., कदाचित् आसक्तिरूपेण....., कदाचित् क्रोधरूपेण.....। इत्थमस्य प्रकाशो बहुविधो भवति। अनेन साधना नश्यति। श्रमो विफलो भवति। परमिदमवधेयम् – सर्वाऽपि साधना जीवनस्य कृते। यदि अनया जीवनस्य तात्पर्यं न बुध्यते तर्हि साधना मूल्यहीना भवति। पुनश्च इदमङ्गीकरणीयं यत् जीवनस्य लक्ष्यं संगतिकरणम्। अनेन शान्तिः। सुखस्य च प्रसक्तिः। अतः सर्वाऽपि अहङ्कारस्य नाशिका शान्तेश्च साधिका भवतु। (P.77)

Lipsā is another arrogant lady who sacrifices the majority of her family life due to her arrogance. She is unable to accept Śrīmukh as her husband due to her snobbish nature. It was an irony that Lipsā's pride of leaving her husband for wealth and property turned out to be a meager hut, when she was ousted by her brothers. Towards the end of the novel, she realized her fault.

Śrāvaṇī and Medinī are the poor daughter and mother who are tamed by Abhrapad. They have little opinion in their lives. Śrāvaṇī is a faithful wife, but never received her recognition from Abhrapad. She is also kind hearted.

Dinamaṇi is the fatherly servant of Abhrapad who served Abhrapad's family. He is the character who suggested Abhrapad's marriage with Śrāvaṇī. He is

an intelligent and experienced person. Dinamaṇi's advice was also sought by Abhrapad.

IV.I.X Śikhā

The main characters in the novel are Kulamaṇi, Vilāsa, Rajanī, Śampā and Murmu.

Kulamaṇi is an orthodox father with no hopes for remarrying his widow daughter. He is in conflict with his son, Vilāsa, who is much more modern in his approach. Kulamaṇi finds solace in visiting Puri as a pilgrimage towards the later part of his life. He is seen to be strong in principles, since he decides to pass on his entire property to Murmu and even assigns him to perform his last rites inspite of the fact that he had a son.

Vilāsa is a representative character of the modern day human being who runs after power and material wealth. He does not mind in adopting unethical practices in order to gain success. He is also witty to realize the usefulness of Śampā in his electoral campaign. He however shared a noble approach in at least thinking of her sister's remarriage. The novel ends with the disappearance of Vilāsa after his self realization.

Rajanī is the widow daughter of Kulamaṇi who sees her husband in Lord Krishna. She is such a character who depends upon her fantasies in order to live. The central theme of her fantasy is Lord Krishna. This is the reason she is often misunderstood by the villagers. She represents many such widows who probably depend upon fantasies for their existence amidst the harshness and insensitiveness of society.

Śampā is another example of the modern day woman who runs after the mirage of materialistic happiness forgetting where to stop the chariot. She gets influenced by Vilāsa and goes to the extent of divorcing her husband. She assumes

an important role in spreading the message of liberalization of women and also demonstrates her organizing skills.

Murmu is a dedicated servant in Kulamaṇi's family. He was raised by Kulamaṇi after the death of his mother. Murmu shows exemplary dedication and Kulamaṇi accepts him as a son who is in charge of everything in the house. The village is lively and refreshing in Murmu's eyes. He performs all the rites after Kulamaṇi's death and is also ready to give away the inherited property to Vilāsa.

IV.I.XI Śitalatṛṣṇā

The main characters of the novel are Ṛtwik and Ṛti.

Ṛtwik is the hero of the novel, who believes in platonic love for his wife and refrains from physical intimacies. He is philosophical in nature and believes in his own personal opinion that the cardinal relation is only temporary in nature and need not be explored. To the readers, he may be a noble man but definitely an unsuccessful husband. Throughout the novel, he tries to influence Ṛti by being pessimistic about any sort of intent or proposal of love.

- ऋती ! दुःखमेव जीवनस्य मौलिकनिदानम्। यत् सुखमिति वदसि तत्

केवलमासक्तिः....वासना । वासनासु आसक्तिषु च दुःखं वर्धते, ऋती ! नोपशाम्यति ।

- अहं मनुष्यः। मत् कृते आसक्तेः वासनाया गुरुत्वं महत्। अहमेतत् सर्वमनुभवामि ।

किमर्थं न स्वीकरोमि ?

- सर्वः अनुभवः न साधुः। (P. 4)

He is also shown as a weak individual where he is the one who proposes to flee in front of Śiladitya's palace upon hearing the shouts of a girl. He demonstrates to Ṛti his strong feelings through a series of practical incidents. At

the end, his feelings arouse for Rti but it was too late since Rti passed away. Overall, Rtwik's character is a weak one without much strength in intent and he is only successful in displaying his coldness. However, the last lines of the novel are symbolic on the transition of Rtwik as a person:

अद्य अहमिच्छामि परिवर्त्तनम् ।

अहमिच्छामि विवर्त्तनम्.....

ममात्मा संस्कारमिच्छति..... ॥ (P. 76)

Rti, the heroine of the novel is a comparatively stronger character compared to the hero, Rtwik (her husband). She is strong enough to propose to Rtwik on numerous occasions. Although, she is unsuccessful in tempting Rtwik, she sends a strong message to support the fact that modern woman's intelligence and inquisitiveness is none less than her counterpart. Rti's softness is also displayed on more than one occasion. When a fellow woman is heard to be tortured at Śiladitya's palace, she prays for her:

तस्याः स्वरतः कुमारीत्वस्य विलापं सम्यक् आकलयति । प्रार्थयते च मनसा – “ भगवन् !

पुष्पं म्लायताम्, परं कलिकां विकाशय ।” (P. 35)

Again, later on when the old man repents for his lost wife, Rti is compassionate enough to console him:

वृद्धस्य नयनतः अश्रु निर्गलितम् । ऋती अपि निजाश्रु वारयितुं समर्था नासित् ।

परिहितवसनाञ्चलेन वृद्धस्य लोतकमपसारयितुं प्रवृत्ता । वृद्धः सवाष्पं क्रन्दति । ऋती तस्य अश्रुभिः

अञ्चलमाद्रीकृत्य विलपति । (P. 55)

IV.I.XII Tilottamā

The main characters in the novel are Puṣṭapavallava, Tilottamā, Bhāgyadatta, Vadrikeśa and Aśutoṣa.

Puṣṭapavallava is the central male character of the novel, who falls in love with Tilottamā during a college picnic. During his youth, he is represented as a leader. However, as days passed, he is forced to marry Madhuchhandā under compelling circumstances. Puṣṭapavallava is a handsome and honest man, but weak at heart. As per Vadrikeśa, Puṣṭa has beauty, youthfulness, education, art-loving nature and singing abilities. He however has a peculiar magnetism in his character which draws his friends towards him repeatedly. It is tragic that he had to see the deaths of both his wife and beloved in a span of a couple of months.

Tilottamā is a lovely lady with charming looks during her youth. She is characterized as an innocent girl in her early college days. After her unsuccessful marriage with Bhāgyadatta, she took a strong decision to become a hermit and lead a life full of hardships. Even after receiving the proposal of remarriage, she was concerned about how she could offer her impure self to Puṣṭa. Such was her commitment to purity of love, that she sacrificed herself through silent fasting. While comparing with Nīlimā, her envious friend, the author describes:

तिलोत्तमायाः मराली गतिः हस्ते पुस्तक-धारणभङ्गिमा, मुखे अमितशब्दवाहिनी स्मिताली,
दीर्घवेणी विभा, संपूर्णमावृत्तं-शरीरं यस्य कस्यापि मन आकर्षति ।

किन्तु नीलिमायाः कुटिलकटाक्षः, जटिलहासः, सर्पिणीनासिका चपललपनचालनं, श्लेषभरवचनानि, वक्रगमनं, अर्धावृत्तं शरीरं यं कमपि प्रवञ्चितुं शक्नोति । (P. 13)

Bhāgyadatta is a rich and wayward youth who leaves Tilottamā after the first day of their marriage and elopes with Nīlimā. He is an angry, instinctive, superfluous and characterless person. He meets his end in the hands of tribal people who suspect him of glancing lustfully towards their girls and women. It is ironic that the so called illiterate tribal people care so much for their women while Bhāgyadatta, inspite of having an urban background could not give respect for his married wife.

Vadrikeśa and Aśutojya are facilitating characters used by Dr. Dash to form a connection between Puṣpavallava and Tilottamā. They depict the typical friends of college life who are always there by your side in times of happiness and grief. They have shown grit and will in their characters to propose the revival of love between Tilottamā and Puṣpavallava.

IV.I.XIII Visargaḥ

The main characters in the novel are Nakula, Avinā and Suparṇā.

Nakula is a weak character who takes the shelter of suicide attempts on repeated occasions to overcome his failure in life to earn an economically comfortable livelihood. He is ably supported by Avinā, his wife, who seems to be much more mature in handling their crisis. Avinā is also supportive of her husband, when the neighbours tell bad things about the relation between Nakula and Suparṇā.

Suparṇā is Avinā's sister and she seems to have spent her days with domestic unrest from her husband, Sukarṇa. She also tries a suicide attempt and is saved by Nakula.

IV.II Socio-Economic Conditions

The socio-economic conditions prevalent in the country during post independent era are highlighted by the author. Various social issues are dealt by the author in these novels.

IV.II.I Āvartam

The Vedic era presents some social customs which are valid even today. The ideal relationship between brothers is described by mother Jājāvari as follows:

अहं युवयोः जननी । युवामुभौ मम आत्मजौ । मम भाषया युवां भ्रातरौ । भ्रातृद्वयस्य संपर्क
आकाशपवनयोः संपर्क इव । आकाशः व्याप्तिमान् , वायुरपि महान् । परं न कदा उभयोः कलहः
श्रुतः । अतः युवयोः कलहः न शोभनः । (*Oum Śāntiḥ*, P. 164)²³

An important social issue is brought out by the author in terms of Gr̥tsamad declaring to Indra that he could only win Urvaśi provided he was stable and had substantial control over the tribe. It is interesting to note that even in these days, such assurances are taken relating to the economical well being of the groom.

यदि इन्द्रः यायावरान् एकीकृत्य तेषां शासको भविष्यति तर्हि उर्वशीं प्राप्स्यति, अन्यथा न -
अयं हि निर्देशो गृत्समदस्य । इन्द्रः एतदर्थं अभिनेता संजातः । उर्वशीं वशीकर्तुं च संकल्पबद्धः,.....

²³ *Āvartam* is a part of the book *Oum Śāntiḥ*. *Oum Śāntiḥ* comprises of three novels, namely, *Oum Śāntiḥ*, *Aruṇā* and *Āvartam*.

उर्वशी यायावरी, तदर्थं स्थायिवासः आवश्यकः। सा..... नगना, अतः शाश्वतवसनमपेक्ष्यते। सा उपोषिता, एतदर्थं नियतमाहारः अन्वेषणीयः।

इन्द्रस्य दर्शनानन्तरम् उर्वशी अपि उन्मादिनी। किंतु गृत्समदस्य कठोरः निर्देशः- यावत् इन्द्रः न स्थायी तावत् कालपर्यन्तं मिलनं निषिद्धम्। (*Oum Śāntiḥ*, P. 178)

IV.II.II Añjaliḥ

The novel Añjaliḥ is a closely knit social novel with the scenes following each other to depict the overall social condition.

The growing expenditure pattern with limited income is a reality in many households in the country. Even to support a small family, it takes out the peace of mind of many individuals. However, hope is the essence. The son would earn some day. The daughter may go away after marriage but still the love will remain. At old age, Milī, Vimala's wife will be the symbol of support level. The author has presented a concern and thoughtfulness which is prevalent in many homes.

कन्या वयस्का। पुत्रो वयस्कः। परिवारो लघुः। व्ययः अधिकः। आयस्तु परिमितः। गृहं नाद्यापि निजस्वम्। देयं तथापि बहु। अतः प्रतिपदं कलहः। अनुपदम् अनर्थः। कान्ता चिन्ताकुला। स्वयं सः अनेकान्तः। अग्रे न किमपि मोदाय। पन्थानस्तु विवादाय एव।

श्रमो जीवनमयः।

आशा विश्वासमूला । विश्वासश्च आपेक्षिकः । अतो न क्लान्तिबोधः । पुत्रः अस्ति । स उपार्जयते । स्नेहवर्धनाय कन्या दूरस्थाऽपि निकटे स्यात् । यदि वा उभयं दूरीयं स्यात् तथापि स्नेहो न परिवर्तते । शेषजीवननिमित्तं मिली अस्ति । यदि वा सा कालकवले विगलेत् तथापि तस्याः कृतिः अवलम्बनस्य अभावं परिपूरयिष्यति । (P. 57)

Another issue brought out by the author is the tendency of migration of the young generation from villages to cities and thereafter settling in the cities. Mitu goes to the city for further studies. Thereafter, when studies are completed, he gets a good job and he also finds a new life partner apart from a new home.

IV.II.III Aruṇā

The novel Aruṇā describes a typical scene of a poverty struck labour town area where Varuna the central character arrives. Although poor, the people are content.

वरुणः सुप्तो वर्तते । स्थानमिदं निम्ननगरी । दरिद्रनगरवासिनां विश्रामप्रदेशः । अत्र भूस्पर्शकुटी पङ्क्तिवद्धा । पार्श्वद्वय लघुप्रणालिकाः । नगरस्य उच्छिष्टमिह जीवनस्य अवशिष्टसारांशः । तथापि जनाः तृप्ताः । यतस्ते नगरवासिनः । ते कर्मकराः... शिल्पजीविनः ... उच्छिष्टस्य अधिकारिणः । (Oum Śāntiḥ, P. 124)²⁴

²⁴ Aruṇā is a part of the book Oum Śāntiḥ. Oum Śāntiḥ comprises of three novels, namely, Oum Śāntiḥ, Aruṇā and Āvartam.

When Nīludā, the artist, extends his help towards Varuna in the form of lending his pictures to Varuna for selling the same to earn their livelihood, Varuna realizes that business is not a bad profession in society. He ponders.

वरुणः चिन्तितः । उत्तमविक्रेता एव अद्यत्वे समाजस्य कर्णधारः । तस्य कथा समाजस्य पन्थाः । तस्य उच्छिष्टं समाजस्य भोजनम् । तस्य जागर्तिः समाजस्य संपत्तिः । तस्य तृप्तिः समाजस्य विवर्धितः । तस्य जीवनी सर्वेषां रामायणम् । तस्य जयन्ती समाजस्य पुण्यदिवसः । तस्य तिरोधानं राष्ट्रियमर्यादादिनाङ्कः । (*Oum Śāntih*, P. 128)

The point to be noted here is that an artistic mind still rendered a middle man's business as a downwardly profession. Although there was money in the profession, there was no intellect involved in it. Amidst, the entire societal downfall, the good thing that Dr. Dash wanted to bring out is that an artist may not be rich as far as materialistic elements are concerned. However, his affluence remained in his creations. Even, Nīludā repented upon sending Varuna to sell his pictures.

नीलुदा किञ्चित् विषिण्णः - अभिजातः अधः पतितः । राजपुत्रो व्याधगृहे निपतितः । इतः कुक्कुरैः सह मृगया । प्रतिवीथि संचरणम् । द्वारं द्वारं च उपसर्पणम् । चतुष्पथे सर्वस्वसंदर्शनम् । विभिन्नमुद्रया च आवाहनम् । जना जानन्तु । तथ्यं निरूपयन्तु । मूल्यमाकलयन्तु । पारिश्रमिकं प्रयच्छन्तु । (*Oum Śāntih*, P. 128)

Later on in the novel, Nīludā's apprehensions turn out to be true, when Varuna turns into a full fledged businessman. Varuna's life gets filled with selfishness and treachery. Varuna begins to lead a luxurious lifestyle.

Accumulation of materialistic wealth seemed to be his ultimate motive of life. His wealthy lifestyle brought new friends.

महानगरस्य अपूर्वमहोत्सवे वरुणो विलासकामी । चौर्यं, शठता, विश्वासघातकता च तस्य मन्त्रो भवति । तत्कृते जीवनमद्य भ्रष्टवृत्तिनिमित्तम् उद्दिष्टवस्तु । विलास एव निखिलमुल्यबोधः । शिल्पजातसामग्रीसंग्रहो जीविकायाः सर्वशेषलक्ष्यम् । सर्वतो ग्रामश्च समस्तशासनस्य प्रकाशः । इत्थं विभिन्नबोधमन्त्रेषु दीक्षितो वरुणः क्रमशः भ्रमद्- विक्रेता संजातः । अद्यत्वे सः सफलवृत्तिकः । खाद्यनिमित्तं न पुनः स नीलुदामपेक्षते । कदा क्वचित् तस्य गृहमागच्छति । इतः, बहुसमयं सः बन्धुगृहेषु निवसति । यदा निकटे धनं तदा बहवो बान्धवः । वरुणः नवबान्धवान् सृजति । नवीनसम्पर्कं स्थापयति । अतः क्षुधानिमित्तं चिन्ता नास्ति । वासकल्पनामपि न करोति ।

(*Oum Śāntih*, P. 133)

IV.II.IV Madhuyānam

Madhuyānam has special significance in bringing out the characteristic features of religious practices prevalent in the country during the last stages of popularism of Jainism and Buddhism. Towards the beginning of the novel, the author describes the household of a Jain Brahmin. Although poor, the family used to live happily. A picturesque representation is made by the author as follows:

शिष्यः जनैकः जैनब्राह्मणः । वृद्धः । एकमात्रसहायिनी भार्या । एकैव कन्या अतिलालिता नीलाञ्जना । गृहाङ्गणं क्षुद्रतरम् । गृहमपि लघु । परितः नानाफलवनम् । कृषिभूमिश्च अङ्गनं संलग्नः ।

गृहस्य पश्चात् गोशाला । गावः सन्ति । ताश्च नीलांजनायाः अतिप्रियाः । दुग्धघृतादीनां व्यवसायेन कृषिकर्मणा च लघुपरिवारः सुखेन निवसति । (P. 13)

The strictness of discipline is enjoyed in the hermitage.

सर्वत्र आश्रमस्य समुचित अनुशासनम् अवलोक्य संतुष्टः अभूत् ।..... विभिन्नप्रान्ते आश्रमं परिदृश्य, सन्यासिनं च उपदिश्य, अनुशासनं कठोरीकृत्य अत्यागतः आचार्यः । (P.17)

A girl's condition during her menstrual periods is illustrated by the author with much pathos. It is indeed disheartening that it is a woman (mother, in this case) who creates social barriers for another woman (daughter, in this case) for issues which are very natural to the human life cycle. It is learnt that a woman is fully isolated during such times and she even takes a bath in such early hours of the morning, when even it goes without the notice of a bird.

अद्य नीलाञ्जना निषिद्धा । शीलप्रज्ञस्य समीपं न आगमिष्यति । माता दृढतया प्रतिषिद्धवती । सा अस्पृश्या । जनमुखमपि न द्रक्ष्यति । एकस्मिन् प्रकोष्ठे उपवेक्ष्यति । महावीरमेव चिन्तयिष्यति । ऋतुस्नानदिवसोऽयम् । एकस्मिन् पात्रे आहारः । एकस्मिन् शयनीये शयनम् । एकस्य जनस्य मुखदर्शनम् । या मातृकल्पा अथवा माता सा एव दिवससप्तकेऽस्मिन् अन्नं वसनं च प्रदास्यति । तस्याः एव मुखदर्शनम् । तया सह केवलमालापः । अतिप्रत्यूषे स्नानं यथा पक्षी अपि न पश्येत् । (P. 15)

Various religious rituals are made to be followed by Sāmpratima including bodily torture, fasting, austerity and begging in the name of attaining higher

realization. These barbaric acts in the name of discipline by some of the religious leaders had caused a decline of the popularity of Jainism and Buddhism.

IV.II.V Nikaṣā

The novel Nikaṣā hovers around the poverty of some villagers and their constant endeavour to overcome the same. The priest Govinda indicates that whatever are his earnings get spent in meeting the daily requirements of his sister and himself.

एतदर्थं गोविन्दः चिन्तितः। पूजावसरे यत् किञ्चित् दक्षिणारूपेण मिलति तत्तु द्वयस्य भोजनाय पर्याप्तं न भवति। को वा अत्र तथाभूतदानीं ? सर्वे तु दरिद्राः। प्रसादार्थं सर्वेषामाग्रहः। कृपानिमित्तं सर्वे भिक्षवः। किं वा वर्तते एषु त्यागाय ? केवलं परिश्रमः..... केवलं जीवनम्। (P. 4)

Govinda explains to Charaka that he hopes to gain financial stability by constructing a new room with the broken stones of the temple and giving it on rent. He repents that with the passage of time, people have lost hope in the wonders of God and are hence donating lesser sums of money to the temple.

– पश्य, चरक ! सः कालो विगतः। अनुदिनं दैन्यं वर्धते। अस्मिन् समये च उदरपूर्तिरपि न भवति। एतदर्थं भग्नांशस्य स्वल्पतृपाषाणान् संगृह्य गृहमिदं निर्मितं मया। आशा अस्ति

– अधिकं भाटकं मिलिष्यति।

– सूचीमाता किं न दास्यति ?

- तस्याः सामर्थ्यं कुतः ?
- वृद्धकालेऽस्मिन् भवताम् इयान् लोभः ?
- चरक! अभिप्रायो मे न ज्ञातः ।
- सर्वं ज्ञातम् ।
- तर्हि, त्वमावयोः अनशनेन मरणमिच्छसि ?
- मैवं वदतु भवान् ।
- त्वं न जानासि । भग्नांशेऽस्मिन् जीवनं व्यतीतम् । एकदाऽपि सुषुप्तिः नाभूत् । पुनश्च, तदाऽयं भग्नांशः गृहमासीत् अधुनाऽपि तथा । परिस्थितिरद्य तु भिन्ना । तदानीं जनानां विश्वासः आसीत् । अतः यथेच्छं दानं कृतवन्तः । अधुना विश्वासो गतः । अतः पूजाया महत्त्वं नास्ति । दानार्थमपि करुणा नास्ति । सर्वे वणिग्वृत्तिम् आद्रियन्ते । अतः सर्वेषां धनमेव जीवनम् । अस्माकं तु उपवासो भाग्यम् । (P. 34-35)

Romance is depicted in a hush-hush manner in which Sūci feels platonicity for Charaka.

प्रतिदिनमिव अद्यापि सूचि प्रतीक्षाकुशलिनी । चरकस्य आगमनाय आतुरा । परं किमपि वक्तुं न शक्नोति । सोऽपि पश्यन्नपि न पश्यति । समान्तररेखायां विन्दुद्वयं मिलनाय कियन्न निकटीयम् ? परितः हरीतिमा । चतुः पार्श्वे प्रकाशः सर्वत्र समवातः । प्रवाहः अनुकूलः । परिवेशश्च

विनोदसंकुलः। प्रदेशोऽपि विजनः। तथापि विन्दुद्वयस्य एकमयकामना न चरितार्था। उभयस्य अभिलाषे मनाक् छाया... मनाक् तमसा...।

सहसा पक्षिणः उडडीनः। तरवः आन्दोलिताः। छायाः चपलायिताः। काकलिः भग्नांशे प्रतिध्वनिता। सूची पुलकिता। गुल्मारण्यं प्रविशति चरकः।

मनसि स एव उत्साहः। कर्मणि सैव श्रद्धा। आगमने पुरातनरीतिः। व्यवहारे अन्वेषणीया भङ्गी। करसंचालनेन गणकीयमुद्रा। दृष्टिघूणने उपयोगीया चमत्कृतिः। नयनपरिसरे च केवलं ससीमपरिधिः। तथापि शरीरे मनाक् पुलकम्। (P. 21)

IV.II.VI Oum Śāntih

The novel gives a live description of the prevalent social conditions of the modern era. The absence of ethics at work and trustworthiness is presented by the author with reference to Chandanaswāmī's workforce. The rhetoric questions asked by the author provide an insight into the society in general.

उत्तरवयस्कः चन्दनस्वामी उद्योगपतिः। धनपतेरभिमानेन तेन जीवनं प्रारब्धम्। शिल्पस्य नैपुण्यमासाद्य तेन शिल्पायनं निर्मितम्। उद्योगस्य सुपरिचालनार्थं चयनसमितेः अध्यक्षो भूत्वा स्वयं सः योग्यतमान् निरचिनोत्। उत्तमाश्च कर्मचारिणो नियुक्ताः। किं सर्वे भ्रष्टाः? किं सर्वे स्वार्थान्धा अभूवन्? किं सर्वे अधोगामिनः? कुत्र विलुप्तं तद् योग्यतमस्य चरित्रम्.....? (P. 10)

The modern-day health of the education system is criticized by the author as follows:

अद्यतनशिक्षाव्यवस्था विपर्यस्ता । शिक्षाक्षेत्रमपि भ्रष्टम् । शिक्षिका दुराचारिणः । विद्यार्थिनः स्वैरिणः । न नीति न वा तादृश आदर्शः कश्चिद् विद्यते । धनसंग्रहव्यवस्थामूलको व्यापारविशेषः शिक्षा । शिक्षणसंस्थाऽत्र विपणी । नात्र जीवनस्य महत्त्वं प्रतिपाद्यते न वा जीविकाया लक्ष्यमुपस्थाप्यते । न पुनः उभयस्य सन्तुलनं विचार्यते । अत्र विद्यार्थिनः साक्षात् वन्यपशवः । एकोऽपि मानवो न दृश्यते ? किमत्र केवलाः पशवो निर्मीयन्ते ? (P. 83)

IV.II.VII Pratipad

The novel Pratipad gives us glimpses of the Indian culture of children being in close association with parents. Udbhava was very close to his father and considered him to be an idol. He took utmost care of his ailing father.

वृद्धपित्रोः सेवार्थं सः अद्यत्वे बाध्यव्रती । प्रभातनयने यदा वायसः कज्जलं भरति तदैव उद्धवः सेवामारभते । सेवायाः समाप्तिः नास्ति । सर्वदा उभयमुखे 'उद्धव' एव मन्त्रः । (P. 3)

Consent of parents for important decision making is also observed as a social and cultural practice. When Udbhava requests Mānā to become a teacher at the orchard, he reassures that consent of his father has been obtained for the same.

- उपवने विद्यायनं प्रारब्धव्यं....खलु ।
- अनेन समयसदूयापः ।

- जानामि ।
- तर्हि....?
- श्वः प्रारप्स्यते इति ज्ञापयितुमागतः ।
- एतदर्थम् इयान् श्रमः ?
- का हानिः ?
- गृहे पित्रोः का अव्यवस्था ...
- नहि । ते प्रसन्नाः । अयं समुचितावसर इति अहं प्रस्थितः ।
- विषयेऽस्मिन् किमुभौ सहमतौ ?
- तेषां आपत्तिः नास्ति ।
- तर्हि , शुभस्य शीघ्रम् आरम्भः..... (P. 9)

Udbhava's dutifulness is also evident when he takes his parents for pilgrimage sacrificing his material pleasures.

Another social issue brought out by the author is Milinda's arrogance in his manlihood and his ignorance for his family members. This important social issue has been touched upon in a very sensitive manner with the flow of the novel.

मिलिन्दनिकटे अस्याः शान्तेः मूल्यं नास्ति । शान्तिः विदूरलक्ष्या सामाजिकानां दुष्कृतिः
एव समाजस्य दुर्गतिः भवति । प्रथमतो दुष्कृतिनाशः । ततो दुर्गतिः निरस्यति । एतादृक् चिन्तासु
वासरः तस्य धूसरः । गृहम् उपेक्षते । पत्नीं प्रति उदास्ते । पुत्रं प्रति च निर्यत्नः । (P. 34)

IV.II.VIII R̥tam

The novel R̥tam is more of a social drama with interesting relations within the family. Various prevailing social issues are well brought out in the novel. The envy that a first wife carries about a second wife is explained by the author through the pride that a woman carries on giving birth to a male child. The important social issue of favouring a male child compared to a female child is highlighted by the author through the following dialogue between Kulabhadra and his first wife, Shannodevī. The pain undertaken by the husband in maintaining a balance between two wives is also brought out by the author.

शन्नोदेवी अपि ईर्ष्यापरायणा । पुत्रप्राप्तेः गौरवमनुभूय सा नीचदृष्ट्या अवनीं द्रष्टुमारभत ।
क्रमशः अवनीलोतके कुलभद्रस्य संसारः सन्तुलनविहीनोऽभवत् । मनोमालिन्यं कलहे परिणतम् ।
तदनु अवनी सदा विरक्ता...कुपिता... ।

कुलभद्रो विपन्नः ।

पूर्वसंकल्पे स आत्मानं विमथ्य सत्यभ्रष्टो भवितुमुपक्रान्तः । मानसिक - भारसाम्यं च
हारितवान् । अशान्तेः वलये नितरां दग्धः । उभयं बोधयितुं स बहु चेष्टितवान् । किन्तु सफलो
नाभूत् । एकदा निजप्रकोष्ठे स शन्नोदेवीमाहूय अभाषत् ।

- कि सर्वं विस्मृतम् ? केयम् अवनी ? किमर्थम् आगता ? कथं तव सेवायां नियुक्ता ? केन

प्रकारेण सा अस्यैव गृहस्य सकलकार्याणि निभालयति ? किमेतत् सर्वं जानासि ?

शन्नोदेवी सरलभावेन कुलभद्रस्य मुखं विलोक्य चिन्तया जडीभूता । कुलभद्रः

विचलितभावेन भाषते स्म ।

- अवनीसेवया त्वं पुनर्जन्म लब्धवती । पुत्रं च प्रसूतवती । पुत्रं प्राप्य सर्वं विस्मृतं किमु ?

किमर्थं ते ईर्ष्या ? कथं च असूया ? को वा मत्सरस्ते ?

शन्नोदेवी विषण्णा ।

कुलभद्रो कुपितः । (P. 8)

An interesting family conversation is presented by the author, when Avani ploys to keep Subhānika at his would-be in-law's place so that his own issue, Ananta is able to inherit Kulabhadra's property. The downfall in societal values is highlighted by the author with the dialogue. The other side of the story may be seen as the blind love that a mother carries for her own son and she does not hesitate to be outspoken for the benefit of her own son.

कुलभद्रः किञ्चित् विचिन्त्य अवदत् ।

- तर्हि किं करिष्यामः ?

अवनी न्यरूपयत् ।

- ज्येष्ठदेवी चिन्तानरूपं कार्यं भवतु ।
- विवाहदिवसः अवधारणीयः खलु ?
- तत्र का चिन्ता ? उपकण्ठेन सह वार्तालापः कर्तव्यः ।
- तदर्थं प्रथमतः सन्देशः प्रेषणीयः ।
- भवतु..... ।
- किन्तु विवाहानन्तरम्.....
- शुभाङ्कः तत्र स्थास्यति ।
- कुत्र.....?
- उपकण्ठस्य गृहे ।
- अवनी ?
- उपकण्ठ एकाकी । पुनश्च तस्य अपरिमिता सम्पत्तिः । तत्र स्थित्वा शुभाङ्कः दायित्वं
निभालयतु ।
- अवनि.....!
- अत्र द्विधा कथम् ? वर्षद्वयानन्तरम् । अनन्तोऽपि समर्थः स्यात् । सर्वमत्र स सम्यक्
चालयिष्यति ।
- अनन्तः.....?

- नूनमेव ।
- किन्तु शुभाङ्को मे ज्येष्ठपुत्रः..... ।
- भवतु नाम । न तत् संपर्क प्रतिरुणद्धि ।
- नैतन्मे रोचते ।
- किं तर्हि, उपकण्ठस्य गृहे स्थित्वा सः कनिष्ठः स्यात् ?
- नैव । नैतन्मे तात्पर्यम् ।
- ज्येष्ठ इति किं स सर्वस्य प्रभुः स्यात् ?
- न तद् वच्मि ।
- तर्हि, किं कथयति ?
- अनन्तस्य चिन्ता तु पश्चात् करिष्यते ।
- किमर्थम् ? स पश्चाज्जात इति हेतोः ?
- नहि....., कनिष्ठो हेयः ?
- नैतेन तस्य अवमानम् । न वा अपमानम् । किन्तु कनिष्ठस्य मर्यादा भिन्ना ।
- नाऽहं किञ्चित श्रोतुमिच्छामि । अहं गृहिणी । यन्मे रुचिः तदेव भविष्यति ।
- कथमेतत् स्यात् ?
- तदर्थमुपाय उपस्थापयिष्यते ।

- नैव....नैव..... । भाविनि काले भ्रातृविवादानिमित्तं त्वमेव कारणं भविष्यसि ।
- तर्हि, अनन्तः किं दासीपुत्रः?
- मैवं वद, अवनि..... ।
- पश्यतु , अनन्तो यदि हेयो भवेत् तर्हि विवादाय भवान् एव कारणं स्यात् ।
- अवनि..... । कथं सदा अनर्थमुपस्थाप्यसि ? नैतत् शेभनम् । सम्यक् चिन्तय..... । सम्यक् विचारय..... । (P. 21)

The concept of an Hermitage as conceived by the author through the plot depicted in the novel is brought out as follows. It shows the noble intent in the concept of an Hermitage and the author's mind is reverberated when he explains the framework of an hermitage in modern day society.

गृहस्थानां दानेन अयम् आश्रमः प्रतिष्ठितः । ते एव वानप्रस्थमङ्गीकृत्य अत्र निवसन्ति । सन्न्यासिनो भवन्ति । आश्रमस्य विभिन्नकर्मणि आत्मानं नियोजयन्ति । ते अत्र विद्यार्थिन आसन् । चरमे वयसि अत्रैव ते शान्तेरनुसन्धानं कुर्वन्ति । शान्तिरेव चरमत्त्वम् मनुष्यसमाजकृते शारीरिकदैर्न्यं न तथा हानिकारकं यथा मानसिकदैर्न्यम् । दैहिकदारिद्र्यस्य उन्मूलनं न सर्वथा सम्भवेत् । उपशमस्तु भवेदेव । परं सति च मानसिकदैर्न्ये समग्रमपि जगत् ध्वंसमुखम्भ्युपैति । तदर्थमत्र ज्ञानस्य प्राधान्यम् । ज्ञानमिह तु सदसद्विवेकः । स एव विमर्शविषयः । तदर्थं न केवलं चरमं वयः

अपेक्ष्यते, अपितु मूलतो मनः तथैव दिशा प्रेरणीयं भवति । तदेव सुखम् । तदेव शान्तेः निदानम् ।

(P. 27)

A silver lining to the value system is illustrated by the author, when Ananta, the younger step brother of Subhāṅka approaches him and urges him to return home to take the responsibilities of looking after their property. It is quite ironical that Avani who is Ananta's mother, has a crooked mind of depriving Subhāṅka of the property for his own son's benefit but it is the son who invites Subhāṅka to look after the property. The typical oriental value system prevailing in society is brought out when a younger brother sticks to the ethical practice of letting the elder brother have the first right of inheritance of property.

- भवान् अभिजातः । आभिजात्यमेव वर्धयितुमत्र भवान् प्रशिक्षितः । इदानीं प्रशिक्षणस्य वयः उत्तीर्णम् । अतः स्थानेऽस्मिन् भवतो निवसनम् अस्मत्कृते न शोभनम् । तत्र गृहे नाना दायित्वम् । नाना च कर्माणि । तत्सर्वं निभालयितुं को वा वृत्ति ? पिता असमर्थः । माता च उपेक्षाशीला । सर्वं तत्र इतस्ततः । अतो भवान् प्रत्यागच्छतु । यत् कर्तव्यं तत्र सर्वं विचारणीयं भवेत् । (P. 56)

IV.II.IX Śaśirekhā

The novel Śaśirekhā shows the results of socio-economic differences present in the masses. Abhrapad and Lipsā are representative of the wealthier class while Śrīmukh, Medinī and Śrāvaṇī represent the poor. Abhrapad and Lipsā are both arrogant of their wealth and hence do not respect their counterparts.

The novel also shows Dinamani as the dutiful servant who had served Abhrapad's father, Abhrapad as well as Urvî, Abhrapad's daughter. It shows the faithfulness of a servant over three generations.

Majority of the characters are proud of their condition and hence could not adjust each other's company. This is pertinent to the modern day culture, wherein people find difficulty in adjusting to each other's requirements.

Induketan's works of charity are also significant in the modern day context. It creates apprehension of how funds are managed in large social projects. Śrîmukh visited a temple, few villages, schools, hospitals and various other places built by Induketan. Everywhere, Śrîmukh found misery, poor maintenance, dilapidated conditions and malpractices.

The social issue of favouring a male child compared to a girl child is also brought out by the author. Abhrapad was not happy with a girl child and considered it to be a sheer outflow of wealth!

अभ्रपदस्तु असन्तुष्टः। कन्या जाता इति तस्य महान् कोपः। अतः स जन्मोत्सवस्य सकलमपि औपचारिकं न्यषेधत्। नामकरणसंस्कारं विहाय नान्यत् किमपि अन्वमोदयत्।

स्वयमात्मना स्पधते अभ्रपदः। न स कन्यायाः पितृत्वं स्वीकर्तुं प्रभवति। न वा कन्यायाः विसर्जननिमित्तम् आत्मानं प्रस्तौति। इदानीं प्रथमतया स आत्मानः पराजयमनुचिन्तयति। नितरां च पीडयते - यदि पुत्रोऽभविष्यत् तर्हि तस्य सम्पत्तिः बहुगुणिता अभविष्यत्। कन्याजनने तु सम्पत्तेः क्षयः। (P.45)

IV.II.X Śikhā

The novel Śikhā gives us glimpses of the Orissan culture of considering Puri as a place of pilgrimage and visiting it once during one's lifetime. It is a place where a person seeks solace during the last stages of his life. In the novel, Kulamaṇi, his widow daughter Rajanī (who sees her husband in Lord Krishna) and Murmu, the servant visit Puri during the Kartika month which is considered auspicious.

मुमुः आयोजने मग्नः। स पुरीं गमिष्यति। जगन्नाथस्य दर्शनं करिष्यति। पापं क्षालयिष्यति। महोदधौ स्नानं करिष्यति। दुष्कृतानि नाशयिष्यति। साधुसज्जनानां सम्मेलने कियत्कालं यापयिष्यति। मनः परिवर्तनं करिष्यति। इदानीं तत्र मासावधिवासः। व्रतं च दिनपूर्णम्। कीर्तनमपि तथा। सदैव कर्म। कदा वा क्षान्तिः ? संप्रति विश्रामो मिलिष्यति। स्तोत्रं निश्वासाय कालः। किञ्चित् उपवेशनाय अवसरः। सेवापूजार्थं च अवसरः। धनधर्मादीनामर्जनार्थं न पुनः कालः आगमिष्यति। यन्नभवेत् वयसि अस्मिन् तन्न भवेत् काले कस्मिन्। (P. 51)

The author has brought out another important social issue in the novel, Śikhā that is widow remarriage. Even, he father Kulamaṇi is convinced that her daughter could not be married off, since she is a widow and is cursed. Murmu is shown as the face of innocence. Kulamaṇi opines as follows:

- अरे मुर्मो ! त्वमपि निर्बोधः। विधवां कोऽपि परिणयति वा ? किमर्थं वृथा भ्रमसि ? अद्यत्वे तु अविवाहिताः कन्या विधवा इव जीवनं नयन्ति। यदा अनूढ़ानाम् एतादृशी दशा तर्हि विधवां को वा पृच्छेत् ? वैधव्यम् अभिशापः। प्राग्जन्मनः दुष्कृतेः परिणामः।

- अभिशापस्य किं निवृत्तिर्नास्ति ?
- सम्भवेत् । किन्तु...?
- कोऽयमुपायः...?
- उपायः...उपासना । भगवति भक्तिः । प्रवृत्तेः निरोधः । पुनश्च संस्कारः.... ।(P. 11)

IV.II.XI Śitalatṛṣṇā

The novel Śitalatṛṣṇā describes the social bonding that a marriage brings into a woman's life. Although modern, the oriental thought processes fill the heroine, R̥ti's mind. The strong relations that a marriage provides to a husband and wife are brought out by the author.

विवाहतः परं बहुदिनं गतम् । किन्तु पत्नी इति अनुभव नागतः । सा प्रलपति-भवान् मे पतिः । अहं च भवतः पत्नी, तथापि विश्वासो न भवति । तस्याः वचनमपि युक्तिसहं न भवति । सा परम्परामनुकरोति । परम्परया यन्निर्धारितं तदेव सत्यम् । विषयेऽस्मिन् बाल्यतः प्रशिक्षणं लब्धवती ।
विवाहः बन्धनम् । (P. 1)

The stature that a husband enjoys in the eyes of a housewife is brought out by R̥ti with her feelings.

पतिः सागर इव महान् । आकाश इव व्याप्तिमान् । सूर्य इव समदर्शी । तरङ्ग इव पत्न्याः समस्तकामनाः पतिमेव अभिधावन्ति । इति विचिन्त्य् ऋती अवदत् –

- भवन्तं प्राप्य जीवनं मे सफलम् । (P. 3)

The lifestyle of a boatman's family and the aspirations that prevail in the family are brought out by Sumatī's thoughts. She thinks of how to groom her next generation so that they also develop to be torch bearers of their father's profession.

What is important is the simplicity of thought processes that embrace Sumatī's mind and the picture that she sees in the horizon under the socio-economic condition in which her family operates. It also reflects on how she spends her days when her husband has gone out with his boat.

मुखमपि कौतुकपूर्णम्। नयनाग्रे केवलं तस्याः पतिः तरी च - प्लवमानौ गच्छतः
आगच्छतः। इतः परं सा निजपुत्रकन्यादीन् आनीय अत्रैव शिक्षां दास्यति। तरीचालने यथा ते
धुरंधराः भविष्यन्ति तथा सा यतिष्यते। कन्या अत्र स्थित्वा दीपं धरिष्यति पुत्रः नौचालनस्य
अभ्यासं करिष्यति। सा भविष्यति निर्देशिका। अन्धकारे उभयं परित्यज्य परीक्षां करिष्यति। पुत्रस्य
अभ्यासः वर्धिष्यते ! दीपं विनाऽपि सः अस्याः स्वरं निशम्य कूलं प्राप्स्यति। ततः आकृतिं
लक्षयित्वा कूलमागमिष्यति। ततः अनुपस्थितौ केवलं तस्याः स्थितिप्रदेशमनुमाय कूलमुपैष्यति।
ततः सिद्धिः। ततः मम अवसरः - सुमती अहसत्। (P. 17)

The downfall in societal values is described by the author in the scene at Śiladitya's palace where drunkards enter the palace. Śiladitya is an evil person who uses girls to satisfy his desires. Śiladitya's thoughts about women depict the male dominance and chauvinism of society. He is so degraded that he addresses the female sex as a commodity and a means for relaxation. The scene is so terrifying that it sends out shivers in R̥twik and R̥ti who flee from the place. It is symbolic that the bad is able to drive out the good from the scene of turmoil.

- अद्यावधि न मिलिता नवीना ?

- नवीना आदेशं प्रतीक्षमाणा, प्रभो...!

- नय, एनां भुक्ताम् । जनाकीर्णमार्गे विसर्जय ।

कुमारी अतिकातरा । तस्याः विलापः बहिरपि सुस्पष्टः । वाष्पाकुला सा अनुनयति ।

- कुत्र गमिष्यामि ? आदौ विवाहस्य प्रतिश्रुतिं मे प्रदाय भवान् अत्र मामानीतवान्... ।

- हा...हा...हा... । विवाहः एका सामाजिकी छलना । नारी...? नारी एका उपभोगस्य सामग्री ।

तदर्थं अस्माकं सर्वाऽपि प्रतिश्रुतिः मिथ्या- । जम्बुक...!

- प्रभो...!

- नय, त्यज एनां पथि ।

- दूषितयौवनं नीत्वा कुत्र अधुना गमिष्यामि ?

- हा:...हा:...हा:... । रसग्रहणात् परं सद्योऽपि श्रीफलं वहिः निक्षिप्यते, सुन्दरि ! जानासि ?

त्वादृशसुन्दरीणां मर्यादा एकमुहूर्त्तनिमित्तं पत्यङ्के एव । अन्यदा तु नारी सोपानतलस्य
तृणम् ।

जम्बुक...!

- दिनैकस्य भोजनाय धनं दत्त्वा वहिष्कुरु एनाम् । (P. 34)

The author explains the immortality of cultural heritage in the social existence. It is interesting to note that the author displays a positive attitude amidst

all the social devaluation in his extempore to the readers. He explains that everything is mortal while culture is immortal.

इदं च सभ्यतायाः प्रतीकम्। संस्कृतेः परिचायकम्। - व्यक्तिः म्रियते। परं सभ्यता अग्रेसरति। संस्कृतिस्तु पश्चगामिनी। सर्वमत्र नश्वरम्। परं संस्कृतिः अविनश्वरा। यथा विषकीटः विषं भुङ्क्त्वा जीवति तथा संस्कृतिः मृतं भुङ्क्त्वा जीवति। मृतमन्विष्य अमृतत्वमाविष्करोति। यत्र तु प्रवृत्तिः पूज्यते तत्र संस्कृतिः न दृश्यते। केवलमाभासते। यत्र पुनः प्रकृतिः तत्रैव संस्कृतिः आकृतिमयी। (P. 37)

Another instance of social devaluation is described in the novel where a sage preaching philosophical thoughts to villagers flees with an accumulated sum of money when attacked by a bull. The author has tried to expose the veil of hypocrisy which is prevalent in modern society. The couple repents as follows:

- अयमेकः कपटवेशधारी यशःकामी। अनया रीत्या धनं संगृह्णाति। ऐश्वर्येन च निवसति। भोगेषु सम्भोगेषु च प्रमत्तो भवति। पुनश्च अनेन उपायेन जनप्रियोऽपि भवति।
- तर्हि, धनार्थं यशोनिमित्तं च कपटः आश्रयणीयः?
- हँ ऋती! छलनासु कपटेषु सर्वे इत्थमभिनयन्ति। धनाय यशसे च अयमेव अद्यत्वे संसारस्य

मार्गः। (P. 41)

IV.II.XII Tilottamā

The novel Tilottamā describes the practical questions faced by Puṣpavallava and Tilottamā when Aśutoṣa and Vadrikeśa had surfaced the proposal of

remarriage. Even with the air of modernism, they were skeptical in the decision making process thinking not about their own lives but what the society would think about them. The author has sarcastically penned his thoughts through the characters of the novel.

Puṣṣapavallava opined as follows.

‘किन्तु, पश्य अस्माकं समाजो वर्तते ।’

‘तर्हि - किमभूत् ?’ वदति बद्रिकेशः ।

‘विचारय ! प्रथमतः तस्याः पतिः वर्तते इति विवाहः असम्भवः । द्वितीयतः यदि वा मृतः तर्हि विधवाविवाहापवादः ।’

‘किन्तु सा परित्यक्ता’ – स्मारयति आशुतोषः ।

‘पश्य आशुतोष ! समाजोऽद्य बहुप्रगतः । तथापि रक्षणशीलः । विधवाविवाहः केवलं श्रूयते । न कोऽपि शिक्षितः स्वेच्छया पाणिं ग्रहीतुमिच्छति’- पुष्पः खिद्यति । (P. 89)

Similarly, Tilottamā’s thoughts are brought out as follows by the author.

‘किन्तु आशुतोष ! प्रकृतजीवनं न चलच्चित्रस्य आकस्मिकी मिलनकथा । न वा कवितायाः भावप्रवणवर्णना । न वा औपन्यासिकस्य आदर्शः परिकल्पना । वास्तवजीवनं कल्पितजीवनात् बहुपश्चात् वर्तते । वास्तवजीवनं सर्वदा शुक्ललितम् । तस्य समाजो वर्तते । भ्रातृबन्धुपरिवारपरिजनाः सर्वे विद्यन्ते । सर्वेषां तीव्रदृष्टिः स्वेच्छाचारं नियमयति सर्वदा । पुनश्च – अहं नारी – द्वितीयतः विवाहिता’ (P. 96)

The social dilemma from both the angles is brought out by the author to pose questions to the minds of the readers.

The novel also covers the downfall seen in a noble profession such as medical practice. The doctor treating Madhuchhandā was so very greedy that he refused to treat her without money. He sent Puṣpavallava to collect money from whatever means before he starts any treatment. Lack of timely treatment ultimately led to pregnant Madhuchhandā's death. The cruelty of the issue creates helplessness even in the minds of the readers.

‘हँ ,किन्तु शृणतु भवान्’ – चिकित्सकः अन्धकारस्थानमभिगतवान्। पुष्पः तमनुसृतवान्।
चिकित्सकः पुष्पस्य स्कन्धोपरि हस्तं निधाय शनैरवदत् – ‘ यदि भवान् तस्याः आशुस्वस्थतां
कामयते तर्हि इदानीमेव पञ्चशतरुप्यकाणि मे ददातु। अन्यथा किञ्चिदपि न भविष्यति। पश्य -
,.....(continued)

चिकित्सकः कार्यान्तरव्यापृत इव अभिनीय गन्तुमुद्यतः।

‘शृणतु इदानीं तु रात्रिसमयः। गृहमपि गन्तुं न शक्नोमि। मन्त्रिकटे तु इयन्ति रुप्यकाणि न
सन्ति।’

‘तर्हि, कथं भविष्यति?’

‘भवान् मे समयं ददातु – श्वः प्रभाते एव दास्यामि। छन्दां स्वस्थीकरोतु भवान्। पुष्पः
चिकित्सकस्य हस्तं धृत्वा अनुनयति। निष्ठुरहृदयः स किमपि श्रोतुं नैच्छत्। उपेक्षया अवदत् –
‘विपण्यां न कोऽपि परिचिताः ? तत् समीपं गत्वा आनय – श्वः प्रभाते तेभ्य प्रत्यर्पयिष्यति।’

(P. 81)

The doctor continued his cruelty further to question the nobility of the profession itself in the reader's mind.

IV.II.XIII Visargah

Nakula is a potter and inspite of ten years of his marriage, he has not been economically stable. The author describes his condition using his means of livelihood as follows:

विवाहतो नैके दिवसा व्यतीताः । अवीना मनसि तु सदैव शान्तिभङ्गः । तस्या अभियोगे एक
एव प्रश्नः - किमुपभुक्तं मया ? दशवर्षाणि गतानि । कालवलयेऽस्मिन् यौवनं विगलितम् । आर्थिकी
दशा तथैव भयङ्करी । वसने सैव मलिनता । मस्तके तैलदानाय अवसरो नास्ति । करस्तु अङ्गारस्य
लीलाभूमिः । सैव लीला समग्रमपि देहं सामग्रीकरोति । अधुनावधि मृत्पात्राणां निर्माणं तेषां च दाहं
दैवन्दीनं कर्मः । कुतो मुक्तिः ? अग्निशाला तु सदैव ग्रासप्रिया । (P. 9)

With the changing times, a few potters had changed their profession to get involved in the manufacturing of bricks. This is an ideal example of the face of art being devoured by materialistic thoughts.

अन्ये कुम्भकारा युगानुसारं तेषां रीतिषु परिवर्तनमानीतवन्तः । तेषु केचन वृत्तिमिमां
परित्यक्तवन्तः । केचन कुम्भादीनां निर्माणं परित्यज्य इष्टकानि निर्मान्ति । इष्टकानां वाणिज्य
तेऽधुना प्रतिष्ठिताः । तेन च ते पुष्कलस्य लाभस्य अधिकारिणो भवन्ति । तदर्थमद्य तेषां कृषिक्षेत्रे
इष्टकानां स्तूप आविर्भवति । इष्टकानां क्षेत्रं तु जनपदः । (P. 22)

A realistic touch is brought in by the author, when he describes the small talk between neighbours that happen. The neighbours discuss about an improper relation between Nakula and his sister-in-law, Suparṇā. A typical narrow mindset is brought up by the author depicting the social poverty in thinking power of commoners.

सहसा चकितो नकुलः ।

कस्यचित् प्रतिवेशिनो वचनं तस्य श्रवणे निपतितम् -

- पश्य, भो ! कियान् अयं भ्रष्टाचारी ? पत्नी अस्ति । पुत्रो वृत्ति । तथापि कामुकोऽयं श्यालीप्रणयी संजातः ।

अन्यः कश्चित् प्रत्यवदत् -

- अरे ! श्याली तु सर्वेषां प्रिया । किमत्र आश्चर्यम् ? तव श्याली नास्ति वा ? अथवा श्याली ते गृहं नागच्छति ? (P. 52)

IV.III Feminism

Dr.Dash's novels give a strong message for feminism through a collection of ideologies aimed at defining, establishing, and defending equal political, economic, and social rights for women. This includes seeking to establish equal opportunities for women in education and employment. Keshab Chandra Dash advocates the rights and equality of women through his novels. In many novels, the female characters are in pivotal role to form the plots.

IV.III.I Āvartam

The author brings forth a sense of compassion in the mind of Urvaśi, when she hears about the physical assault and tortures her fellow Jājāvaris have experienced in the aftermath of war. Urvaśi is so moved that she decides to leave Indra in the later part of the novel.

उर्वशी दीपालीभिः गुहामालोकयति । गुहाद्वारे बृहदीप उज्जागरः । उर्वशी तु उदासीना ।
समरस्य दृश्यं यद्यपि तया नावलोकितं तथापि सकलवृत्तं श्रुतम् । मनसि तस्याः केवलं विषयद्वयं
संलग्नम् – यायावर्यः धर्षिताः..... वन्दिनी दासीकृताः ।(Oum Śāntiḥ, P. 201)

Dr.Dash has also utilized woman power in representing the building of a new civilization through the hands of mother Jājāvari. It is interesting to note that at the beginning of the novel, mother Jājāvari puts a boulder in the cave mouth as a symbol of controlling the evil. It is the same mother Jājāvari, who at the end of the novel, tries to build something new by removing the obstruction from the mouth of the cave.

IV.III.II Añjaliḥ

The characters of Milī and Kakalidevī show different forms of feminism. While Milī is representative of the woman who is instrumental in giving the family its completeness, Kakalidevī is symbolic of the modern day working woman. The author has used the female character to save the male character, when the latter is in distress and trouble. It is also to be noted, that Vimala tries to find solace in his Milī, which is not only representative of love but also symbolic of the strength in the female character which is used to safeguard the male characters.

IV.III.III Aruṇā

Dr. Dash has re-established his strong support for feminism in the novel Aruṇā by carving Yaminī's transformation. Yaminī is a woman of tremendous self dignity. Although her name suggests 'night', all her activities are associated with those which the morning brings. When Varuna asks Yaminī about who her teacher was, she responds in a matured manner that it is Mother Nature who had taught her the bamboo tricks.

Furthermore, when Varuna inquires about her spinster status, Yaminī cunningly replies that she is already married to her profession. Yaminī's independent nature also gains precedence when she goes out to show her bamboo tricks to support Lallū's ailing condition. The author has created a sense of independence in her female characters, so that they share equal importance in the novel along with other male characters.

IV.III.IV Madhuyānam

Madhuyānam portrays Nilañjanā as an intelligent character when she asks Sāmpratima the authenticity of the methods adopted by him for attaining *Nirvāṇa*. She is seen to adopt the method of confrontation as a means for resolving conflict.

The author carefully uses the boldness of a female character to question the orthodox approach of Sāmpratima. Nilañjanā asks a series of powerful questions in her dialogue:

“आचार्य ! अद्य वदतु किमिदं निर्वाणम् ?”

“ अधुना ? अस्मिन्नवसरे ? असमये कथमयं प्रश्नः ?”

“ न किमपि श्रोतुमिच्छामि अद्य । अद्य भवान् उत्तरतु ।”

“ किमियं ते ध्रुवेच्छा ?”

“हं...,आचार्य ! अद्य , अधुनैव अस्य प्रश्नस्य उत्तरमिच्छामि”

“किमर्थमियं नीरवता? तर्हि भवताऽपि न ज्ञातम् ?”

“यदि निर्वाणं सत्यं, तर्हि तस्य किं स्वरूपम् ?”

“तर्हि, किं धर्मस्य लक्ष्यम् ?”

“निर्वाणस्य स्थानमिह कुत्र?”

“यदि शरीरं न विद्यते, तर्हि अनुभवः केन प्रकारेण संभवेत् -?”

‘नहि, नेत्थं वक्तुं शक्यते। आत्मा निर्लिप्तः। यः आत्मा दुःखं सुखं वा नानुभवति कीदृशं स

निर्वाणमनुभवेत् ? पुनश्च यत् अनुभवितुं न शक्यते तस्य कल्पनायां को वा लाभः? को वा उपकारः?’

(P. 77)

All the above mentioned questions are very basic and fundamental in nature and challenge the very approach Sāmpratima had taken in the realization of *Nirvāṇa* in Jainism. At the end of the chapter after her questioning session, it is interesting to note the happiness experienced by Nilañjanā (अपूर्वमानन्दमन्वभवत्

नीलाञ्जना -). It was a sense of accomplishment by Nilañjanā that she was able to ask the reasons which would otherwise have remained as eternal truths. The author did

not take the help of Śīlaprajña in creating such circumstances, although he would have been an obvious choice of the reader. It is the promotion of feminism by Dr. Dash that provides the opportunity to Nilañjanā for such a role in the novel.

IV.III.V Nikaṣā

Dr. Dash has again left his trademark of feminism in the novel Nikaṣā by putting an imaginary female character Māyā in Yamunā's thoughts. The presence of Māyā is very symbolic as the name suggests. Māyā crafts her way throughout the novel even being an imaginary character. The character being imaginary, the author could have easily portrayed a male child – however he has chosen Māyā and created a plot to demonstrate an ailing mother's appeal for marrying off her daughter.

IV.III.VI Oum Śāntiḥ

Candrā is depicted as a strong character with individualism. Her strained relationship with her father, her blind love for Mahendra, her lessons learnt and her transformation is used by the author to successfully name the novel as 'Oum Śāntiḥ' – a transformational journey to peace.

IV.III.VII Pratipad

A very sensitive side of feminism is brought out by the author in the novel 'Pratipad' through the character of Mānā. The character has displayed maturity in bouncing back from falling in love with different men. She had the maturity to consider Udbhava's elegance and Mukunda's body inside Milinda. Mānā is seen to be fighting all by herself, when her hand is given in marriage to Milinda who gave her an unsuccessful marriage. Mānā shows courage in asking Milinda to leave when she finds him hitting his son. Then she starts afresh in Udbhava's orchard.

IV.III.VIII R̥tam

Dr. Dash has crafted the female characters in the novel R̥tam through Shannodevī, Avani and Avidhā. Different facades of feminism are exhibited when Shannodevī is portrayed in contrast to Avani. While the former feels proud on giving birth to a male child, the latter shows the negative side of a character when she ploys to deprive Shannodevī's son of Kulabhadra's property. Avidhā is again depicted as a moderately strong character, since she carries an individual opinion against Subhānika, the hero of the novel. Even Avidhā displays exemplary maturity when she forgives Uparka on seeing tears in his eyes for a peaceful married life. It is good to see that all the female characters are used by the author to form important links to the story rather than only being ornamental to the theme of the novel. The strengths of the characters are such that they decide the course of the novel – be it Avidhā's liking for Uparka instead of Subhānika or Avani's strategy at the climax.

IV.III.IX Śaśirekhā

The author has used the novel to raise his voice against the injustice faced by the girl child. Urvī was never favoured by Abhrapad, who wanted a male child. However, he has used the same girl child as a means for reunion of Lipsā-Śrīmukh as well as Śrāvaṇī-Abhrapad.

Śrāvaṇī is also described as a meek and gentle woman. But when Abhrapad asked Urvī for the money she received as a prize, Śrāvaṇī came out of her shell and called Abhrapad अनार्य.....! लम्पट.....! राक्षसः..... । चाण्डालः..... । दूरमपसर..... । मूढः.....

नराधमः..... । (P.79)

IV.III.X Śikhā

The novel Śikhā represents a strong case of the use of feminism to develop the novel. When Śāmpā assumes an important role in running Vilāsa's organization, her character is used to reveal the problems that modern-day women face in society. Women are exploited – they do not have any place other than the kitchen. There is danger when they go out to work. The author describes:

यदा प्रभृति विलासः शम्पाहस्ते कार्यनिर्वाहिकात्वेन दायित्वं समर्पयति तदारभ्य सा आत्मानं
तथा वर्णयितुं प्रतिवेशिद्वारं गच्छति । अद्य यदि एकस्य तर्हि अपरदिने अपरस्य गृहं गच्छति ।
महिलामङ्गलसमितिष्ये प्रचोदयति । सा विवृणोति – महिला अद्यत्वे निर्यातिताः । पाकशालां
विहाय अन्यत्र तासां स्थानं नास्ति । बहिर्गमने विपत् । गृहे च निर्यातना । कर्मक्षेत्रे शोषणम् । सर्वत्र
भयम् । सर्वदा च शोषणाय जना भ्रष्टवृत्तिकाः । एषा महती समस्या । प्रतिक्षेत्रं नारीणां स्थानं
सुरक्षितमपि अरक्षितमिव । एतस्य कारणं स्पष्टम् । नार्यो हि न जागरूकाः । शिक्षिता अपि न
चिन्ताशीलाः । सर्वासां ज्ञातसारे घटना तु अरुचिकरी भवति । किन्तु न काऽपि प्रतिवदति । नार्यः
पण्या भवन्ति । परं न काऽपि स्वरम् उत्थापयति । सम्मुखे एव ता दासीभवन्ति । तथापि न
अभियुङ्क्ते । एतस्य कारणं नारीणामसाहित्यम् ... संकीर्णस्वार्थपरता....ईर्ष्यापरायणता.... ।

(P. 18)

IV.III.XI Śitalatṛṣṇā

Dr. Dash has brought into light various female characters in the novel Śitalatṛṣṇā through Ṛti, Sumatī and Basumatī. Each character plays a defined role in the novel and the author has successfully represented various forms of a woman

through Sumatī's caring attitude, R̥ti's innocence and suppressed desires as well as Basumati's expression of love. Each character has an aura of independence and thinks freely. It is to be noted that throughout the novel, it is not R̥twik, the hero, but these female characters who have displayed a mature thought process and at the end, the hero is symbolically reminded of these female character:

क्लान्तः चलति । हस्तद्वयं मुक्तभावेन दोलायते । मनसि भावनाः तृणायन्ते ।

- ऋती..... ।
-सुमती..... ।
- वसुमती..... । (P. 76)

It is also to be noted that the entire novel is centered on the thoughts of different women in the novel – be it R̥ti, Sumatī or Basumati. It is their feminism which carve the story.

IV.III.XII Tilottamā

The author has named the novel upon Tilottamā, the central female character. The chemistry between two female friends in college, namely Tilottamā and Nīlimā are also brought out subtly. Although, Puṣpavallava and Tilottamā both loved each other before their individual marriages, the irony of fate led Tilottamā to lead a disturbed life post-marriage while Puṣpavallava led a happy one with Madhuchhandā. The partiality of society towards the masculine sex is yet again captured by the author.

The revolutionary side of a female character is brought out by Dr. Dash when Tilottamā questions the so-called norms of society.

तिलोत्तमायाः विप्लविमनः ज्वलदासीत्। न सा प्रतिशोधाय समर्था न वा प्रायश्चिताय। कति
धूमिलप्रश्नाः मनसि समुस्थिताः -‘कोऽयं समाजं निर्मितवान् ? कोऽयं नारीपुरुषयोः
सामाजिकानुष्ठानं ‘विवाह’ इति उदघोषयत् ? कोऽयं धनलुब्धपुरुषान् धनिकान् अभिरूपवरपेण
स्थिरीकृतवान् ? केवलं धनं उपभोगः किं जीवनम् ? किं विवाहः जीवनस्य अविच्छिन्नमङ्गलम् ?’

(P. 52)

Parallely, the author has also highlighted the strength of the female character through Tilottamā’s life as a hermit in contrast to Puṣpavallava’s broken-down condition after Madhuchhandā’s death. A strong message is voiced by Dr.Dash through the depiction of these contrasting yet close-knit characters. While Puṣpavallava is always seen to be supported by his friends, Vadrikeśa and Aśutoṣa, Tilottamā struggles through life single handedly. Even, in death, she glorified the commitment to her purity.

IV.III.XIII Visargaḥ

Suparṇā’s freedom from Sukarṇa is signified by the arrival of their baby girl. Suparṇā liberates her inner self through the birth of Bula and this is significant, since the author has again sown the seed of a feminist touch to the story. The baby girl is a symbol of progress, youthfulness, cleanliness, happiness, hope and independence.

अङ्गे तस्याः शिशुकन्या एका प्रगतिः तारुण्यस्य एका सम्पत्तिः
परिच्छिन्नसमयस्य एका स्मारकी आनन्दमयक्षणस्य एका वर्तिका आशाऽलोकस्य

..... एका शिखा आदियज्ञस्य एका लाजलेखा स्वाधिष्ठानस्य एका तटिनीशाखा
दहनस्य..... दोहनस्य मोहनस्य.....! (P. 70)

The story is sown around the feelings of female characters and the female characters also show enough strength of character to overcome the weakness of the central male character, Nakula. Bula, the daughter of Suparṇā is also seen as the rebirth of their dead daughter, Ilā, by Nakula and Avinā.

However, quite uniquely in the novel, Visargaḥ, Dr. Dash has hinted an anti-feminist feeling through the words of Nakula. Probably, it is an attempt to show the hypocrisy in the mind of individuals in the modern era. Nakula ponders,

कन्यां जन्मं दत्वा सुपर्णा किं सुखिनी स्यात् ? सा निःसहाया । सहायरूपेण पुत्र एव तस्याः
प्रयोजनीयं वस्तु । अनेन सुकर्णस्य पुनरागमनमपि सम्भवेत् । कन्याजननेन तु सुपर्णा पुनरात्मानं
न्यूनीकृत्य जीवितुमपि न इच्छेत् । कन्याजननमिह हि अभिशापाय भवति दुःखाय भवति ।
नकुलो गुञ्जने मग्नः - नहि, कन्यायाः प्रयोजनं नास्ति । पुत्रो भवतु । सुपर्णा सुखिनी भवतु ।
(P. 60)

IV.IV PLOT CONSTRUCTION

The plot constructions of the novels involve a series of interconnected events in which every occurrence has a specific purpose. In general, Keshab Chandra Dash has used the plots for establishing connections, suggesting causes, and showing relationships.

Generally, it is observed that the novels have a context setting, followed by a conflict with the society or self or somebody else or even with a situation. Then the

various characters get involved in a rising action to reach the climax and thereafter the novels reach a conclusion.

In some of the novels, the writer weaves two or more dramatic plots that are usually linked by a common character and a similar theme.

Not much of an episodic plot or flashback is used to narrate a string of events.

IV.IV.I Āvartam

As per the ancient literatures and as contained in Shrimad Bhagwat and other religious books, there was once a 'Prajapati' named Tvashta, who had a devout and pious son named Vishwarupa. Vishwarupa, blessed with three heads, was a sage having immense spiritual strengths, which evoked a sense of insecurity and fear in the mind of Lord Indra, the king of the Inderlok (Paradise) and in a fit of rage Indra killed the good sage. When Prajapati Tvashta came to know of the incident, he became furious and performed a Yagya with the purpose of avenging the death of his dear son. From the holy fire was born another son of Tvashta, whom he named as Vritrasura and whose sole aim in life was to avenge his brother's death by destroying Indra.

Vritrasura then meditated and undertook a penance as the result of which he was granted a supreme boon. As per this boon no weapon known till then, could kill him, and he would not even die of anything that was either wet or dry or any weapon made of wood or metal. The boon also ensured that his power would go on increasing during the battle. Upon being granted this boon, Vritra waged a battle against Indra and his forces and managed to give a crushing defeat to him as a result of which Indra had to flee from the battle scene leaving behind his elephant Airawat. Vritrasura then took over Inderlok, forcing Indra to flee to Lord Shankar for help. Shankar along with Brahma went to lord Vishnu to seek his help. Vishnu

advised them that they should first win the confidence of Vritrasura, befriend him and then kill him when he may not be on his guards. Vishnu also advised them that they should pray to the Goddess so that through her 'Yogmaya' she may render Vritrasura incapable of intelligent thought. Indra did as advised and was consequently blessed by the Goddess.

After this Indra managed to befriend Vritrasura and once when Vritrasura was asleep on sea shore, Indra collected sea-foam as it was neither wet nor dry, neither wood nor any metal and it certainly could not be categorized as a weapon. With the intention of using the sea foam as a weapon to kill Vritrasura, Indra summoned the Goddess to enter the foam. When the Goddess entered the foam, Indra wrapped it around his Vajra (a deadly fierce and favourite weapon of Lord Indra, made out of the bones donated by Dadhichi ' Rishi') and with this Vajra he killed Vritrasura there and then. The Devtas, rid of the menace of Vritrasura, praised the Goddess for keeping her promise of helping them in their hour of need.

The above mentioned plot has been used by the author to bring out the dilemma of culture and modern practices. The plot has been built and neatly grafted into twenty smaller chapters. Each chapter has logically tried to complete a scene, an incident or a thought. The transition of chapters is also executed smoothly, so that the reader is able to summarise the happenings that occurred in the earlier chapter.

IV.IV.II Añjaliḥ

The plot in 'Añjaliḥ' is constructed around the central character Vimala and his journey from being a teacher in one college to the other. On one hand, when he is already burdened by family pressures, he maintains his honesty only to find himself transferred to another college.

His good relation with Kakalidevî in the new college fetches him ridicule and mockery. He again fetches a transfer order due to his good relation with Kakalidevî. In the new college, he is fooled by the college principal and dumps him of some money. The plot is gradually sensitized here. In a typical cinematic style, Kakalidevî turns to save Vimala in his daughter's marriage. The climax in the novel is continued when Mitu, Vimala's son moves to the city and gives his parents the news that he has joined a well-off job and also found a new life partner. The most refreshing part of the novel is seen towards the end when Vimala and Milî decide to start a new life. The story is written in a simple and lucid style unlike many other novels of Dr.Dash.

IV.IV.III Aruṇā

The plot is built up in the novel Aruṇā around a centrally strong character Nîludā surrounded by weaker individuals such as Varuna. The plot grows in the form of discussions between Nîludā and Varuna regarding the downfall in societal values. Yaminî is brought into the novel at regular intervals to bring down the monotonicity. Yaminî's actions are symbolic of individualism. The climax is grafted in a manner wherein an unethical person tries to use Nîludā's pictures with his own writings. It proceeds to an extent where Nîludā dies after the person beats him up. The unfriendly and unsocial behaviour of the neighbours after his death trigger Varuna's transformation. Varuna switches his profession from being a street vendor to a dancer. The conversation between Varuna and Yaminî is crafted in a matured way, wherein Yaminî is seen to respond to difficult question posed by Varuna. Their romance is depicted as one where circumstances have always overruled the wish of the mind. The story content in the novel is slightly weak and Dr. Dash has used the novel to spread the message of principles. Descriptive narratives are present in abundance which highlights the author's mastery over the Sanskrit language.

IV.IV.IV Madhuyānam

The novel Madhuyānam is one of the early novels of the author and the entire storyline is divided into short chapters. Each of the chapters has helped the author in gradually building the plot and it also makes the reader comfortable with the pace of the novel. The backdrop of Jainism and religious austerity is explained through the preachings and methodologies of Sāmpratima.

The author generates a hero in the form of Śīlaprajña to counter the orthodox practices while Nilañjanā is developed to be the heroine who persuades the hero to get initiated into Jainism.

The plot is built with descriptions of the lifestyle of disciples of the hermitage and regular confrontations are presented to provoke the reader's mind. Although, the plot is constructed on the backdrop of hard austerity of Jainism, a romance is groomed between Nilañjanā and Śīlaprajña to bring about an element of romance. However, the plot turns to be a tragedy when the couple fails to unite with each other and the heroine dies in the lap of the hero.

The return of the hero maintaining anonymity is quite interesting and produces a spark in the novel signifying the victory of simplicity over imposed harsh rules. The hero's quest for eternal truth and challenge to set practices throw open dimensions of modernism in the thought process of readers. Throughout the novel, there is an intended criticism of the orthodox religious practices and its ill effects on society, in general.

IV.IV.V Nikaṣā

The plot is built up in the novel Nikaṣā around a temple which is shown in dilapidated condition depicting the changed era of destruction where circumstances are provocative to test our moral values. The author nicely builds up the case for the poverty struck Govinda who is in requirement of constructing an additional room in the temple premises. His financial instability becomes his license for

renting out his newly constructed room at higher rates to foreigners. The scene is dramatized with an ailing sister, Yamunā, who hallucinates about an offspring named Māyā. The plot peaks when Yamunā proposes her imaginary daughter, Māyā's marriage with an attending doctor, Charaka. Consequently, Charaka is in love with Sūci, another village girl but the duo does not reveal their love for each other. The plot weakens and turns out to be a tragedy, when Charaka leaves the scene and does not return. The author is successful in keeping the readers guessing about the climax but Charaka's departure turns out to be quite an anticlimax for the novel. Probably, Dr. Dash had carefully planned such an end to the story to pose a question in the minds of the readers as to whether circumstances mould humans or it is the humans who create the circumstances!

IV.IV.VI Oum Śāntiḥ

The plot is built up very nicely with many events lined up to engross the reader. A continuous storyline is formed, wherein the characters are exposed to real life situations. The plot is based on the life of a poor boy, Cakradhara, who flees and lands up in an industrial environment. This is typical of the situation of modern India wherein there is an exodus from the villages to the urban parts of the country.

The plot thickens when the industrialist's daughter, Candrā, falls in love with the dishonest manager of the factory, again symbolic of the modern day anarchy and infatuation.

Through provoking scenes, such as attempt to murder and setting the factory on fire, the author builds the plot and poor Cakradhara emerges to be the honest and loyal hero. His popularism is symbolic of the unionized industrial environment prevalent in the country and sparks some amount of socialism. As the novel matures, the dishonest manager dumps Candrā and Cakradhara also inherits the industrialist's wealth on exhibiting his loyalty. However, Cakradhara passes on the

entire wealth to the industrialist's daughter and dies in the lap of his mother. Amidst all this, Candrā gets transformed and builds a memorial for Cakradhara. The plot brings out the uniqueness in all the characters and helps in building a logical conclusion to the novel.

The reason for Chandanswāmi's unrest is bifold²⁵ – daughter and property. The nature of his daughter always pains him and at the end he dies. Abundance of wealth also creates problems for Chandanswāmi.

The second problem of the plot is Candrā. She is fond of showing off and with the dazzle of fashion, Candrā forgets her duties towards her old father and is trapped in the beauty web of Mahendra. Candrā is representative of the modern woman who is inclined towards enjoying various pleasures.

The third point of problem is Mahendra. He is having a problem of excessive greed. He wants to lead a life full of pleasures and luxury. Such a life requires a lot of wealth. In order to gain such wealth, he marries Candrā to take control over Chandanswāmi's property. He does not love Candrā. He only marries Candrā as a step towards his personal goals.

The root cause of all the three problems are – greed, aspiration, affection, desire etc. The solution to all these problems is seen in the character of Cakradhara. His life is depicted as an experiential journey on the path of peace and at the end, with his exemplary selflessness and sacrifice leads to a self attainment of happiness.

IV.IV.VII Pratipad

The plot is built by the author in small steps where he has first set the backdrop of the orchard, lifestyle of the different characters and then also introduced the readers to various routine problems of various families. Small

²⁵ Prasad, Jagdishwar, *Oum Śāntiḥ :In search of Śāntiḥ*, Drik,P. 24 (in Hindi)

elements of romance are introduced by the author – the one between Mānā and Udbhava, between Mukunda and Mānā, between Mānā and Milinda and between the blind couple. Each such romance has been used by the author to give new twists to the novel.

A dramatic climax is constructed when Milinda goes away leaving behind Mānā and her son, Udbhava returns to the orchard to find it in a dilapidated condition, Mukunda is tensed about Udbhava's thoughts and finally, when Udbhava finds his slippers and the kohl pot in the orchard. He even meets Mānā and the suspense is broken when Mānā narrates her entire story to Udbhava.

IV.IV.VIII R̥tam

The plot is built up in the novel R̥tam in the most interesting manner in which the reader is kept in suspense till the climax of the novel. The author uses various characters in the novel to establish a storyline with real life situations. There are flashbacks occurring recurrently along the story. The climax is built up in the story with all the characters assembling for the coronation ceremony. It is important to note here that each character has contributed to take the story forward in a manner in which the reader's interests are protected.

The daily problems in family life are explained nicely where there is a conflict between two wives. The story passes from one generation to the other when a young lady is brought in to the novel to add an element of romance. Treachery between friends is revealed when the young lady gets involved in a love triangle.

A younger brother's duty towards his elder brother is also represented by the author. Finally, the climax ends up in deciding the fate of the characters in line with the name of the novel, which means the 'path of truth'.

IV.IV.IX Śaśirekhā

The method of parallel plot construction is employed by the author in which two incidents are developed parallelly.

On one side, the story of Lipsā and Śrīmukh is developed into an unsuccessful marriage in which Lipsā's arrogance leads to the departure of Śrīmukh from family life. Śrīmukh travels from place to place supervising Induketan's properties.

The other parallel episode narrates another unsuccessful marriage between Śrāvaṇī and Abhṛapad where the latter's arrogance keeps Śrāvaṇī's simplicity subdued.

The climax sees Śrāvaṇī being rendered speechless and Śrīmukh being hit by Abhṛapad which creates a dramatic impression in the minds of the readers. The author uses Urvī who is Śrāvaṇī and Abhṛapad's offspring to unite the two couples.

The plot uses the metaphor of moonlight in the path of darkness (arrogance) traversed by various characters in the novel.

IV.IV.X Śikhā

Various characters and their roles are well knit to develop the plot of the novel. For example, the character of Niśānt is used to draw away Vilāsa to the materialistic lifestyle. Later on, it is Vilāsa who adds fuel to the conflict between Niśānt and his wife, Śāmpā. The plot provides good insights to the cultural heritage of Puri being a pilgrimage and also the craving that people have in making to Puri at least once in a lifetime.

A dramatic climax is formed when, Vilāsa returns to find that Murmu has inherited the entire wealth of Kulamaṇi. He shouts at Murmu only to test his

composure. Murmu was ready to give back everything to Vilāsa, but the latter disappeared.

IV.IV.XI Śitalatṛṣṇā

The plot is built up in the novel Śitalatṛṣṇā amidst the suppressed desires of the hero and it ends in a tragedy. The author uses various examples throughout the novel to aid the hero in proving his point of platoncity and abstinence from physical relationships. It is ironic in nature that at the end after Ṛti's death, it is Ṛtwik, the hero, who realizes his mistakes and repents for his wife's loss. The author's command over the language is noticed, when he demonstrates the case of the old man losing his wife through the metaphorical representation of a cow. The series of metaphors are continued when the old man is countered by comparing his wife to a gold coin.

The plot is well built up through a series of conflicts between Ṛtwik's stance of lack of physical desires and the experiences which he comes across such as the union of Sumatī with the boatman, Rāmdās' worry for her wife who was about to give birth to their fifth child, Śiladitya's lust for women, the love between Basumati and Mohan and the old man's worry for her lost wife. All the incidents are in sharp contrast to Ṛtwik's beliefs and author is quite successful in the rising portion of the novel to build the climax. However, at the climax, Ṛti falls sick and loses her life. It is very surprising that there is no mention of any medical assistance being given to Ṛti, although Ṛtwik is an educated person. The climax is very tragic and the consequences give rise to the novel's name which is aptly kept as Śitalatṛṣṇā, implying unfulfilled and cold desires.

IV.IV.XII Tilottamā

The plot is built up in the novel Tilottamā around the love story of Tilottamā and Puṣpavallava. In the first quarter of the novel, the picturesque lake of Chilka is

described with the backdrop of Kālijaī hill. The description of love gains new heights when described amidst such romantic atmosphere. The choice of the spot represented tragedy before union, since it is in Chilka that the legendary bride Kālijaī died in a storm while going to her groom's house after marriage.

The story continued to separate the two lovers after a brief love affair and marry them off to different people. The author has nicely grafted the plot to keep continuity in the novel. Shorter construction of sentences and abundant usage of dialogues simplify the climax to the plot.

An element of drama is seen in the novel, when Bhāgyadatta gets angry upon Tilottamā and decides to take revenge on her by passing a single night and finally eloping with Nīlimā, who was Tilottamā's envious classmate and Bhāgyadatta's village girl. It is ironic that both Bhāgyadatta and Nīlimā are killed by tribals.

Madhuchhandā's death is well planned by the author representing the downfall in moral values seen in the modern era, when the doctor refused to treat a pregnant woman without five hundred rupees. Puṣpavallava's tragic loss is narrated by the author quite dramatically.

There is suspense when both Aśutoṣa and Vadrikeśa visit the hermitage and ultimately find Tilottamā over there, renamed as Madhusmitā. The two friends are used by the author as a connecting tie between the memories of the past romance and the tragic conditions of the current age in which both Puṣpavallava and Tilottamā were entangled. They persuade the couple to marry each other, but at last Tilottamā's strong principles prevail over the novel.

The novel is full of dialogues to keep the reader's interest and giving a touch of realism of the modern era.

IV.IV.XII Visargaḥ

The plot is built up in the novel Visargaḥ amidst the financially weak family condition of Nakula and Avinā. The author uses suicide attempts by the characters throughout the novel to aid the release of frustration. The plot develops slowly from these frustrations and fails to grow into a solid storyline. The predictability of events fades the colours of the story.

The climax is reached when Nakula himself saves Suparṇā from committing suicide. Kalanidhi is portrayed as a symbol of knowledge who guides Nakula – however, the character could not add value to the pace of the story.

The character of Sukarṇa adds drama to the plot with him refusing to return to Suparṇā and Nakula hiding the same for the sake of Suparṇā's mental condition.

IV.V Narration

The narrative mode used by the author is used to convey the plot to the readers. Narration, the process of presenting the narrative, occurs because of the narrative mode.

The point of view of narration is expressed by the author as that conceived by the various characters. Some of the major elements of narration used by the author are Description, Scene and Summary.

In a *Description*, the author describes the environment and backdrop in which the characters carry forward the story. Descriptive references encompassing minute details of the environment and that of the conditions under which the characters get involved in the novel are put at strategic parts of the novels to bring some relief to the readers.

In a *Scene*, a specific issue takes a shape based on the interaction of various characters. A scene usually includes dialogues between the characters to achieve a goal through proposition, conflict, reaction and decision.

In a *Summary*, a particular event is narrated in a way which represents the end result of a series of events. Instead of narrating all the events, the author uses this powerful tool to let the readers know the end result and hence form an opinion.

All the above tools are used by Keshab Chandra Dash as discussed below.

IV.V.I Āvartam

Description:

The description of a lonely woman (mother Jājāvari) in a hilly environment is given at the beginning of the story.

यायावरी चिन्तामग्ना । नयनपथे तस्याः- कति उन्मुण्डिताः पादपाः । शोभमाना उपत्यका ।
उन्मत्ता शिखरश्रेणी । धूमिलो दिग्बलयः । निर्दिष्टमेघमार्गः । पादपशीर्षान्तराले बलाकानां
परिक्रमापथः । पलाशप्रसूनानामात्मसंकोचः । निषिद्धगिरिझरीणां, ह्रस्वसंचारः.....

पर्वतस्य कटिदेशे यायावरी आसीना । पार्श्वे क्रीडामग्नं पुत्रद्वयम् । सकृत् सा पुत्रं
निरीक्षितवती । (*Oum Śāntiḥ*, P. 161)

Scene:

In Chapter 12, the author has presented a motivational scene, where Indra addresses his followers to be ready for the war. He brings in a touch of feeling for one's ancestral property and the farmlands to arouse the fighting spirits.

स्थायिवसतिषु इन्द्र विहरति । सरोषं सर्वान् जागरयति, एकीकरोति, युद्धाय आह्वयते ।

- पश्यत, इयमस्माकं कृषिभूमिः । कृषिरेव अस्माकं जननी । अस्मादेव जातानि जीवन्ति, वर्धन्ते, परिपुष्यन्ते । । अस्या रक्षार्थं असिधारणं कर्तव्यम् । भूखण्डमिदमखण्डीकर्तव्यम् । वीरशोणितेन मण्डयितव्यम् । वयं वीराः....सत्यपथस्य च अभियात्रिणः । रात्रिः अद्य समाप्ता । निद्रां परित्यज्य उत्तिष्ठत..... । (*Oum Śāntiḥ*, P. 196)

Summary:

After Indra decides for the war and the war finally takes place, the author summarizes the effects of the war at the beginning of Chapter 15. Instead of describing the war in detail, the author summarizes as follows:

युद्धे बहवो मृताः । अनेके आहताः । कति च नदीजलेषु प्लाविताः । अवशिष्टाः कति वन्दिकृताः । अनेके इतस्ततः पलायिताः । समरशिविराणि भग्नानि । यायावर्यः धर्षिता....मृष्टा.... कृष्टा:..... ।

इन्द्रः सदर्पं पश्यति ।

ध्वस्तनदतटी तथापि समरकाङ्क्षिणी । नदी च शववाहिनी । पार्वत्यप्रदेशे मांसाशनपक्षिणां छाया मण्डलीभवति । अस्थ्यवशेषेषु श्वानः कुण्डलीं विदधति । (*Oum Śāntiḥ*, P. 199)

IV.V.II Añjaliḥ

Description:

The simplicity of family life and the intricacies of need are interleaved in Vimala & Milī's family. The author describes as follows:

शनिवासरीयसंकल्पेषु अवकाशदिवसीयप्रबोधनासु च मिलीविमलयोः संसारो वानप्रस्थी ।
आरतीशिखा दुःसमयस्य लोतकं पिवति । प्रार्थनाया मूर्च्छना मानसं प्रक्षालयति । भित्तिशय्यायां
समूहचित्रं सानुरागम् अतीतं स्तपयति । विश्वास एव भविष्यन्निरूपयति । सिद्धान्तग्रहणाय च वर्तमानं
निष्पद्यते मिलीसिद्धान्ते संसारो हरणप्रियः । (P. 63)

The condition of a family where the husband is out for most of the time and the family is managed by the lone hands of a wife is explained nicely by the author above.

The ending in the novel, *Añjaliḥ*, is described by the author in a situation wherein Milī is arranging for the evening prayer and Vimala comes home to Milī, gives his offering (*Añjaliḥ*) and start a new life afresh. The environment is picturised by the author as:

दीपं दीपयति एकाकिनी मिली । अङ्गने चन्द्रस्य मन्दरश्मिः चत्वरप्रेमी । तुलसीमूले धूपगन्धः
पर्णरसिकः । तैलाक्तवर्तिका द्वारदेहलीतले आत्मप्रिया । कपाटम् अपावृत्तम् देवप्रकोष्ठे पूर्ववत् मिली
ध्यानस्था । (P. 99)

A description of the environment in a village pond during Milī's bath is provided by the author in a very lively manner.

मातामही पुष्करिणीतटे दण्डायमाना । मिली स्नानं विदधाति । किमपि अपूर्वम् अनुभवति ।
एकपाश्वे चन्द्रस्य मलिनज्योत्स्ना । अपरपाश्वे सूर्यस्य अरुणशोभा । सम्मुखे जलम् । तत्र च
विकसिता कुमुदिनी । लघुमत्स्यानां भग्ना उतप्लुतिः । मिली त्वरया हरिद्राकङ्कुमादिभिः शरीरं
विलिप्य पुनः पुनः स्नातुम् आरब्धा । (P. 10)

Scene:

After Kakalidevi had given five thousand rupees in lieu of the jewellery, she employs a strategy to give back the jewellery which overwhelms Vimala and Milī. The scene presents a drama in the simplest form. The short sentences capture the mind of the reader.

- हूँ, मिलीदेवि...! मया तु विस्मृतम् ।
- किम्...?
- लिटी श्वश्रूगृहं गता । मन्ये, पुनश्च तया सह साक्षात्कारः न भवेत् । किञ्चित् उपहर्तव्यम्
आसीत् ।
- नहि । तद् विस्मरतु । उपस्थितिः पर्याप्ता । उपहारे वा किमधिकं स्यात्?
- नैतत् समीचीनं भवेत् । एतद् गृह्णातु । स्थापयतु ।

काकलिदेवी सर्वमपि सुवर्णम् अञ्जलिपूर्णं मिलीकरे समर्पयत् । विमलः उत्सुकः सञ्जातः ।

- अरे....! किमेतत् करोति ?

- समीचीनं करोमि । (P. 84)

Summary:

After arranging for the loan, Vimala came back home and started arranging for the marriage. The various activities are summarily represented as finding the groom and writing down invitation cards.

विमलः कृतकृत्य सञ्जातः । गृहं च प्रत्यागतः । विवाहव्यवस्थां विहितवान् । वरो मनोऽनुगुणः । अन्याया अपि आपत्तिः नास्ति । अद्य सर्वानपि बान्धवान् निमन्त्रयति विमलः । मिली सहयोगिनी । सा नामानि निर्दिशति । विमलो लिखति । (P. 77)

The novel is narrated by the author in such lucid and simple style that it creates a lasting impression in the minds of the readers.

IV.V.III Aruṇā

Description:

When Varuna spends his sleepless night at Nīludā's place, he ponders. The author describes as follows:

वरुणो विनिद्रः ।

नयने तस्य तमसा प्रपञ्चमयी । अप्रपञ्चं प्रपञ्चते नगरप्रणालः । तथपि अदूरे दृश्यते देहिनी आभा । इदं च अदूरं प्रणालमुखम् । अत्र दिग्वधूः हरिद्रामयी । साधकीयानुग्रहे महाकाशः श्वेतकायः । कालश्च समतलः । तदनु सहसा मिश्ररागे आकाशः क्रमशेषः । दिग्वधूः विवसना । ईषच्चुम्बने विभा अरुणायते । तदनु ऐक्यम् अनिर्वचनीयम् । एकवचनं च वृथा । (Oum Śāntiḥ, P. 125)

Scene:

When, Varuna goes to the marketplace to sell some of Nīludā's paintings, he gets engrossed in witnessing Yamini's dance. He is so lost in her performance that he ends up in being robbed off all the paintings. Somebody steals them and leaves Varuna in a helpless situation. He feels ashamed of the entire situation. The scene is nicely depicted by the author in which a mixed bag of emotions is depicted in series.

वरुणः आगतः । नृत्यस्थले उपस्थितः । निकटे चित्रफलकं स्थापितवान् । जनगहने च प्रविष्टः । मुखेन वक्रीभूय नृत्ये विलीनः संजातः । खण्डवंशेषु नृत्यं प्रदर्शयति वंशेश्वरी । भङ्गीविशेषान् घोषयति लल्लुः । यामिनी मोहं वितनुते । सीत्कारे वेपथुमान् परिसरः । प्रशंसाध्वनिषु उत्साहिनी यामिनी ।

वरुणः तन्मयः ।

उदरे क्षुधा । परिच्छदे मलिनता । मनसि तथापि एकाग्रता । नृत्ये आनन्दमस्ति । नर्तकीलपने लावण्यमस्ति । तदीयदृष्टिधारे अमृतमस्ति । अधरे च मदिरा बोधिप्रिया । सकलवाद्यताले सा प्रियदर्शिनी ।

लल्लुः उदूयापनं घोषितवान् । वरुणो निजस्थः अभूत् । परं सहसा हतवाक् संजातः । तस्य चित्रफलकं चोरितम् । कं वा प्रक्षयति ? सर्वे साधवः प्रतियन्ते । सर्वे निजकर्मलग्ना दृश्यन्ते । यथारिति सर्वेषां प्रचलनं गमनमागमनमपि । को वा अत्र चौरः ? कस्य वा कर्मणि चित्रफलके ? (*Oum Śāntih*, P. 129)

Summary:

In order to bring in connectivity and continuity to the novel, the author summarizes the different phases of Varuna's life. After Nīludā's death, Varuna's lifestyle changes. The author summarizes the turn of events as follows:

उत्तमस्य संज्ञामन्विष्यन् वरुणः ग्रामतो महानगरीपर्यन्तम् आगतः । नाना गृहीतवान् । नाना च परित्यक्तवान् । अन्ततः महानगरेऽस्मिन् श्रेष्ठीभवनस्य कल्पना तस्य लुप्ता । नीलुदाम् अनुसरन्

अपि प्रकृतं नानुसृतवान् । यामिन्या सह चरन् अपि तथ्यं न निरूपितवान् । अद्य आविष्कारे न स्वार्थः

अपि तु ईर्ष्या एव ईश्वरायते । (Oum Śāntiḥ, P. 151)

The narrative summary gives the transformational characteristics of a person travelling from the corners of a village to the Broadway of urban lifestyle.

IV.V.IV Madhuyānam

Description:

The novel, Madhuyānam, has a series of descriptions. Some of them are explained below.

The concept of *Nirvāṇa* is described through comparison of the same with human anatomy as follows:

मनुष्यशरीरे अस्थि वर्तते । अस्थि धवलमिति जानन्नपि जनः सकृत् तदवलोकयितुं नेच्छति ।
अस्थि इव निर्वाणमपि मनुष्यस्य कामनावासनादिषु प्रलीनं वर्तते । यथा रक्तमांस-स्नायु-
प्रस्नायूनामुत्सारणे अस्थि उपलभ्यते । तच्च धवलमिति ज्ञायते । तथैव कामनादीनां नाशे निर्वाणलाभो
भवति । (P. 2)

The author criticizes the modern day value system through a narrative illustration of the public knowledge as well as the stringent religious practices. It is emphasized that sustainability is based on the right practices and beliefs rather than the blindfoldedness of followership.

...अद्य विद्याऽपि मनुष्ये नास्ति । बुद्धिश्च व्यक्तौ न तिष्ठति । लोकमतमेव बुद्धिः ।
संधनिर्माणं संधीकरणं विद्या । विज्ञानपनीयप्रचार एव विद्वता । कुलटिया वृत्तिश्च कुलीनता ।
अन्तःशून्यता एव आदर्शः पार्श्व - परिवर्तितवान् शीलप्रज्ञः ।

...एका रीतिः यदि बहुदिनपर्यन्तं प्रचलति । क्रमशः सा परम्परा रूपेण गृह्यते । अस्याः
परंपरायाः परिवर्तनं न सहजसाध्यम् । तथापि परिवर्तनीयम् । परम्परायाः एक एव आदर्शः न सर्वदा
सम्भ्यतां जीवयितुं प्रभवति । अन्धधार्मिकता च न सदा सोढव्या । पारम्परिकः आदर्शः अथवा
अनुकरणीय आदर्शः यदा मानवस्य अधःपतनाय कल्पते इति केनापि प्रतिपादितम् तदा स आदर्शो
भूत्वा स्थातुं नार्हति । (P. 46)

In his speech to the public, Śīlaprajña describes the wishes of mankind. He emphasizes on the philosophy of wishful thinking by different types of people. The author's simple and lucid style of narration is noteworthy. The basic requirements of mankind are described in his speech.

“ आत्मीयाः....!

जीवनं मधुमयम् । किं तु पवित्रजीवनयापने एव मधु मिलति पश्यन्तु ... शिशुः इच्छति
खेलनाम् । किशोर इच्छति क्रीडार्थम् अवसरम् । युवा इच्छति अभिरूपम् । बन्धुः इच्छति हृदयस्य
हासम् । प्रेमिक इच्छति अधरे मनाक् स्मितम् । वृद्धः इच्छति उपनेत्रम् । वृद्धा इच्छति
सहाययष्टिकाम् । क्षुधार्त्त इच्छति मुष्टिमितमन्नम् । पिपासुः इच्छति बिन्दुमितं जलम् । वासशून्य
इच्छति एकपादमितभूमिम् । वन्दी इच्छति मुक्तमलयम् ।

कृषकः इच्छति उत्पादितस्य मूल्यम्। श्रमिकः इच्छति पारिश्रमिकम्। शिक्षकः इच्छति नमस्कारमेकम्। सर्वकार इच्छति करम्। सर्वोपरि व्यक्तिः इच्छति निरापत्ताम्। स्वमतपोषणाय च अधिकारम्। एतत् सर्वं साधयितुं धर्मः वाञ्छति श्रृङ्खलितजीवनयापनम्। धर्मः अनुशास्ति सहस्थताम्। अभिकांक्षते च समात्मीयताम्। पोषयति समन्वयम्। अतः साहस्थ्यमेव जीवनस्य मधु। यतः मनुष्यः जन्मतः सहस्थः.....”(P. 60)

After Nilañjanā's confrontation with Sāmpratima, the author describes the nature and surroundings in the eyes of the former.

नीलाञ्जना दण्डायमाना। नयनपुरतः पर्वतः धूमिलः। सूर्यः जलदस्य अन्तस्थः। अतः न दृश्यते। तथापि रश्मिः अनुभूयते। उष्णता स्पर्शक्षमा। वृक्षस्य छाया किन्तु न दृश्यते। छायाः रश्मयश्च परस्परमन्तर्लीना ? उभयस्य वर्णमपि एकात्मम्। परितः उभयस्य योगपद्यसत्ता। अधिकं किमपि नास्ति। (P. 79)

Scene:

The immediate after effects of a newly born romance between Śīlaprajña and Nilañjanā are evident in the following scene. A steady headed Śīlaprajña gives into Nilañjanā's demand of driving him into initiation. As a sense of gratitude as well as a newly found love, Śīlaprajña becomes a 'Yes Man' to fulfill Nilañjanā's wishes. The scene is important due to the fact that it decides the future course of the novel and establishes Śīlaprajña's sensitiveness and responsiveness towards Nilañjanā in the latter's mind.

तोषसिक्ता आसीत् नीलाञ्जना । हृदयं तस्या उच्छलद् आसीत् । सविनयमुदतरत् सा – “ ममात्र किमपि नास्ति । भगवतो महावीरस्य आशिषा भवान् स्वस्थः ।.....तथापि मनाग् वक्तव्यं मे वर्तते ”

“वक्तव्यं...? भवतु ! बहुवारं मत्तः वेदनायाः शब्दाः श्रुताः त्वया । अपरमद्य त्वत्तः मधुमधुरशब्दान् श्रोष्यामि” - अहसत् सः -

“तव मङ्गलार्थं बहुप्रार्थितः मया भगवान् महावीरः । बहुवारं मानसजा च आयोजिता मया । अनेका मानसिकी च कृता - प्रतिज्ञाता अपि । वदतु, यत् प्रेरयामि – करिष्यामि न ?” अधोमुखी सा ।

तस्याः मृदुवचनं अस्य मानसं भिन्नदासीत् -

वद....,वद.....,नूनं करिष्यामि –

मनाग्विभाव्य सा अवदत् –“आगामिनी पूर्णिमादिवसे भगवतः महावीरस्य जन्मदिवसः आपतति । तद्दिने एव महावीरस्य दीक्षां गृह्णातु ”-

“दीक्षा...? प्रलम्बं निश्वासितवान् शीलप्रज्ञः “ततः किं भविता ?”

“जीवनं भवतः समुन्नीतं भविष्यति । सदा शान्तिः मिलिष्यति । दुर्गतिः अपैष्यति”-

“केन प्रकारेण ज्ञातवती ?”

“आचार्यः एव वदति । पिता, माता, बन्धुजना अपि तत् समर्थयन्ति ।”-

“बहुजानासि त्वम्”- इति सः तां निकटमानेतुं यतते । किन्तु स दूरीभवति ।

“किं समर्थयति भवान् ?” सा सकौतुकं तस्य मुखं पश्यति मस्तकमालुडय – “ नूनं...नूनं करिष्यामि यद् वदिष्यसि ।” निकटायते ? (P. 23)

An intense scene is described by the author with high level of emotion and drama when Śīlaprajña meets Nīlañjanā but could not recognize her. Śīlaprajña’s frenzied search for Nīlañjanā is pictured in the scene where he questions a sanyasini on whether she has seen Nīlañjanā, not realizing that she is the one whom he is looking for. The rigour that the body carried after her initiation had rendered such a austere look to Nīlañjanā, that the beauty of a woman was lost. This intensity reverberates in the following dialogues.

सहसा निजसदृशं जनं विलोक्य सः विस्मितः । निकटं गत्वा अपश्यत् - तन्द्रायते । शनैः तमुत्थापितवान् – ‘सन्यासिन्.....!’

शब्दं निशम्य व्यग्राऽभूत् नीलाञ्जना । नयनमुन्मोच्य कियत् कालं तं सा अपश्यत् । कण्ठस्तस्याः शोकगद्गदः अभूत् । नीरवा आसीत् सा –

“ युवजीन.....! कुत आगतवान् ?”

“ सांप्रतिमस्य आश्रमतः”-

श्मश्रुलः शीलप्रज्ञः मनाक् व्यथितः । मुखात् विनोदरेखा तस्य मलिना अभवत् ।

“किमभवत् ? सन्यासिन्....!” उन्मनीभवति नीलाञ्जना ।

“नहि, युवजीन! वक्तुं न शक्यते । अनिर्वचनीया सा स्मृति.....”

“ स्मृति.....!कीदृशी स्मृति:?”

“ तत्रैव सा स्मृतिः निपतिता मम । तस्या अपि दर्शनं लब्धमद्यावधि..... ।”

“ कस्याः वार्ता करोति भवान् ?”

“ वक्तुं प्रभवसि ? वक्तुं प्रभवसि,युवजीन....!

नीलाञ्जना नाम्नी एका बालिका कदा दृष्टा त्वया ?

कदा वा तत्कृतः भिक्षा गृहीता...?”

“ नीलाञ्जना....नी - ला – ञ्ज ना आ”...व्यथते सा ।

नेत्रं तस्याः उत्पयीभवति ।

“ व्यथसे...? व्यथसे त्वं , युवजीन.....! जानासि ? किं जानासि ताम्हँ..... हँआ:”

बाष्परुद्धा अभूत् सा ।

“कथं त्वं बाष्पाभिभूतः, युवजीन.....! किम्....., किं त्वं तस्य प्रणयवान्.....!”

“ नहि , नहि, सन्यासिन् !”

“ अथवा, तव प्रतिस्पर्धी इति मां चिन्तयसि...?”

“ नहि.....,नहि, सन्यासिन् !अन्यत् चिन्तयामि ।” (P. 53)

Summary:

Nilañjanā's condition is summarized by the author after Śīlaprajña's departure for begging. The solitary state of a woman's mind is summarized due to the vacuum which had been created due to her loneliness. Śīlaprajña's departure had raised apprehensions as to whether he had forgotten Nilañjanā or not. Śīlaprajña's love had bewildered Nilañjanā and three long years of waiting did not yield any fruits.

तथापि एकाकिनीतया जीवितुं न मे वयः अनुमन्यते । न कदा मनुष्य एकाङ्गतया मनुष्यत्वमाप्नोति । न शान्तिं प्राप्नोति । न वा प्राप्तिमनुभवति । अतः देहो मे सहस्थीभवितुमिच्छति । श्रुतं मया साहस्थ्यं जीवने अपरिहार्यमिति । अद्य तु अनुभवामि – सहस्थता एव जीवनम् । साहस्थ्यमशेषधर्मस्य प्रतिभूः । सहस्थीभवनमेव सर्वस्य परिणतिः ।

..... वर्षत्रयं गतम् । तथापि तव सन्धानं न प्राप्तम् । सर्वे अवदन् - सः भिक्षाटनाय गतः ।
दूरदेशे स्थित्वा सम्भवतः त्वं मां विस्मृतवान् । अन्यजलवायुभिः सह परिवर्तितः । त्वं कथं वा ज्ञातुं
प्रभवे:-

नारीमनसः वेदना कियती ? स्नेहार्थं नारी कियदातुरा कियती च उन्मादिनी, न
त्वमवगमिष्यति । (P. 43)

Nilañjanā underwent a radical change after her conversion from a Brahmin girl into a Jain Svetambari. Not only were her physical appearances different, but her behavioural traits also transformed over a period of time.

अद्य किन्तु सा उपासिका । निरतमुपासते । आभरणाय लोभो नास्ति । यौवनार्थमनुचिन्ता
नास्ति । सौन्दर्यकृते भ्रूक्षेपो नास्ति । एतादृक् परिवर्तनार्थं आत्मदैन्यमपि नास्ति । केवलमुपासना....
साधना.....आराधना । सनातनीयप्रतिमा सा महावीरस्य द्वितीयसंस्कृतिः । (P. 63)

IV.V.V Nikaṣā

Description:

A typical description of the monsoon is described as below. Minute details are brought out by the author through a natural descriptive style.

संध्या अत्र बंध्या । अन्धकारश्च कबन्धः । सुन्दरी तु मन्दोदरी खद्योतिका । शारदीया मञ्जरी
इह क्षणाय स्वप्नजीविनी । अयमेव विशेषः । ततः सैव वारिधारा । लघुनिलयानां सैव ललितलीला ।
तदेव निर्झरलालित्यम् ।

आकाशो मेदुरः ।

मेघो वर्षति । वीथिषु जलप्रवाहो मन्थरः । प्रवाहेऽस्मिन् वालकेलिः चपला । गोमूत्रेषु पल्वली
भवति । निर्झरकुञ्जमद्य आषाढस्य शौचालयः । (P. 2)

The philosophy of life is described after Charaka comes to know that Māyā does not exist in reality and Govinda keeps his sister, Yamunā, in illusion of the character Māyā.

इत्थं जीवनेऽपि भवति । कदा कदा मरीचिका सखीयति । शून्यः प्रियः संजायते । आशासु,
अभिलाषेषु, आवेगेषु च प्रियाकृतिः हृदयमालिङ्गति । प्रीतये मनसि दौर्बल्यं सृजति । ततो नयने
आत्मीयं भवति केवलम् आकृतेः अवतरणम् । अत्र अवतरणं अत्रैव आलिङ्गनम् । आलिङ्गने च
शान्तिः अमृतमाहरति । (P. 27)

Scene:

The downfall in societal values is clearly illustrated in the following scene, where Yamunā thinks about having Charaka as his son-in-law for her imaginary daughter Māyā. The point to be noted is that Yamunā forgets about Charaka's help in rendering her well and she seems to be more indulged as an opportunist who sees Charaka as a prospective groom for her daughter rather than a helpful young doctor. It is observed that Yamunā decides on her own about Charaka without having the courtesy of a buy-in from the latter.

गोविन्दः अतीतमेव रोमन्थयन् मन्त्रमग्नः । इतस्ततो जल्पन्ती यमुना आगम्य निकटे यष्टिं
स्थापितवती ।

- कदा माया आगमिष्यति ?

- गृहं तु अद्यावधि न संपूर्णम् । आगम्य सा कुत्र निवसते ?
- किमर्थं न सम्पादयसि ?
- एतदर्थं धनमपेक्षते किल ? समयोऽपि अपेक्षते ।
- वृद्धकालेऽस्मिन् किमर्थम् इयदायित्वं वहसि ?
- तर्हि किं कुर्याम् ?
- चरकोऽयम् अभिरूपः । मायार्थम् अवश्यम् उपयुक्तः । उभयोः विवाहव्यवस्थां कथं न करोषि? यदा स अस्माकं जामाता भविष्यति तदा सर्वमपि दायित्वं स्वीकरिष्यति । आवयोः पोषणे च न काऽपि चिन्ता स्यात् ।
- तदर्थमपि समयः आवश्यकः । चरकस्य सम्मतिश्च अपेक्षते ।
- चरकः नूनं सम्मतो भविष्यति । प्रथमतो मायामत्र आनय । (P. 22)

Summary:

The author summarizes Mīnākṣī's history in a nutshell. The relevance of the positioning of stars in the life of Mīnākṣī is also hinted by the author:

मीनाक्षी तु आत्मना संन्यासिनी । आध्यात्मिकस्तरे तस्याः संघर्षः अद्यापि अविच्छिन्नः ।
आशा तस्या महति – “सर्वमतिक्रान्तुं शक्यते” । तथापि अतीतघटना भयप्रदा । शनिमहादशायां सः
(पतिः) स्वर्गतः । गावः मृताः । सूची मृतप्राया अभूत् । उपार्जनं नष्टम् । स्वयमपि चिन्तया

प्रेतप्रतिमा संजाता । अद्यापि शनिदशा विगता इति न आश्वस्ति –“संसारेऽस्मिन् अस्मादृशानां विपर्ययार्थमेव शनिः अवतरति” । (P. 19)

Charaka's accomplishments are summarized by the author through a description of the people's feelings towards him. People greet him with honour and sense of gratitude.

चरकः कर्मस्थानं संप्राप्त । सः प्रसन्नः । उदभिदां पाकरस-प्रभावेषु रोग इह क्रमशो न्यूनीभवति । जनानां कृतज्ञतासु सः प्रभाववान् संजायते । अद्यत्वे रोगोपशमनाय न कश्चित् तम् आह्वयति । परं सम्मानदानाय प्रतिदिनं द्वारे जनमेला भवति । मार्गे उपमार्गे च सर्वेषां नमोवचनेषु विनम्रकार्तज्ञं तस्य सौजन्यं वर्धयति । अद्यत्वे सर्वतो निमन्त्रणम् । सर्वत्र बन्धुभावः । सर्वत्र च मित्रस्य चक्षुषा तस्य कृति समीक्षा । (P. 24)

IV.V.VI Oum Śāntiḥ

Description:

The author describes Candrā's making up for an occasion as follows:

परिवेशं विजनयति मध्याह्नस्य तापप्रखरता । प्रहरमलसयति शिथिलकाकलिः । पवनस्य मन्दविलासे पर्णविभा तेजस्क्रियामात्मसात् करोति । निजप्रकोष्ठे चन्द्रा वेशसज्जायां विमग्ना । परिचारिका यथोक्तं व्यवस्थापयति । इत्थं प्रतिदिनं निजसज्जीकरणे चन्द्राया दिवसस्य अर्धं व्यत्येति । अपरार्धं केवलम् इतस्ततः संचरणेन समाप्यते । नैके बन्धवः..... नैकाः सख्यः..... । तस्याः कर्मधारायां केवला उत्सवस्य टिप्पणी दैनन्दिनीपृष्ठम् अलंकरोति । अद्य समारोहे आतिथ्यम्

..... श्वः उत्सवस्य उद्घाटनम् परश्वः आयोजनम्अपरश्वः उद्यापने साभापत्यम्

अन्यदा सखीविवाहे सौजन्यसाक्षात्कारः - एवं कर्मव्यसने चन्द्रा अद्यत्वे महीयसी अभिजाता ।

(P. 58)

The start of a day when Chandanswāmi goes out for work is symbolically described as follows:

महानगरस्य गगने धूसरसूर्यास्तस्य रंगलेखा महाकालस्य क्लान्तस्मितमिव प्रतीयते ।
मार्गदीपाली दिनस्य प्रतिभासं प्रस्तौति । यानरवः व्यापृतेः उपसंहारं सूचयति । विपणी प्रत्यग्रा
प्रतीयते । चन्दनस्वामी गृहान्निर्गतः । (P. 12)

Scene:

A car scene is presented wherein the minds of the characters are read aloud. Both Candrā and Mahendra are immersed in the thoughts of obtaining Chandanswāmi's property. The scene gives an idea about what is going on in the minds of various people and how each character is engrossed in material thoughts.

यानं चालयति महेन्द्रः । चन्द्रा पार्श्वे उपविष्टा । उभयस्य मुखे मौनभावः । उभौ निजचिन्तायां
विमग्नौ । चन्द्रा चिन्तयति – यदि सम्पत्तिः अस्य करगता भवेत् तर्हि अस्यैव इच्छानुसारम् अहमपि
क्रीडनकं स्याम् । यदि अहम् अधिकारिणी स्याम् तर्हि यथा वदिष्यामि तथाऽयं करिष्यति ।

महेन्द्रश्चिन्तयति – मम नाम्ना तु चन्दनस्वामी कदापि इच्छापत्रं न करिष्यति । नूनं स
कन्यानाम्ना सर्वं करिष्यति । एतद् भवतु । ततः कन्याया वधः.... । तदनु पिता स्वयमेव मरिष्यति ।

संप्रति चन्द्रायाः मनसि सन्देहः अडकुरितः – महेन्द्रो न प्रेमी महेन्द्रः। संप्रति सः
सम्पत्तिलोलुपः। (P. 85)

The death scene of Cakradhara is quite touching. The use of words is fully in line with the description of the scene. A sense of parting of a soul with another is highlighted apart from the physical partition of the soul from the body.

समयेऽस्मिन् चक्रधरस्य करं शिथिलभावेन मातुश्चरणोपरि न्यपतत्। एतद् विलोक्य विक्रमः
उच्चैः विलपितुमारब्धः। चक्रधरः मातुरङ्गे चिराय नेत्रद्वयं न्यमीलत्।

सोमनाथः चक्रधरस्य चरणोपरि मस्तकं निधाय विलप्य च वदति।

- श्रीमन्.....! श्रीमन्.....! दोषस्तु ममैव

चन्द्रा स्तब्धा। वृद्धा धरा तटस्था। मन्दरः स्थाणुः। समयेऽस्मिन् यानागमनमभिलक्ष्य
ग्रामात् पुष्कला जनाः तत्र सम्मिलिताः। सर्वेषां मुखमण्डले विषादस्य ग्लानिः। हाहाकारमयवचनेषु
केवलं चक्रधरस्य नाम श्रूयते।

चक्रधरः चिराय शान्तः।

विलापं संयम्य चन्द्रा विक्लवतया गम्भीरा। ग्राममुख्याः चक्रधरस्य अन्त्येष्टिनिमित्तं पुर
आगताः। चन्द्रा उत्तराधिकारस्य दायं न्यभालयत्। मधुपुरग्रामः चक्रधरस्य अन्तिमदर्शनमकरोत्।

अग्निः हव्यमगृह्णात् । पञ्चमहाभूतेषु चक्रधरः सम्मिलितः । भस्मावशेषं समचिनोत् चन्द्रा । संप्रति
चक्रधरः तस्याः कृते कश्चित् शिखरपुरुषः स शान्तेः ईश्वरः । (P. 118)

Summary:

Dr.Dash has carefully used the words in summarizing facts so that they aid the plot construction. For example, Mahendra's character, Candrā's liking for the former, Chandanaswāmī's feelings, traitor of her wife, his differently abled son - are all summarized as follows:

चन्द्रामहेन्द्रयोः संपर्कस्य परिणामविषये चिन्तितः चन्दनस्वामी । चन्द्रा मनोऽनुगामिनी ।
महेन्द्रः चतुरो जालिकः । विना योग्यतां सः अधिकारी । विना श्रमं स विलासी । तस्य
संपत्तिसमाकलनमोहं सम्यक् जानाति चन्दनस्वामी । कदाचित् स तमपि बहिष्करिष्यतीति
सन्देहपन्नः चन्दनस्वामी व्यथितः ।

इतः स्मृतिं विमथ्नाति विश्वासघातिनी पत्नी । अन्तःकरणं विकलयति विकलाङ्गो मूकपुत्रः ।
अनुभवं विदहति पार्श्ववर्त्तिनी दुहिता चन्द्रा । भाविकालं पीडयति क्रयविक्रयव्यापारसीमा ।
चन्दनस्वामी अशान्तिवलयतो मुक्तिं कामयते । (P. 12)

IV.V.VII Pratipad

Description:

The story begins with a description of the physical environment of the plot. A river, the shore, a tree, the introduction of the main character Udbhava are all described by the author.

क्षीणतोया नदी । विस्तीर्णा वालुका । तस्मिन् एकः मार्गः । तत्र च एकः द्रुमः । तम् अभि
लक्ष्य आगच्छति उद्धवः । करे जलधानी । मनसि प्रश्नः - वालुकायां द्रुमः ? अणुमयी वालुका ।

(P. 1)

Scene:

A powerful scene is constructed towards the formation of a climax in the novel, when Mānā puts in all her courage to shut the doors for Milinda, when she finds him hitting their child.

मिलिन्दनिकटे अस्याः शान्तेः मूल्यं नास्ति । शान्तिः विदूरलक्ष्या सामाजिकानां दुष्कृतितः
एव समाजस्य दुर्गतिः भवति । प्रथमतो दुष्कृतिनाशः । ततो दुर्गतिः निरस्यति । एतादृक् चिन्तासु
वासरः तस्य धूसरः । गृहम् उपेक्षते । पत्नीप्रति उदास्ते । पुत्रं प्रति च निर्यत्नः । (P. 34)

Summary:

After Mānā's episode of parting with her husband and hitting her child, the author uses the power of summary in order to change the scene and divert the reader's mind to Udbhava. The author mentions that one year had passed and Udbhava had completed all rituals. Here, summary is used to take forward the novel and create a bridge in reader's mind.

उज्ज्वलप्रत्यूषस्य अद्य विजयः ।

हस्तद्वयेन सञ्चितं द्रव्यं सहस्रहस्तेषु वितरितम्। अन्तःकरणस्य मन्तव्ये गन्तव्यं
सत्यानुव्रतम्। निरवतरणयात्रापथे न पुनरग्रे काचित् फला फलयोः सूची। कर्मतर्पणमेव सेवा।
आरब्धव्यम्। समाप्तव्यम्। उद्धवः स्वयं तु परिपार्श्वस्य संस्पर्श एव।

पित्रोः सपिण्डीकरणं समाप्तम्। प्रथमवार्षिकश्राद्धः सम्पन्नः। प्राचीनाकषर्णं किञ्चित् अद्य
विरतम्। शेषाश्च सतीर्थमभूत्। अन्तःकरणस्य मन्त्रेषु महासत्यं सरलायितम्। (P. 49)

IV.V.VIII Rtam

Description:

During Subhāṅka's stay in the hermitage, the author describes as follows:

इदानीमपि शुभाङ्कः अनुभवति - उद्यानेऽस्मिन् नाना पुष्पाणि विकसन्ति। सौन्दर्यं वितन्वन्ति।
एषु न गुरुलघुग्लानिः न वा अल्पवृहदभिमानम्। न वा ते परस्परमार्गरोधे स्पर्धालवः। एषु संघर्षो
वर्तते। किन्तु प्रतिपक्षता नास्ति। तथैवाऽत्र निर्झराणां प्रवाहः। ते सदा पुरः सरन्ति। परं न कोऽपि
कस्य मार्गं प्रतिरुणद्धि। (P. 14)

Again, the description of friendship between Subhāṅka and Uparka is brought out by the author as follows:

शुभाङ्कः अत्र प्रियः। पुनश्च बन्धुवत्सलः। उपार्कः तस्य बन्धुः। उभयस्य मनोभावः
संकल्पमूलः। उभयस्य अभिलाषे मौलिकपरीक्षा एव विषयः। यथार्थनिरूपणं तत्त्वम्।

सत्यकामतर्कणायां सस्कांरस्य कर्कशप्रसरः उभयोरभिप्राये भूरिभारः । उपार्कस्तु चञ्चलः । आश्रमस्य
आभोगः तस्य प्रेरणास्त्रोतः । (P. 12)

Uparka's financial well being after his marriage with Avidhā is described as follows:

संप्रति उपार्क उपकण्ठस्य जामाता । स प्राचुर्यस्य अधिकारी । संपत्तेश्च प्रभुः । स एव
उपकण्ठस्य भाविजीवननिमित्तं प्रतिश्रुतिः । अभिधायाश्च तीर्थभूः । तस्य मनोविनोदाय परितो
विलाससामग्रीसम्मुखे पूर्णप्राणा भोगविभव अभिधा । ऐश्वर्यसामग्री बहुवर्णयन्तः परिचारका
निजपाश्वे सुखभुषणाः । (P. 52)

The author describes a mother's thoughtfulness for her son when Shannodevī is seen to be thinking about the coronation of her son, Subhāṅka.

पूजाप्रकोष्ठे विनयावनता शन्नोदेवी । पुत्रस्वस्तिकामनातले तस्याः स्मृतिरोमन्थः
अतीतग्रासी । शाश्वतयोजने पौर्णमासी सैव प्राचीनप्रमा । दिवाप्रवाहः नामान्तरे महाकालः । तत्र
आशाबन्धो नाम जीवनधारणार्थं कतिपयकल्पनाराशिः । सूत्रपरामर्शे तु सेयं धारा अनन्ता ।
सूक्ष्मतानिरीक्षणे शन्नोदेवी आत्मविस्मृता । (P. 83)

Scene:

When Avidhā, the heroine of the novel meets Uparka, the scene is carefully grafted by the author to represent a sense of friendliness at the first meeting, which in due course, turns to romance.

अभिधा अपृच्छत्

- भवतः परिचयः?
- अहम् उपार्कः ।
- अरे....., भवान्....वनवासी.....?
- नहि, आश्रमवासी ।
- हम् ..., सम्यक् स्मरामि । तस्यैव उपवनस्य अन्तिमाश्रमे खलु?
- नहि, प्रथमाश्रमे ।
- मन्ये, उपवनस्य अन्त्याश्रमः सः ।
- नहि, अन्तिकाश्रमः ।
- भवेत्... । सर्वं तु विस्मृतं मया । इदानीं स्मारितम् । अस्तु... । कथं वर्तते भवतः सुहृत्?
- सम्यक् ।
- अतीव चतुरः सः ।
- सत्यम् ।
- भवानपि तथा ।

अभिधा अहसत् ।

- अस्तु ... । तमानीय कदाचित् आगच्छतु ।

- नूनम्...आगमिष्यामः ।(P. 25)

The scene of a shattered friendship is described in the following scene by Dr.Dash. The scene is built around the pride of Uparka and the helplessness of Subhāṅka. Uparka does not hesitate in handing over his marriage invitation card to Subhāṅka proudly, very much knowing that how much it would hurt Subhāṅka. Right from Uparka's entry till his exit, his arrogance is noticeable. The imagery that develops in Subhāṅka's mind can be well imagined by the readers. The scene is so powerful, that the readers very well understand the effect of the scene on the subsequent relationship between the two friends.

उपार्कः दाम्भिकभावेन अवदत् ।

- किं पराजयो न स्वीकृतः ?
- अभिप्रायस्ते आकलयितुं न शक्यते ।
- किम्...आशा न पूर्णा ?
- केयम् आशा...

शुभाङ्को विस्मितः । कथमद्य उपार्कः दाम्भिकभावेन वदति ? विजयी इव उपहसति ? को वा

पदार्थः लब्धः? विचिन्त्य सः अपृच्छत् ।

- किमपि त्वया लब्धमद्य ?
- सत्यम् ।
- सत्यम्?

- तदेव...यद् वाञ्छितम् ।

- किं तत्... ?

- तदेव सत् । तद् हि प्रीणाति । तदेव भाति ।

- किं साक्षात् ?

- साक्षात् अभिधा ।

उपार्कः भावाविष्टः - इयमादिस्पन्दनस्य स्थूलाकृतिः । इयमेव वचनस्य मधुरप्रकरणे विक्लितः ।

इयं च वितरणपरिभाषायां जीवनविभूतिः । इयं पुनः सहभावे विनिमयस्य प्रियप्रकृतिः... ।

वेद्यान्तरजडः शुभाङ्कः ।

उपार्कः निमन्त्रणपत्रं प्रसारितवान् ।

- मम विवाहः अभिधया सह ।

शुभाङ्कः पुनश्च स्तब्धः ।

- किमस्मिन् गुरुः.....?

- ते तु सम्मताः । तेषामाशीर्वादोऽपि मया गृहीतः ।

सोच्छ्वासं शुभाङ्कः स्वीकृतवान् ।

- भवतु.... । शुभमस्तु ।
- नान्यथा चिन्तनीयम् । आगन्तव्यम्....

उपार्कः उपाहसत् ।

शुभाङ्कः क्षीणमहसत् ।

- अस्तु.... । स्वीकृतम्.... ।
- उपार्कः प्रस्थितः । (P. 45)

The novel 'Rtam' has an element of suspense wherein all the characters are brought together by the author to form an apt climax. The expectations built by the author in the readers' minds for the coronation of Subhāṅka are given a subtle twist when Avani cracks the suspense by reminding Kulabhadra of his promise. Kulabhadra had earlier promised to Avani's father that Avani's son would inherit his full property. Also, Shannodevī had once promised that she would sacrifice Subhāṅka on a full moon day of the *Vaisakh* month. All eyes opened on the path of truth. Ananta was coronated while Subhāṅka went along with Alekh as a monk away from family life. The climax turned out to be quite an anticlimax, since the author did not establish that the path of truth treaded by humans create immortal victories. Instead, Subhāṅka was seen to drift away from family life, possibly in search of the immortal truth.

Summary:

The novel Rtam does not use summary as a powerful tool. However, bits and pieces are seen to be scattered across the storyline. The first example is seen in describing Subhāṅka's growing up in the hermitage.

शुभाङ्कोऽद्य पूर्णयुवा । इदानीं स गुरुकुले निवसति । आगामिवर्षे समावर्त्तनं समाप्य
प्रत्यागमिष्यति । किंतु ज्येष्ठदेवी इच्छति अस्मिन् वर्षे तस्य विवाहो भवतु । (P. 10)

The drift between Subhāṅka and Uparka is summarized by the author as follows:

उपार्कः संशयात्मा । मनसि तस्य अविश्वासः । पूर्वभावे शुभाङ्कः इदानीं न आत्मीयः ।
उभयस्य व्यवधानं क्रमशो दीर्घयिते । आलापे उभयस्य मनोभावः सामञ्जस्यं न वहति । नेत्रमिलनमपि
प्रतिबध्नाति काऽपि अलक्ष्या अनुरक्तिः । आकुलद्वक्पथे उभयस्य आश्रुतिः अतीतविषया । प्रतिश्रुतिः
पिहितकाया । निजमाया उभयस्य जाया । व्यवधाने सैव दुरत्यया । (P. 43)

IV.V.IX Śaśirekhā

Description:

Śrāvaṇī's feelings are described in detail by the author. The beauty of the moon lit night and it's interaction with other natural things creates a philosophical image in Śrāvaṇī's mind. The details of murmuring of old leaves of a Peepal tree, wind enjoying Śrāvaṇī's hairs, a portion of her sari playing with the Tulsi plants is captured by the author beautifully.

पवनस्पर्शो वासन्तिकः ।

श्रावणी मुग्धा । दूरे किमपि न दृश्यते । परं तत्र तमो नास्ति । अदूरेऽपि किमपि न
विलोक्यते । अत्र च प्रकाशप्रतिबन्धको नास्ति । सर्वमत्र प्रतीतिधूसरम् । सर्वमिह आवेशपाण्डुरम् ।
सर्वं च बोधविलोलम् । अधीरा श्रावणी आकाशमपश्यत् । तत्र लावण्यनिविडः चन्द्रः । परितः

शशिरेखा..... । सैव रजनीदिवसयोः गहनाऽभिज्ञाने यौगपद्यभूमिका । स्मिताधरयोः कवोष्णमिश्ररागे
सा तु साक्षात् आश्लेषहृदस्य अयत्नस्मारिका । (P. 19)

The detailing exercise done by Dr.Dash in describing the dilapidated condition of the school set up by Induketan is evident from the following paragraph. The description is such that it creates an image in the minds of the readers. The description easily lets one understand the extremity of the situation.

श्रीमुखः चकितः । विद्यालयस्तु क्षयावशेष एव । अर्धभग्नभित्तयः इतस्ततः शृङ्गायन्ते । तत्र
आरुह्य कतिचन छागा गुल्मानि चर्वन्ति । कुक्कटाः विहरन्ति । मेषाः रोमन्थयन्ति । काकश्च
विरोति । तृणमयः अधः प्रदेशः । तत्राऽपि वत्सतराणां समावेशो मनोहरः । श्रीमुखस्य वचनं
नास्फुरत । (P. 57)

Scene:

The climax scene includes Abhrapad hitting Śrīmukh angrily. Lipsā joined the scene crying loudly and holding Śrīmukh. Seeing the scene of hitting from a distance, Śrāvaṇī suddenly screamed.

Abhrapad heard Śrāvaṇī's shouting mixed with crying and ultimately stopped hitting. Śrīmukh was bleeding heavily. Seeing Śrīmukh's blood stained body, some people came to hit Abhrapad. However, Śrīmukh blocked their path and stood in front of Abhrapad rescuing him. Śrīmukh explained to the people that he is happy because somebody's hitting him turned beneficial for Śrāvaṇī.

The scene brings all the characters together and creates a happy ending with the downfall of vanity.

Summary:

When Śrāvaṇī gets married to Abhṛapad, the author uses the summarizing tool to avoid describing the marriage rituals. The status change of Śrāvaṇī is narrated as the bride of the family...the wife of an aristocrat...the wife of his master...

श्रावणी इदानीं कूलवधूः...अभिजातस्य पत्नी...प्रभोः गृहिणी... । दिनमणिः विमग्नः -
वृक्षमारोपयति जनः । किन्तु वृक्षो यदा महाद्रुमो भवति तदानीं स तमेव प्रणमति । कदाचिदपि
विशादसमये तन्निकटे मनो निवेदनं करोति । तस्य गौरवं गाम्भीर्यं च आकलयन् मुग्धो भवति ।

श्रावणी अत्र नवीना । अभिजातव्यवहारेण सह अपरिचिता । गृहस्य पारम्परिक । (P. 21)

IV.V.X Śikhā

Description:

An entire description of Puri's routine is vivid from the following excerpt:

रजनी ऐषमः पुरीं गत्वा प्रथमतया तत्र कार्तिकव्रतं पालयिष्यति । शरत्पूर्णिमातः
कार्तिकपूर्णिमापर्यन्तं मासावधिवासः । रात्रौ उपवासः । प्रातः तारकास्नानम् । दिवा हरिकीर्तनम् ।
पुनश्च पुराणश्रवणम् । मध्याह्ने विश्रामः । अपराह्णे लघुतीर्थानां भ्रमणम् । तीर्थीभूतपुष्करिणीनां
जलसंग्रहः । ततः स्नानम् । तदनु दीपदानम् । एवं नानाकर्मसम्पादननिमित्तं धनमावश्यकम् ।
(P. 38)

Another description of Vilāsa's condition is made by the author with a touch of socialism. The author describes that although Vilāsa has left his aged father and

widow sister, but he has in mind many poor families. There are millions of aged fathers and lakhs of widow sisters.

किन्तु विलासो युवकः । पार्श्वचराणां वचने स इदानीम् उदीयमानः । तस्य परिवारो नास्ति ।
जनसेवानिमित्तं स गृहं परित्यक्तवान् । तन्निकटे नाद्य वृद्धपिता न वा विधवा भगिनी । किन्तु सहस्रशो
वृद्धपितरः । लक्षशो विधवाभगिन्यः । (P. 28)

Scene:

The climax scene is built by the author towards the end when Vilāsa comes home after his father, Kulamaṇi's death. He has come to know of Murmu having inherited his father's property and is hence very angry and upset with the turn of events. Vilāsa has come after suffering a defeat in the elections. Thus, all the ingredients of developing a scene are carefully grafted by the author.

Thereafter, Vilāsa argues with Murmu through continuous dialogue and ultimately slaps him. Murmu had been a dedicated servant all throughout his life and exclaims:

- दीर्घतरसेवायाः किमिदं मे पारितोषिकम्...? (P. 68)

The scene is touching in the minds of the readers. Thereafter, Rajanī appears at the scene and Vilāsa is ashamed of his actions.

Summary:

The importance of Puri as a place of pilgrimage is emphasized and summarized by the author with the logic that all the family members had earlier visited Puri. The author summarises that गोविन्दमाता, कामिनीमाता, रघोः पितामही,

गोपालस्य मातामही, सनातनस्य मातुलानी, मायाधरस्य पितृष्वसा, गीताया मातृष्वसा, सीता भगिनी, लतायाः भातृजाया - एताः सर्वाः प्रतिवर्षं श्रीक्षेत्रं गच्छन्ति । नटवरस्य प्रपितामही इदानीमपि प्रतिवर्षं पुरीं गच्छन्ति । (P. 39)

IV.V.XI Śitalatṛṣṇā

Description:

After R̥ti's death, the world comes to standstill for R̥twik. The author describes as follows:

... अद्य शून्यताऽपि एका प्राप्तिः । विजनता स्मारकी । उदासता पूज्या । दूरता च निजौभव्या उपायनि । नामस्मृतिः एकैव उपलब्धिः ।

- ऋती.....!

पवनः तस्य शीतलता च - उभयं समकालीनमपि शीतलता सम्यक् अनुभूयते । पवनस्य तादृशः अनुभवः वस्तुतः न भवति । तथैव तव शवः मरणं च । मरणस्य चिह्नमद्य कुत्राऽपि न दृश्यते । शवरावोऽपि मरणरूपमुपस्यापयितुं न शक्नोति । तद्दिनेऽपि नाशकत् । मरणं तु मयि वर्धते इति अनुभवामि । किम्भूता इयमनुभूतिः...? अन्तःकरणे मे अद्य कतिशीतलदृश्यानामनुलेपः, कतिशीतलशब्दानां च प्लुतिविधूतनमेव । (P. 67)

Scene:

The novel Śitalatṛṣṇā is basically composed of a series of scenes. The entire storyline is close knit with encounters between various people and the couple, R̥twik and R̥ti. All these encounters form engrossing scenes. Infact, majority of events are depicted by the author through scenes.

Summary:

The author uses the power of summary in narrating the story of the lost wife of the old man. On being inquired, the new husband responded:

- “ भ्रातः ! वन्याजलेषु प्लवमाना इयं गच्छन्ती आसीत्। अतिकष्टेन सा मया उद्धृता।
उद्धारात् परमपि सा मृतप्राया आसीत्। बहुव्ययेन अनेकपरिश्रमेण च सा स्वस्था अभूत्।
तदानीं तस्याः रोगभुक्तशरीरं मन्त्रिकटे दृष्ट्वा सर्वं मामपावदन्। तथापि तदर्थं समस्तचेष्टा
मे सफला अभूत्। सा जीवनं लब्धवती। तदनु पत्नीरूपेण तामहम् अङ्गीकृतवान्। तां
विहाय अधुनाऽहं जीवितुमपि न शक्नोमि।” (P. 51)

The narrative summary gives a clear picture of the circumstances under which the stranger married the old man's wife.

IV.V.XII Tilottamā

Description:

The serenity of the Chilka Lake is described in the novel, Tilottamā. Such a description, created the platform for the blossoming of romance between Puṣpavallava and Tilottamā. The power of words created a sensitive ambience.

नीलाम्बु ‘चिलिका’ बहुदूरपर्यन्तं विस्तीर्णा। परिसीमापर्यन्तं नयनं न यातुं शक्नोति। दूरे केवलं
धूसर आकाशः। मध्ये कुञ्जटिका। जलराशौ तपनसहस्रम्। जलं लवणाक्तं तथापि बहुविहगाः
सन्तरन्ति। कति च कुञ्जटिकाच्छन्ने गगने चक्रायमाणाः दृश्यन्ते। निकटे मत्स्यरङ्गपक्षी मत्स्यं
लक्ष्यकृत्य जले निमज्जति। पुनरुत्थाय आकाशे पश्यति। अव्यर्थं तस्य संधानम्। (P. 17)

A typical village scene with children surrounding Puṣpavallava is described by the author when he returns to his village. The simplicity of the description draws a picture in the reader's mind. The description of such common scenes gives the author credential of a modern writer.

बालकपरिवेष्टितः पुष्पवल्लभः । स तेषां व्यवहारमवलोक्य हसति कश्चिद् वदति मह्यं देहि
प्रथमतः । अन्य वदति मह्यं प्रथमतः । एवं कोलाहलः संवर्धितः मन्दिरद्वारे । पुष्पवल्लभः अपश्यत्
तेषु केचित् नग्नाः । केचित् अर्धनग्नाः । केषाञ्चित् नासिकातः जलं निर्गच्छति केषाञ्चन नीवीवस्त्रे
अहेतुकी ग्रन्थिः वृत्ति । स उपादिशत् – ‘प्रथमतः नीवीं सज्जीकुरुत । नासतः जलं निष्कासयत ।
पङ्क्तिबद्धाः भवत । ततः प्रसादं दास्यामि ।’ सर्वे तत्परा अभवन् । वामहस्तेन नासां दमयितुं
प्रारब्धाः । (P. 50)

The author also describes the beauty of the Dhauli hills and the history associated with it. The scenic beauty of the foothills, the story of a past war and the transformation of the land into a fertile one are all described in the following paragraph.

‘धउलि’ गिरेः पाददेशः । सरसप्राङ्गणम् । चतुः पार्श्वे सान्द्रवनानी । सुदूरे
श्यामलशस्यक्षेत्राणि । निकटे च शान्ततोया दयानदी । धउलि गिरिः अद्यापि बहुजनानामिति वृत्तं
गोपायति । अत्रैव एकदा महासमरोऽभूत् । बहुजनाः मृताः । बहवश्च जीवन्मृताः । दयानदी तदा
रक्तमुखी आसित् ! अगणितानां वीराणां छिन्नपरिच्छदाः मृदभूताः अस्याः पूलिने । कतीनां
रमणिनाम् अत्रैव अश्रुसंपातः सज्जात इति न कोऽपि सम्यक् वक्तुं शक्नोति । कति परिवाराः अस्याः

गर्भे सलिलसमाधिं प्राप्ताः तदपि वर्णयितुं न शक्यते । किन्तु अद्य सा अपरक्ताधरा । उर्वरा -
ऊर्जस्वला – अनुकम्पाशालिनी । तस्याः करुणादृष्टिः विपिनं सृष्टवती धउलगिरिपाददेशः । तस्याः
सावलीलसलिलं अद्य उपजनयति शस्यानि । गृहे गृहे च आनयति श्रियम् । (P. 59)

Scene:

A romantic scene is presented by the author, when Puṣṭpavallava and Tilottamā are brought together in a garden. The scene also assumes importance as it highlights Nīlimā's jealousy towards the relationship that Puṣṭpa and Tilottamā develops.

तिलोत्तमायाः हस्तं धृत्वा पुष्पवल्लभः चलति पर्वतस्य नतोल्लतप्रदेशः । नीलिमा अन्यौ साकं
आलपति । केचिद् वदन्ति अत्रेदम्, तत्रेयम्, कुत्रायमिति बहुकथा ।

सपदि नीलिमायाः दृष्टिः पुष्पोपरि न्यपतत् । मनस्तस्याः ज्वलदासीत् मुखे हासः तथापि
वर्तते । स्नेहवचनमपि पूर्ववत् संलग्नमधरे । सा पुरःसृता । स्नेहवचनच्छलेन किमपि कथयित्वा
उभयस्य हस्तं स्वहस्तेन धृतवती । पुष्पः मनाक् शङ्कितोऽभूत् । तिलोत्तमायाः सरलं मनः न किमपि
अबुध्यत् । सा अपश्यत् सर्वे भ्रमन्ति । पुष्पाणि पत्राणि च चिन्वन्ति । (P. 21)

IV.V.XIII Visargah

Description:

Nakula's poverty is described by the author in the backdrop of a moonlit night. Each of the members of the family are introduced by the author which gives a glimpse of their respective conditions.

ज्योत्स्नासंचारे रजनी अल्पप्राणा । अलिन्दस्य द्वारदेशे नकुल आसीनः । अङ्गे रुग्णपुत्रो
जीनः सुप्तः । अपरपाश्वर्गे वृद्धपिता कपिलो जपजडः । अविना पाकशालायां काष्ठानि
अग्निसात्करोति । नकुलस्य रोमन्थे तु कन्या ईला पूर्ववत् वास्तल्यं भिक्षते । चिन्तां गम्भीरयति
निमग्नभावः । विषयं निबध्नाति इतिकल्पः । स्मरणं विशादयति पूर्वभूमिका ।

(P. 6)

Scene:

Sukarna rejected Nakula's proposal of taking back Suparnā. An excerpt of Nakula and Sukarna's dialogue is presented in the following intense scene:

- गृहम्? को वत्तते ।
- सुपर्णा । वराकी तत्रैव सीदति ।
- कथं छलयसि? सा तु तव गृहे इति पूर्वं विदितम् ।
- तर्हि, किमभूत् ?
- सा यथा कथयति स्म तथा कृतवती । इदानीं नूनं सुखिनी स्यात् । किञ्चित् गम्भीरभावेन
नकुलः अवदत् –
- किं वक्तुमिच्छसि ?
- सा कुलटा व्यभिचारिणी ।
- सुकर्ण! किमेतत् कथयसि ? विचार्य कथम् । अन्यथा.....
- अन्यथा किं भवेत् ? त्वं गृहात् तां बहिष्करिष्यसि । सा पूर्ववत् । (P. 45)

Summary:

The dilapidated condition of Nakula's village is summarized as follows. Over a period of time, the prosperity of the village had disappeared and life had come to a standstill. The educated were undermined by the uneducated and the youth were ill directed.

सम्प्रति ग्रामस्तु श्रीहीनः। जीवनधारा अत्र विपर्यस्ता। संस्कृतिश्च नष्टा। परम्परा
अन्धता। अविश्वासो विवर्धितः। शिक्षिता अत्र तस्कराः। अशिक्षिताः चौराः। भद्राः शोषकाः।
सभ्याः सर्वभक्षकाः। भ्रष्टाश्च धर्मरक्षकाः। विपथगामिनी युवकाः। महावृक्षेऽत्र निष्पर्णा सर्वाऽपि
शाखा। (P. 51)

IV.VI Delineation of Sentiments (*Rasas*)

Sentiments are produced by the combination of stimuli (*Vibhāva*), responses (*Anubhāva*) and complementary transitory states (*Vyabhicāri*)²⁶.

The cause or stimulus for the *Rasa* is presented through *Ālambana Vibhāva* comprising the hero, heroine and other important characters and *Uddīpana Vibhāva* comprising the auxiliary causes or stimulating circumstances for manifestation of the basic inner state.

The responses depict *Sthāyi Bhāvas*, the manifestations of physical responses and *Sāttvika Bhāvas*, the involuntary psycho-mental responses. The *Vyabhicāri Bhāvas* (also called *Sāncāri Bhavas*) are the complementary transitory states or emotions which accompany the *Sthāyi Bhāvas*.

Dr. Dash has touched upon many *Rasas* in his novels to leave a lasting impression in the minds of the readers.

²⁶ Mehta, Tarla - *Sanskrit Play Production in Ancient India*, P.83

I. *Hāsyā Rasa*

The *Hāsyā Rasa* has its origin from the permanent mood of laughter. Since, the author has dealt primarily with social issues with pressing needs, not much of laughter is seen in Dr. Dash's novels.

However, at one place in the novel *Śaśirekhā*, there is a dialogue between a blind person and a deaf person. The repetition of the deaf beggar to assure his hearing is comically presented by the author.

एकः अन्धः । अपरो बधिरः । उभय साक्षीकृत्य श्रीमुख च दर्शयित्वा स भिक्षुः गर्जति ।

- पश्य, भो! एष मद्यपः अस्मान् बहिष्कर्तुं मागतः ।

वधिर उक्तवान् ।

- किमुक्तम् ? वाद्यम्?अद्य कस्य विवाहः?

- अरे.....! वाद्यं नहि । मद्यपः ।

- पादपः ? किमभूत् ?

- धिक्..... मूर्खः..... वधिरः.....

- खदिरेण किम्.....? ताम्बुलं कुत्र?

अन्धो वारणपुरःसरं कुपितः ।

- विरम..... । स जनविषये कथयति ।

- भोजनविषये.....? कुत्र....?

वधिरः प्रहृष्यति ॥ (P.50)

A natural flavour is brought into the novel with the use of some comedy amidst a serious plot. Here, the blind person and deaf persons are the *Ālambana Vibhāva* and laughter is the *Sthāyi Bhāva*.

II. *Adbhuta Rasa*

The *Adbhuta Rasa* is found in many novels with ‘wonder’ or ‘surprise’ as the lasting feeling (*Sthāyi Bhāva*).

In the novel, *Āvartam*, Urvaśi mentioned that she never imagined that Indra would win the war in a bloody fashion. Indra became angry. He forcefully attacked Urvaśi. Urvaśi was surprised.

इन्द्रः क्रोधाविष्टः संजातः । रुधिरतृष्णा तस्य प्रबला अभूत् । बलात् उर्वशीमाक्रमत । सहसा च हिंस्रशृङ्गारी समभूत् ।

उर्वशी निश्चला । समस्तं बलं तस्याः पराहतमासीत् । (*Oum Śāntiḥ*, P.203)

The feeling of being surprised by sudden attack of Indra rendered Urvaśi to become speechless and motionless. Indra and Urvaśi are the *Ālambana Vibhāva* while Indra’s forceful attack is the *Uddīpana Vibhāva*.

In the novel, *Pratipad*, when Udbhava returned to the orchard, he was surprised in finding his slippers and Mānā’s kohl pot in the orchard alongside Mukunda’s flute.

अन्तिमवारं सः कूर्टिं प्रविष्टः । अन्विष्यन् इव इतस्ततः समचरत् । सहसा निजपादुकाम् आविष्कृत्य सः चमत्कृतः । पादुकोपरि मानायाः कज्जलमञ्जूषा निहिता । पादुकातले च मुकुन्दस्य मूरली सयत्नं स्थापिता । दृश्यमिदं मनोहरं खेदावहमपि । उद्धवः विस्मितः । (P.55)

Udbhava is the *Ālambana Vibhāva* while the orchard is the *Uddīpana Vibhāva*.

In the novel, Aruṇā, when Varuna finds that all the pictures are stolen, he is surprised.

वरुणो निजस्थः अभूत् । परं सहसा हतवाक् संजातः । तस्य चित्रफलकं चोरितम् । कं वा प्रक्ष्यति? सर्वे साधवः प्रतीयन्ते । सर्वे निजकर्मलग्ना दृश्यन्ते । यथारीति सर्वेषां प्रचलनं गमनमागमनमपि । को वा अत्र चौरः? कस्य वा कर्मणि चित्रफलके ? (*Oum Śāntih*, P.129)

In all the above cases, the author has nicely delineated the *Adbhuta Rasa* successfully.

III. *Bhayānaka Rasa*

The *Bhayānaka Rasa* is a result of the permanent mood *Bhaya* (fear).

In the novel, Tilottamā, when Bhāgyadatta and Nilimā were chased by the tribal men, both of them ran for their lives through the thorny path. It was a fearful situation when the tribals started shooting arrows at them.

भाग्यदत्तश्च तान् सविस्मयमपश्यत् । स जानाति एते निष्ठुराः । निर्ममभावेन उभयं हनिष्यन्ति । तस्य चिन्तयितुं समयो नासीत् । सः नीलिमायाः करं धृत्वा प्रधावितुमयतत । उभौ आत्मरक्षार्थे आप्राणं प्रधावितौ उभयं च अनुसृत्य बर्बराः धनःशरहस्तेन प्रधावन्ति । विकटालचीत्कारं च कुर्वन्ति । तथापि तौ आप्राणं प्रधावतः । मार्गस्तु कण्टकमयः । पार्वतीयप्रदेशः नतोन्नतः । उभावपि स्वलतः । पुनरुत्थाय गच्छतः । चरणाणि च रुधिराक्तानि ।

कुत्र कुत्र च निपतनकारणात् हस्तात् शरीरात् च शोणितं निर्गच्छति । क्रमशः चरणानि शिथिलीभवन्ति ।..... समग्रशरीरं विद्धमभूत् सायकैरेव । शरमयशरीरद्वयं छिन्नतरुवर इव शिलामये प्रदेशे निपतितम् । शिला च रक्तमयी अभूत् । सद्यच्छिन्नकुसुममिव मुखद्वयं उज्ज्वलासीत् । यन्त्रणा च सञ्चरिता आसीत् तनुद्वये । चरणानि द कम्पितानि आसन् । (P.68)

Bhāgyadatta and Nīlimā are the *Ālambana Vibhāva*. The shouting of the tribal men is a *Vyabhicāri Bhāva*, while the pain and trembling are *Sāttvika Bhāvas*. The element of fear is delineated to create a lasting impression with the readers.

IV. *Sānta Rasa*

The *Sānta Rasa* is a result of the permanent mood of leisure.

In the novel, *Añjaliḥ*, the author delineates as follows:

अवकाशः रविवासरीयः । अद्य विद्यालये विरामः । कर्मकराणां विश्रामः । कर्मप्रवाहः शिथिलः । जन उदासीनः । आवेगः अधस्तनः । उद्वेगः किञ्चिदूनः । (P.6)

Here, Sunday is the *Uddīpana Vibhāva*.

In the novel, *Oum Śāntiḥ*, an early morning scene is described which gives an image of a tranquil atmosphere.

प्रत्यूषप्रहरः शान्तः ।

नित्यकर्मणि संलग्नो वृत्तिर्यत्र विक्रमः। चक्रधरः तत् सर्वं पूर्वं संपाद्य प्रार्थनामग्नः।
दूरनीहारिकामपसार्य पूर्वाकाशः भास्वरायितुमुपक्रान्तः। प्रत्यूषनक्षत्रस्य स्पृहणीयविभा
उपरमविम्लाना। निवारणमूलकधर्मविशेष मनः संलग्नं चक्रधरस्य। (P.50)

The early morning is the *Uddīpana Vibhāva*. The praying denotes *Sāttvika Bhāvas*.

V. *Karuṇa Rasa*

The *Karuṇa Rasa* is a result of the permanent mood of sorrow and lamentation.

The novel, *Aruṇā* begins with a sorrowful tone.

वरुणः विरागी। मनसि अनुतापः। चिन्तने वितृष्णा.....नहि, न पुनः सः प्रत्यागमिष्यति।
यत्र स्नेहस्य प्रकाशो नास्ति, ममतायां माधुरी नास्ति, यत्र च गृहमिति पदार्थो नास्ति तत्र पुनः
किमर्थमवस्थितिः ? (*Oum Śāntiḥ*, P.123)

In the novel, *Tilottamā*, when Puṣpa enters the maternity home and inquires about Chhandā, the nurse remains silent and then Puṣpa sees Chhandā's dead body covered in white cloth. His surprise is brought out by the author in the following paragraph.

पुष्पः छन्दायाः प्रसूतिसदनं अभिधावितवान्। सः अपश्यत् - बन्धुजनाः मूकीभूताः।
यैश्वर्यगुणसेविका तत्र प्रतिक्षते। पुष्पः तामपृच्छत् - 'भगिनि ! छन्दा मम कीदृशी अधुना वृत्तिर्यत्र ?'

सेविका निरुत्तरा आसीत्। व्यग्रपुष्पवल्लभः द्वारमपावृत्य अपश्यत् - छन्दायाः मृतकलेवरं
धवलवसनावृत्तम्। स तारस्वरेण 'छन्दा' इति चीत्कृत्य न्यपतत्। (P.83)

Puṣpa and Chhandā are the *Ālambana Vibhāva* while the covered dead body is the *Uddīpana Vibhāva*. The speechlessness of the nurse and relatives is a *Vyabhicāri Bhāva*.

VI. Śṛṅgāra Rasa

The *Śṛṅgāra Rasa* is a result of the permanent mood called Rati (love). The author has delineated the erotic sentiments of Sambhoga-Śṛṅgāra (love in union) in plentiful across his novels.

In the novel, *Śitalatṛṣṇā*, the flute player Mohan and his beloved Basumati, indulges in union.

- अहम् आगतवती । प्रतीक्षा ते समाप्ता तु ?
- नहि ... नहि ... वसुमति ...! प्रतीक्षायाः अन्तः कुत्र ? तव अप्राप्तिः यथा मे व्यथादायिनी,
प्राप्तिरपि ते तथा ।
- त्वामङ्गे निधाय, वारम्बारं च आलिंग्य नाहं सम्यक् परितृप्तो भवामि । न वा त्वां
परित्यज्य सुखेन स्थातुमत्र शक्नोमि । तव आगमने पिपासा मे अधिका भवति । गमने
तु अधिकतरा भवति ।
- सम्यक् उत्तम् । अहमपि न संतुष्टा, मोहन ...! वंशीस्वनं ते निरतं मामुन्मादयति ।

- एहि...एहि...वसुमति! त्वदर्थं वंशीस्वने मे पिपासामूर्च्छना । त्वदर्थमेव प्रतीक्षा मे अपूर्णा ।
- अङ्गमाकर्षय...मोहन...!
- एहि...वसुमति! आत्मनि मे विलीयस्व... ।

आलिङ्गने उभौ बद्धौ । पत्रशय्यायां संध्या उत्तीर्णप्राया आसीत् । दिग्भ्यः वृष्टिः उदीयमाना ।

विद्युत् प्रकाशवाहिनी । पवनः क्षिप्रतरः । प्रवाहः तीव्रतरः । (P.43)

Mohan and Basumati are the *Ālambana Vibhāva*. The erotic sentiment is delineated by the author which adds beauty to the plot in a matured fashion.

In the novel, Āvartam, Vṛtta went to follow a young Jājāvari and got excited on looking at the bare body of the girl.

पर्णपात्रं हस्ते धृत्वा उत्थितः वृत्रः । अभिनवा केलिमग्ना । निर्मलजले स्निग्धशरीरं तस्या उज्ज्वलम् । तथापि प्रत्यङ्गस्य विवरणं सम्यक् मानसमानेतुं न शक्यते । वृत्रः नवीनां पश्यति । रुधितमपि पश्यति । परमुभयस्य सहयोगं स्थापयितुं न शक्नोति । हृदये क्रमशः विकारः जायते । केयम्.....? उषाः वा? निशा..... वा? अथवा उभयस्य दिशा..... वा?

वृत्रः अपसर्तुमचेष्टत । तस्य पादशब्दं नवीना श्रुतवती । सा सहसा जलादुत्थिता । वृत्रः चकितो भूत्वा तत्रैव स्थिरः । अग्रे दण्डायमाना नग्ननवीना । एका जलीया यायावरी । दीर्घकेशान् वक्षसि ग्रन्थीकृत्य आक्रान्तुमुपक्रमते । भयङ्करी सा भयप्रतिमा विश्वग्रासमिच्छति । परमस्याः वयः

कियत्? अल्पीयसाऽपि वयसा इयती भीषणा? अथवा आकृतिः वयसः न प्रकृतपरिचयः। अपिच नवीनानिकटे वयः प्रश्न न समीचीनः। (*Oum Śāntiḥ*, P.177)

Vṛtta and the young Jājāvari are the *Ālambana Vibhāva* while the naked bathing of the young Jājāvari is the *Uddīpana Vibhāva*. Vṛtta's excitement denotes the *Sāttvika Bhāvas* while the young Jajvari's embarrassment denotes a *Vyabhicāri Bhāva*.

VII. *Raudra Rasa*

The *Raudra Rasa* is a result of the *Sthāyi Bhāva* of anger.

In the novel, Śikhā, when, Kulamaṇi returned from pilgrimage carrying holy water in a container, instead of taking blessings, Vilāsa sarcastically mentioned that he would have been happier if Kulamaṇi had brought the container full with money. Kulamaṇi was furious and expelled Vilāsa on hearing his remark.

कुलमणिः अगर्जत्।

धूर्त.....! निशाचर.....! इयान् ते साहसः? किमहं ते वाणिज्यस्थली.....? किमहं ते उत्पादनशीला शिल्पसस्थां ? अथवा ते वचस्करः ? यत्त्वं वदेः तदहं करिष्यामि ? नय ते धनम्। त्वत्तः जलमपि ग्रहीतुं नेच्छामि। याहि..., शीघ्रं गृहं पतित्यज। (P.10)

Kulamaṇi and Vilāsa are the *Ālambana Vibhāva* while the sarcastic remark made by Vilāsa is the *Uddīpana Vibhāva*. The feeling of anger is effectively delineated by the author in the above excerpt.

IV.VII Figures of Speech (Alamkāra)

The author, belonging to the modern era, has selectively used figures of speech instead of the widespread use evident in the classical period. Some of them are listed below.

1. उपमा –

- i. विमलस्य वचनं सागरस्य लहरी इव आगत्य तस्याः मनसः कलुषं धवयति । (*Añjaliḥ*, P.9)
- ii. विकलाङ्ग इव निजक्षतं प्रदर्श्य धनसम्मानभिक्षा तस्याः रुचिविरुद्धा । (*Añjaliḥ*, P.16)
- iii. अस्थि इव निर्वाणमपि मनुष्यस्य कामनावासनादिषु प्रलीनं वर्तते । (*Madhuyānam*, P.2)
- iv. म्लानकुसुमस्य मलिनता इव पुष्पवल्लभस्य मनसि आसीत् विकृतचेतनायाः स्पर्शः । (*Tilottamā*, P.7)
- v. असमाप्तकाव्यस्य लेखक इव पुष्पवल्लभः तिलोत्तमायाः रूपकल्पनायां उपमयति चन्द्रस्य लावण्यम् । (*Tilottamā*, P.24)
- vi. अद्य तस्याः जीवनं नूनं सुखमयं भविष्यति, धनं विना जीवनं गृध्रस्य शव इव । (*Tilottamā*, P.24)
- vii. खेदालसा मरालीव शनैः शनैः अन्तः प्रविशति तिलोत्तमा । (*Tilottamā*, P.61)
- viii. संध्यातारका इव अद्यत्वे तस्य उपस्थितिः । (*Rtam*, P.66)

2. रूपक –

- i. दम्पतीचरणे क्लान्तिः शिलाशायिनी । (*Añjaliḥ*, P.14)
- ii. स विचारे उदारः । वचने स्नेही । कर्मणि राजहंसः । तस्य प्रेम अस्याः कृते प्रेरणा । तस्य एकात्मता अस्या अपवर्गः । तस्य सत्यनिष्ठपौरुषधारायां मिली एका सम्पूर्णसर्वस्वा पार्वत्यनदी । (*Añjaliḥ*, P.33)

- iii. रात्रिः अर्धोत्तीर्णा । वृष्टिः शान्ता । (*Śitalatrṣṇā*, P.48)
- iv. छायाः चपलायिताः । (*Nikaṣā*, P.21)
- v. आकाशे अस्वस्थचन्द्रः खण्डमण्डनः । प्रकाशलेखा निष्प्राणा । नीलतल्पे तारका आभासमात्रप्रणयिनी । (*Śaśirekhā*, P.36)

3. अनुप्रासः –

- i. केवलं परिवर्तनं परिवर्धनं च संस्काररूपेण स्वीकृत्य रुद्धिधारायां निपतिता । (*Añjaliḥ*, P.49)
- ii. केवलम् अनुकरणं अनुसरणं वा न परिवर्तनम् । (*Añjaliḥ*, P.49)
- iii. कृष्णधनम् कृष्णधनं नाम कृष्णवसनम् , कृष्णा गौ , कृष्णवृषभाय भोजनम् , कृष्णजनेभ्यश्च अन्नम् । (*Nikaṣā*, P.8)
- iv. अयमानन्दः विसर्गसमनन्तरस्य संकल्पपरिपोषणस्य तादात्म्यविनिमयस्य कर्मप्रतिबद्धस्य विश्वासविशेषस्य निरपेक्षसन्तोषस्य आत्मपरितृप्तस्य । (*Oum Śāntiḥ*, P.115)
- v. गर्जनं - तर्जनं - अर्जनं - सर्वं तस्य स्वरे प्रकाशितम् । (*Śitalatrṣṇā*, P.18)
- vi. दूरे दूरान्ते च वाणिज्यं वर्षतः दशमासाः मे बहिव्यतीयन्ते स्म । (*Śitalatrṣṇā*, P.49)
- vii. परीक्षया निरीक्षया च सर्वमत्र प्रचलति । (*Visargaḥ*, P.42)

4. व्यतिरेकः –

- i. सम्मुखे कुम्भद्वयम् । एकत्र अमृतम् । अन्यत्र विषराशिः । यदा विषबिन्दुः अमृतपात्रे निक्षिप्यते तदा समग्रमपि पात्रं विषमयं भवति । यदा तु अमृतबिन्दुः विषपात्रे निक्षिप्यते तदा विषपात्रं अमृतमयं न भवति । (*Visargaḥ*, P.16)
- ii. प्रतिशरीरं स्त्रीत्वं पुंस्त्वं च वर्तते । (*Pratipad*, P.28)

- iii. कुत्र गतिः ? एकतः अन्यत् ? एकतः एकम् ? पश्चाद् वा ? प्रतिमुहूर्तं वर्धते मनुष्यः । किन्तु वर्धनस्य गतिः - नीचै, उच्चैर्वा ? अथवा स्थितिः वर्धते ? संवर्धनम् कस्यार्थम् ? अपेक्षार्थम् ? उपेक्षार्थम् ? उपेक्षार्थं वा ? कुत्राधुना सा गच्छति ? लक्ष्यतो निर्लक्ष्यम्, अथवा निर्लक्ष्यतो लक्ष्यम् ? (Madhuyānam, P.49)
- iv. एकः कष्टायते इति अपरः सुखमनुभवति । इदमेव अहङ्कारिकं तत्त्वम् । एको दुःखी, अपरोऽपि तथा इति समता साधारणसान्त्वना । (Śaśirekhā, P.31)
- v. कालो न समानः । सर्वस्मिन् समये च स्थितिरपि नानुकूला । अद्य यत् सुखमिति प्रतीयते श्वः तत् अनुतापाय भवेत् । अद्य यत् अमृतोपमं तद् अपरेद्यः विषायते । (Śaśirekhā, P.38)
- vi. तस्या नयनयोः उभौ समानौ । परमुभयस्य चिन्ताधारा भिन्ना । एकः सौन्दर्यप्रेमी, शासनलोलुपः, सत्यकामी, हितैषी । अपरः ऐश्वर्यलोलुपः, सत्कर्मवादी, आत्मशक्तिसाधकः, संधानी । (Āvartam, Oum Śāntiḥ, P.166)

5. अतिशयोक्ति –

- i. त्वं तुच्छपदार्थः ।..... पशु । कीट इव कीटः । अत्र स्वैरं विचरितुम् अधिकारस्ते नास्ति । (Aruṇā, Oum Śāntiḥ, P.143)
- ii. हृदयस्य अभिव्याप्तये मनसश्च प्रसाराय पैसामेकामपि दातुं सः कुण्ठितो भवति । (Aruṇā, Oum Śāntiḥ, P.156)

CHAPTER V

शाशिरेखा



विद्वन्मणिः
डॉ. केशवचन्द्र दाशः

लोक भाषा प्रचार समितिः, पुरी

CHAPTER V

TRANSLATION

The present chapter includes the English translation of two of the popular novels of Keshab Chandra Dash, namely *Śaśirekhā* and *Tilottamā*.

V.I Śaśirekhā (Moon Beam)

The Universe comprises of many different beliefs, religions and cultures. Every individual object has its unique meaning. Each soul is also characterized by its uniqueness. Many sub parts are put together to make one complete part. Nevertheless, objects are still manifested widely. In real sense, life lives between theism and atheism. During this time, human being's narcissism is conceived to be a mound of fire. As time passes, this narcissism increases profoundly. But this is not life. The struggle of life intervenes and takes the last breath. All the vanity which human existence was longing for throughout a life span meets its ultimate end in a moment. Life is thus rendered meaningless.

Abhrapad is very worried. Lipsā had already rejected his proposal for marriage. Hence, he is fidgety. He is not able to concentrate on anything. He cannot travel beyond his limits. He is also unable to keep a limit on his own narcissism. Therefore, he gets indifferent, annoyed and hates Lipsā. He is also prepared to argue with her. Abhrapad had turned vindictive. But he is unable to express it. His restlessness is evident in his day-to-day activities. His mind becomes unsteady. His thought process reminds him –“I am an esteemed person.” I belong to a dignified family. I am the head of the family and also an idol in the society. The struggle of life intervenes shows up to preserve the vanity – it is neither for life nor for sustaining it. The fight starts here and maintains itself. The

more you crave for narcissism, the more it grows within you and it ice balls into an ego clash, whereby one loses strength of mind. The sense of balancing, thinking or discrimination between what is right and what is wrong diminishes. The self reflections get distorted in the warped mirror.

Adversity finds the environment suitable and it starts to show its colours.

Lipsā is seen in the reddish sunset to be gazing at the movement of birds. At the distant horizon, multi-coloured clouds could be seen. The sun is setting behind the trees. The brightness of sun paves its way through the lap of sunset.

Lipsā took a deep breath. Habitually, adjusting her sari, she viewed her reflection in the mirror. She was very happy with her beautiful self. Signs of vanity are also deep rooted in her conscience. She was praising herself for her good looks. With all her thoughts of parental affluence, she came out for a stroll.

Father is old. Mother is also growing old. Brothers have all established themselves as successful businessmen in different cities. Lipsā is the youngest of the siblings and serves as a helping hand to her aged parents. Here there are no signs of false pride.

The servant approached –

Sir....! Please order me....!

Abhrapad looked behind and saw the old servant standing still. The calmness of his face had stopped his questions. However, his eyes were reflecting the thoughts and inquisitiveness for divinity. His hands were waiting to serve his master. Abhrapad told calmly,

- Fatherly...!
- Yes sir.
- What is the news now?

- News is what you please, sir.
- Lipsā had rejected the proposal.
- Okay. Anything more?
- Where?
- What is your choice? Your preference?
- Simple, poor and a kind lady....
- Oh, you are such rich and aristocratic.
- What is the need of aristocracy.....? Even if a good natured poor girl is apt for me.
- Sir, you please take your time and then make your decision.
- I have already decided. Let us start searching.....
- It is my duty.
- Then be fast with your search.....We will meet when you succeed.

Dinamani is a servant who has served his entire life. He is the contemporary of his current master's father, who had passed away. Keeping his last words, Dinamani had been serving Abhrapad, since his father's death. Till now, Dinamani had been executing his duties as a servant. He reserves the right on his master although he is a servant since he is the oldest and has been serving since long. So Abhrapad gives more weightage to his advice.

Dinamani keeps silent on Abhrapad's preference. He is used to his little master's choices and behaviours. He always remains apprehensive with his master's work; he is always suspicious of his words. Dinamani also knows of Abhrapad's anger. He is always cautious of his positive and negative aspects.

Dinamani has always been on the side of his little master since his childhood days. He always makes his best effort to inform Abhrapad of what is good and what is bad. But there is no effect of all this on Abhrapad's egoism. Dinamani is worried. At times, Dinamani has to get subdued by his master's wishes and

decisions. He becomes worried with the fact that inspite of possessing vast acres of land and exorbitant amount of wealth, Abhrapad cannot give away his miserly attitude and longing for more and more. His greediness is never limited to a point. He always dreams of accumulation of more and more wealth....wealth..... Winter has arrived.

The shadow of life encourages his feelings. The touch of wind feels like a flat blade of ice. The mumbling sound of water in the streams enhances his sadness. The environment is dusty. In the forest of his heart, signifying the darkness of his life, he could feel snowfall. In reality, his life is passing on in complete dreadfulness.

A seemingly strict idol is sitting on a swing. This is old Medinî. She has passed her life in hard labour. Her beliefs have been dilapidated. She is waiting for a sensation to happen in life. The winged chariot of life has run slow in her life. But her conscience reflects something. Her mind is in the wait for a silent encouragement. Only for life...for existence of life....She has no strength to work hard...for the services of life...

Collecting water from the pond, Śrāvaṇî crosses the household threshold. Medinî looked for sometime and again got lost in her deep thoughts. Śrāvaṇî is the result of her hard labour...her single girl. She has lost her father during her childhood. She has been raised up with the fruits of her mother, Medinî's hard earned labour. Labour is her only friend in life. Śrāvaṇî has now stepped into her youth. She has now been more cautious in life. The old lady's earning is spent for her only daughter.

Śrāvaṇî fully understands her mother's mind. She judges her position. She minutely observes the heritage of their poverty. But there is no way. What does she have except for self vanity? Everything was sold off whatever was saved. What is

left? Whatever is left cannot be sold. Holding her fortune with fear, Śrāvaṇī was passing her nights.

Everyday invitations were there. Many indications were present for welcoming gestures. They created surprises in Śrāvaṇī's mind and body. However, she could not make anybody her own due to reservations of social constraints. Roads of blame get elongated by merely touching her. The ill-fate of losing her clothes is continuously in search for her.

Many things revolve in her mind.

What is required in this materialistic world....? Medinī becomes analyticalbecomes thoughtful. But her motherly heart breaks down with her love. It is difficult to find solution for egocentric people. But still her motherly love does not meet its end. She imagines her daughter to have bracelets, necklace – but the vermillion is missing. Had that also been seen on her daughter's forehead, Medinī would have been very satisfied and happy.

The corn fields are seen to be convincingly green and beautiful. The waters of the pond give reflections to the white clouds and present an apathetic look. The early morning moon was shining from a distant horizon. The name of the village is 'Madhugram'.... It is like a small city. Everybody is familiar with each other and nothing is hidden.

The environment of the village is very beautiful. It is rich with natural resources. It is well known for its beauty. But the scenario has changed with time. The village looks like a crowded place today.

Śrīmukh has come.

The villagers are surprised by Śrīmukh's return to the village. When his father died, he did not return. Even upon her mother's death, he did not return.

Why has he come now? To have a look at the last remains of his dilapidated house?

People have different versions and logic regarding his return. Some people tell that he had been captured during his childhood. Some are telling that he had left his home due to his father's anger. Some others say that no-no...his mother had dedicated him to a nun. Again, some others say that his mother has actually a step-mother. So he could not tolerate her and left the house. But what has happened today?

Śrīmukh is happy and serious too. He is surrounded by many villagers who are throwing him various sorts of questions. Diligently and tactfully, he was answering to all their queries in order to satisfy them. In his speech, vanity was reflected. In his moral precept, the vanity of knowledge was reflected – I am learned...I am knowledgeable...I am considerate and above all I am near to God...Saying this, Śrīmukh turned serious. Śrāvaṇī was standing silently in the crowd.

There was a sign of smile on her lips. Śrīmukh is her childhood friend. After a long time, they will meet each other. Śrāvaṇī had been waiting for this visit. She is standing beside a hut like a statue. She maintained her brightness amidst her poverty. Her childish instincts could not be hidden her youthfulness.

The crowd gradually lessened. Śrīmukh came to Śrāvaṇī. Śrāvaṇī was happy. So was Śrīmukh. He whispered in a low voice,

- How are you?

Śrāvaṇī gently smiled and replied,

- I am fine.

- How is your mother?

- She is okay.
- What about others?

Śrāvaṇī nodded her head symbolizing everything is fine. She asked emotionally,

- For how long will you stay here?

Śrīmukh smiled innocently and replied,

- Cannot say, but I am still here.
- Then, do come to my home.
- Sure, I will come.

Śrīmukh, turned towards a different direction and started moving. Śrāvaṇī observed her childhood friend to become serious. He is not a saint, nor a monk. He is like an ordinary foreigner. He is familiar but still unfamiliar. Being not attached, he is still attached. Being ignored, he is still not alone.

Śrīmukh went to his home. The home was in a much wrecked state...remains of an aristocracy....summary of the end....symbol of the passage of time. Different kinds of plants had grown in the remains of the house. The inner portion of the house was filled with bird stools. It was the hideout of snakes. The corners were covered with cobwebs. The hills created by white ants had the bones of reptiles. All roads leading to the house were lost under the cover of yellow leaves.

Śrīmukh greeted with folded hands.

Suddenly his ears were filled with the echoing words of her mother. Her picture reflected in his mind. Her affection filled tears came into his mind. Somebody sounded a stick like that in his father's hand down his memory lane, symbolizing the aristocracy. His father breathed his last, remembering the

aristocratic tradition of his family. Whatever is visible in front of his eye is his hard earned property.

Śrīmukh was in a state of airlessness. Suddenly, he felt somebody's hand from behind on his shoulders. He looked back. It was Raghupati, a fatherly acquaintance known since his childhood – the father of Lipsā. Śrīmukh is speechless. He greeted him with folded hands after rubbing off his surprised look. Raghupati hugged him.

One more thing came into Śrīmukh's mind like a drop of ink on a piece of paper. May things came across his mind. Here, there is a sense of consolation featuring a vision.

Discussing good and bad issues, made the path shorter to Raghupati's house. Śrīmukh reached at Raghupati's home. Suddenly, everyone was astonished at Śrīmukh's entry into the house. Śrīmukh was also surprised. In front of is vanity, the house was filled with sinners and was near to hell. The guest room door was opened by Raghupati. He also directed him on the location of the prayer hall. He went away assuring him of his return.

Śrīmukh is sitting. He is serious and worried. The colours of pre-acting are there in his preparation – affection and simplicity are evident in his eyes. Smile is there on his lips. This diction of happiness was devoid of any tensions and apprehensions. The picture of Lipsā was playing in his mind. Her imaginary picture is in rhythm with his heart beat. Since childhood, Lipsā's picture had covered his mind. He is hopeful to have a glimpse of the pretty lass. And he hopes that she would be astonished too on her arrival.

He felt the sound of somebody's silent arrival. Śrīmukh is excited. The innocence of vanity expressed itself. He remained tensed and kept sitting. One lady with veil came into the scene and placed a gift and glass of water in front of him.

Śrīmukh turns restless on having a glimpse of the lean and weak hands. The veiled woman went at a distance and saw him.

- Son, you are Śrīmukh!

Śrīmukh turns speechless but quickly regains his stature and responds,

- Yes...Yes...

- Oh,....So many changes How would I be able to recognize you? Śrāvaṇī was telling about you. Śrāvaṇī is my daughter.....do you know it?

- I know....

- I was anxious to meet you. Finally, I succeeded. Are you able to recognize me?

- I have recognized you.

- How did you know? Your father and mother have both passed away.

Who will ask about me? I am working here latching onto my fate. Śrāvaṇī is alone at home. I am not sure on when her fate will come.

Raghupati reached with all his family members. Medinī seemed to be interrupted and became unhappy. Standing there, Śrīmukh greeted everybody with folded hands. Raghupati introduced Śrīmukh to everybody. Lipsā's eyes were inquisitive. Lipsā's mother Bhavāni seemed indifferent. However, Raghupati is affectionate. Bhavāni avoided any conversation and went away from the room sitting some work. She also took along Lipsā with her. Medinī followed them. Changing the topic, Raghupati started conversation with Śrīmukh. He ordered him to stay at his guest room. He got a positive response.

The moon beam seemed to be happy in its natural habitat.

Covering her body with dirty clothes in the winter's dew and placing the pitcher on her waist, Śrāvaṇī was returning back. She met Śrīmukh on her way

back. Excited on seeing him, she paused. Śrīmukh was also happy to see her. Śrāvaṇī asked with egotism,

- You have become great. Why do you need to take our news?

Śrīmukh told innocently,

- No Śrāvaṇī. Nothing of that sort. I have met your mother. Surely, I will visit your place.
- Poor's place? Who has asked?
- No....no....it's not like that. All are equal and normal to me. Definitely, I will go to your place. My invitation remains. I accept it.

Śrāvaṇī smiled gently and went away expressing her feelings. Śrīmukh again turned serious. On his way, servant Dinamaṇi came. He had heard of Śrīmukh's arrival. He was astonished and happy to see her. He paid respect to him with folded hands from a distance.

- Greetings, young master.
- Fatherly, how do you know me?
- Why can't I recognize? Has my memory lost with the passage of time?
- Where are you now?
- Now, I am with Abhrapad. But from childhood, you are....it's okay. So, what next?
- I am moving for sometime. As long as it is possible...
- Don't do that. You go for family life. Is there any shortage of girl for you?
- So, you may search for one...

With a joking smile, Śrīmukh moved forward, while Dinamaṇi went in the opposite direction. At a distance, he happened to see Śrāvaṇī and thought that – 'Where will he go now? The man is now captured in the net.'

A mistaken time rendered a wise thought.

Raghupati is immersed in thoughts. How much is a daughter's father worried? How much is he apprehensive? How much is he aware of his daughter's nature and attitude? Really, how interested is he in owning someone else's son? But something is creating an obstruction. The hindrance is again caused by wealth only. Again the desire for wealth indicates vanity. Greed takes birth in vanity...hereditary...profession based...provincial...according to time.

The human soul is affected by narrowness. To come out with a solution, is difficult – hence the eye only sights greed. Work begins with envy. Failure of others is a language. Differentiation is the source of affluence. Reduction of aversion leads to complete acquaintance of knowledge. What is the result? Where is the origin? What is realization due to the downfall?

Regaining conscience, Raghupati becomes helpless.

Wishes are great. Beliefs are strong. Wishes are encouraging. He called his wife and gently said

- If Śrīmukh is for Lipsā...

At half the sentence, Bhavāni shouted.

- Don't tell that. Will my daughter be a beggar?
- It's not like that.... He has come new to the village? Where will he go?
He will stay here.
- Why will he stay here?
- Here, means he has his land here. In a few days time, he will be starting to work over here and get established. With him our daughter...
- It's ok....Let it stop here. What work will a man do, who has been roaming here and there. How to believe a nomadic person?

- Yes! Nobody disagrees with you. But think of our daughter. None of the marriage proposals are suited to her because of her nature. Do you think that she should be allowed to grow older?
- Why should she be older? Is she ugly? Don't we have wealth?
- That is not the issue. Only that person should be chosen who would be able to tolerate her nature. Or else, there will be continuous fighting.
- Can a lowly person be my daughter's husband then?
- How can that be? There is no place for lowly person here. Here is the question is of agreement on ability.
- How is it agreed?
- It is evident in behaviour.
- This lowly person can also be good in behaviour.
- No, they are flatterers. They act well while showing their behaviour.
- Nowadays, everybody is a flatterer.
- Don't tell like that. Why will everybody be like that? People, who are selfish, can act.
- Humans are selfish. How can this man be devoid of it?
- No...no...He has not come here on her own. I have invited him with respect.

Bhavāni is silent. Raghupati seemed convinced. But he is thoughtful. Anyhow, he has to marry off Lipsā. Or else, there is no peace. There will be no completeness. What is the purpose of all these tensions? Who can decide on fate? Parents are only the creator.

There is desire in each and every word. Every word takes the shelter of contradiction. Meanings are also waiting for desires. Emotions are the roots of mistakes. When the vision is clear, the ways for achieving the mission are also

clear. But the objectives are secretive. So it is an assembly of sorrow. Dinamaṇi analyzes in this manner.

Although Dinamaṇi is old, he is still a servant. He is the oldest but still he is a mere servant. Hence, he does not dare to express himself freely. He controls himself not to give any advice. He is disturbed. The worried master is in front of him. He asked,

- Why are you so depressed? Tell clearly.
- What is the lacuna....?

Thoughtful Abhrapad asked,

- What... has the search finished?
- Finished....
- Then who will be the bride for this home?
- You must have known Medinî.
- Who is she.....?
- She is poor....old....
- I know. But how is she connected?
- Her daughter is Śrāvaṇî.

Abhrapad laughed loudly.

- Fatherly, are you thinking of my marriage with a servant's mentality?

Dinamaṇi replied fearfully,

- No....no.... Sir!
- In your eyes, is there nobody else, except that poor lady?
- Whoever comes rejects you.

Suddenly, Abhrapad becomes conscious. Pride reflects in him. He shouted in a revengeful manner.

- Something must be shown.

Dinamani tried to convince him and advised him to spend some time thinking over the issue.

- No...she may be a servant or poor. I have to marry.
- Think in a peaceful mind. You have a position in the society. The family also beholds its aristocracy and tradition. Think rightfully and then take the decision.
- What is the requirement of thinking over it? You may proceed and give them the proposal for this relationship.
- What?
- Don't be unnecessarily late.

Dinamani kept silent, bowed down in front of his master and went away slowly, showing the symbol of acceptance of the proposal.

Probably, he lacks desires.

Raghupati is satisfied and peaceful, because his wife is in agreement with him. Now, he is ready to convince his daughter. He went up to his daughter's room and gently called,

- Daughter...! Daughter....! Lipsā....!

The door opened. But she was hesitating to respond to her father's invitation. She is not interested to talk. Lipsā is worried. Restless Raghupati asked her,

- Why are you tensed? Why is this hesitation? Is my decision for the marriage not suitable for you? Lipsā replied with ego,

- No..... I don't like it.
- Then, what is your wish?
- Don't you want to get married?
- I don't want to get married.
- What for.....?
- I don't want my life to be controlled by a man. Raghupati smiled.
- Ah....after marriage, both of you will be masters. In line with the situation, sometimes the male is the master, while on other occasions, the female is the master.
- No.... I don't want to be driven by somebody else's order or direction.
- You are inexperienced. I know that you don't try to understand anything. Currently, you will not think of it, but later, you will be repenting for it the whole of your life. Listen, see. At a distance, everything seems to be valueless. When near, valuelessness also seem to be valuable.

Lipsā's pride is passionate. She does not want to hear her father's sermons. She told boldly,

- Why don't you allow your daughter to exercise her rights?
- Why will I accept the words of inexperience in the name of rights? As a result of inexperience, you are now short sighted. You are not matured with experience. Why don't you understand? If I tell something, will it be against your well-being....?

Lipsā is answerless.

Raghupati cools down and continues,

- Child...! Every time there is no necessity of cutting down the trees to clear one's path. Are the shades of trees rendered to be useless, with the

presence of umbrellas? Always times shall not remain favourable. Think a little...

Raghupati leaves the scene. From the other side, Bhavāni enters the room. She is a little concerned to see her daughter's sorrowful face. She asked restlessly,

- What happened? Did your father mention anything? I know....he is of that sort. Without knowing anything, he is busy scolding, Lipsā replied.
- No....no....it is not like that.
- Then why are you worried?
- But, father was asking about marriage...
- Oh....! Yes.....! I had forgotten all these things. How do you....
- But I have not said anything.
- Why not? If father has already decided, how can it be disobeyed? Lipsā asked wisely,
- Did your father forcibly have you married off? Didn't you disagree with him?
- At that time, it was different. Now times have changed.
- With the changing times, human mentality has also changed?
- Oh....? I cannot make you understand. I cannot make out. Sometimes you are favouring your father and sometimes me. Don't know, what you wish?

Lipsā smiled.

Feeling disgusted, Bhavāni goes away. Lipsā gets immersed in thought. Mother is the first teacher. From early times, her each and every situation is effected by her mother. Firstly, she is not finished with words. Every symbol of her signifies word. Her thought processes are already transferred. But father controls the entire family. Parents are already at their advanced ages, so she is not in

preference to go against their wishes. Father influences the decision making process in the family. At the old age of her father, Lipsā doesn't want to see him in sorrowful condition.

The source is spiritual.

The road crossing is visible at a distance. The spring festival is seen in the lights of the winter. It is the beginning of perspiration. The koel bird's voice is heard from the crow's nest breaking nature's silence.

Śrīmukh came.

He is serious about his marriage with Lipsā. Her pride is intolerable. Some people are eager for the donations. Somebody is eager for seizing. On one hand where there is request, on the other hand, there is self dignity. In between the two, a fertile ground of vanity exists. Ultimately, Śrīmukh accepted Raghupati's proposal unwillingly.

Śrīmukh greeted with folded hands. A deep breath created made turns like the mountainous river. The fizz of the waves could be seen. His eyes were having the vision of a young lady. With the drizzling waters, Śrāvaṇī turned into the smell of the idol made of soil.

Suddenly, Dinamaṇi came on the way. He is running restlessly. Śrīmukh called him. But Dinamaṇi could not hear him. Dinamaṇi vanished away soon. He could not be seen besides the trees.

Dinamaṇi's mind is now filled with the sole thought of well being of his master. He is strongly determined for his master's welfare. He went towards Medinī's house. Seeing from a distance, Medinī became happy. She asked eagerly,

- Brother! What brings you to a poor's house?

Dinamani answered with pleasure.

- It is my good fortune, if I am made a member of your family.

Medinî is surprised.

- Member.....?
- Yes...Yes...Poor lady. I am here to bring you good fortune.
- Why are you in a hesitation?
- It's not hesitation. Only your welfare.
- What is welfare to me? Think of my daughter's welfare.
- Yes...Yes...Not only welfare. She would be a girl with great fortune.
- You always come with good news.
- What is the matter? I have come for your good fortune. Tell if you are ready to accept it. What will be my remuneration?

Medinî is thoughtful. In life, whatever is achieved cannot be accepted always. In search of truth, she has not been able to give everything. Sometimes, the poor heart beats wipe out everything. Maintaining silence, she thought deeply.

Dinamani requested her.

- Come....with me.
- Where.....?
- To my master.
- There.....!!
- Why there? My master wants to marry your daughter.
- What is this? He is of upper class. We are....
- So what? He is pleased with your daughter. That is the reason he is interested in marrying her. Your daughter will be my master's wife. You will also stay there.

Medinî hesitates.

Dinamani tries to convince her.

- Yes. The proposal should be accepted. Your daughter will remain happy with him. You will also live the last days of your life happily. Then what is the loss?
- Loss...? Loss.....? Loss.....?

She asked to herself.

Dinamani joyfully said.

- Why are you thinking about it pessimistically? You are old now. What is left over there in life? Who does not want to lead this life with good food and proper sleep?

Still Medinî is hesitant. She is in fix to whether accept the proposal or turn it down. She is not strong enough to be out of the proposal any more. Looking at Śrāvaṇî from a distance, Dinamani felt interested. She looked at Medinî and told,

- Your silence speaks that you have agreed for the marriage proposal. So get ready for the marriage, as soon as possible.

Medinî is speechless.

Śrāvaṇî entered the room, put down her water pot slowly from er waist and asked Dinamani,

- Fatherly! What brings you here?

Dinamani told simply,

- Your mother would brief you. I am busy now. I am going.

Medinî looks steadily. Dinamañi is out of sight. Śrāvañî continued her work for the evening. Medinî could not measure and validate Dinamañi's words. She prays to the evening lamp in a confused state. Then she slowly calls Śrāvañî. She came and sat down with her. Medinî told the summary of the conversation she had with Dinamañi in a fearful voice. It took Śrāvañî by surprise. She felt excited in her mind and body with an unexpected pleasure. She could neither speak anything about the fact nor think much about it. She moved around the corner of the room to the courtyard restlessly. Observing daughter's unsteadiness, Medinî went over to the kitchen.

The wind had a touch of spring.

Śrāvañî is pleased. Nothing could be seen from a distance. But it is not dark over there. She could not even see anything near. It is also not dark over here. Everything is looking dusky. Everything is brownish. Śrāvañî looked up in the sky. The beautiful moon is seen. Moon beam was seen everywhere.... It is serving as the ornament for both night and day. The light is embracing the earth like an uncared monument. In all acts, it is the only actor. In the drama of life, it is seen repeatedly as the peace flag.

In the moon lit night, Śrāvañî closed her eyes. Near her ears was the murmuring of old leaves of a Peepal tree. The wind is enjoying her hairs. A portion of her sari is playing with the Tulsi plants. The night is deepening. The sacrifice is big.

This sacrifice is commensurate. Commensuration is also a sacrifice. So the relation between husband and wife is also a sacrifice. Sacrifice of feelings is not of any significance. This is devotion. Here devotion is an imagination of knowledge. Knowledge is enjoyment. Getting knowledge of something out of nothing renders somebody proud and wealthy just believing that there is wealth. Thinking of

marriage, she becomes a bride. That is why her enjoyment starts with the knowledge of her marriage. Notwithstanding anything, she becomes desirous of womanhood through marriage.

The late night is silent. Śrāvaṇī is continuously turning her side on the bed. The waves of imagination have captured her sleep. Incidents of marriage have captured her imagination. The same scenes and flow of youthfulness are there. Her mind is filled with all such imagination. Thinking of the enjoyment has made her body slack. Śrāvaṇī tried to sleep.

The new sun is rising from the east.

Keeping to his nature, Abhrapad is passionate. He is full of strength. Will is his dictionary of action. In an unpleasant environment, Abhrapad is waiting.

Dinamaṇi submitted.

- The marriage date is firmed up.

Abhrapad looked aggressively.

- Then why are you waiting?
- What type of function is envisaged?
- Everything will be done from the palace.
- Then the bride....
- She will be present here. One of the rooms of the palace will be decorated for her.

Dinamaṇi departs.

Getting mercy out of no reason has made Medinī self content. But Śrāvaṇī is a servant of somebody who has not come. Śrīmukh waits for the situation. He is worried about the sudden decision of Abhrapad's marriage with Śrāvaṇī. But there

is no way. How can he offer shelter to somebody, when he himself is staying under somebody else's roof? All his emotions came for sometime and again vanished. So he went to Raghupati's house. At the village end, the mud hut can be seen as before. Śrīmukh went ahead. In front, the houses are full of poverty. The door is open. Some birds are singing in the courtyard. A dog is sleeping. Śrīmukh saw the surroundings. He kept silent.

In the lethargic plentiful, days passed.

Dinamani is seen. His thoughts had the marriage altar. The foundation was cruel fate line. The invitation was pale. The intention could not produce festive lights. The thoughts were occupied by arrangements for marriage. All bad deeds traits could be covered with the marriage. For differential feelings, the rights were clear. Again the seed of vanity bloomed at the centre. The constellation of stars is seen.

Hearing a sound, Dinamani regained consciousness. He looked around. Again he hears the sound.

- Fatherly.....!

Dinamani was happy to see Śrāvaṇī from the back. Now Śrāvaṇī is the bride of the family...the wife of an aristocrat...the wife of his master...Dinamani thought - like a tree. When the tree becomes large, people respect it. During sad times, one shares his sorrow with the tree. With the imagination of excellence and gravity, he feels happy.

Śrāvaṇī is new to the place. She is not accustomed to the aristocratic lifestyle. She is used to the traditional values.

- She is inexperienced with the rituals. Here, each step is fearful. But Dinamani, himself consults her for all activities. Also provides advice.

Recently, Śrāvaṇī also expresses her displeasure. Dinamaṇi inquires politely.

- Child....! What is the work?
- Come to the upper floor. Mother wants to tell you something.
- I will come after sometime.

Medinī's was thirsty with fear. Śrāvaṇī could not adjust herself in the new environment. Also, Medinī could not stay there happily. A distance is being formed between mother and the daughter. Thinking of mutual welfare, both their minds are fearful.

Dinamaṇi comes.

Getting him close by, Medinī becomes impatient. She tells innocently.

- Brother! With your mercy, my daughter's fortune has changed. What more do I expect? Now I want to go back to my home.

Dinamaṇi replied

- Sister! Is it not your home now? From now on, live here only.
- No....brother! Where is the place for me in this palace? I am filled with fear over here. How can I be there without any work?
- Where is your work here? You are the landlady's mother. Your stature is different here. There are other servants to work. Your responsibility is with me.
- But my mind always remains in my small cottage.
- It is okay. You are not used to this life style. In a few days, you will adjust with it. Do not be worried.
- What shall I do?
- Is there any restriction in sitting with your daughter? She is your everything. Whatever she likes, do it.

But Medinī does not have any place here. She is neither able to measure her daughter's stature over there. She is trying her best to spare the days by any means.

Śrāvaṇī's face is filled with smile. Her heart is throbbing. She knows the nature of her husband. She thinks of her husband's passionate nature. But she never disobeys her husband's orders. She never argues with him, even for petty issues. Husband is like God...any passion and wish is like All Mighty. There is neither limit to his desire, nor obstacle to his inclination. Śrāvaṇī is worried about her mother's illness....

Abhrapad ridicules Lipsā's arrogance. Dinamaṇi informed.

- Sir! Today is the day of solution.

Dissatisfied Abhrapad asked.

- Who's.....? What.....?
- You got married. Lipsā also.....
- Lipsā....? Today....?
- Marrying today.

Abhrapad is surprised.

- Marriage...!! Who is the groom?
- Śrīmukh.....

Abhrapad laughed loudly.

- Who that nomadic? That's fine.....That's fine. Genuine union. It is the correct punishment for the grave lady.

Old Dinamaṇi is polite.

Abhrapad returned with a satirical smile. Dinamaṇi is observing him without the blink of an eye. The musical sound of Lipsā and Śrīmukh's marriage is heard from a distant place. Vanity is dancing in the eyes. In the circumference, certain unspoken words are felt. There is a coating on what is said.

Śrāvaṇī called from the back.

- Fatherly....!

Dinamaṇi looked at her. There is sorrow filled interest in her face. Her eyes are filled with questions. Dinamaṇi asked.

- What is the matter?
- No.....Listen.....
- Listen to what....?
- Is today Śrīmukh's marriage?

Dinamaṇi became conscious. To calm her, he tried to explain,

- Yes...You must be knowing everything. And they are all aristocrats. Aristocrats have their relation with aristocracy, know...!
- I have no knowledge of any such thing at this house.
- How is that possible? The premises over here are large. Being here, where is the time to think of others? Also, what is the point in thinking about anything else? If anything is to be done over there, then there is benefit in investing time onto the same. Else, it only gives sorrow.
- Shouldn't we try to go over there?

Dinamaṇi took a deep breath.

- That's not possible, dear...!

Śrāvaṇī keeps silent.

Dinamani tried to explain.

- Know...! At first one is desperate to find a house. Then..., this house makes him desperate and restless. It also decides upon his status.

Śrāvaṇī kept silent keeping her head down. Dinamani observed her slow and unwilling movements.

The marriage ceremony ends with the business of disbelief.

Śrīmukh is fortunate. Lipsā's complexion is reflected in her vanity. She is looking new with her make up. She is feeling good with her new marital identity. Her seriousness is also beautiful. She is fresh in love. Her smile is artificial. Her self-boasting nature is evident. Her behaviour is sorrowful. Her expressions reflect purity of self-poverty.

Nomadic Śrīmukh is now a married man. He is serious with the dignity of marriage. All are happy with the marriage of Lipsā with Śrīmukh. Now both are in a room. One of them thinks that he is superior. The other thinks that she is superior. Something is being an obstacle for their union. Both are waiting for invitation from the other. There is a conflict of doubt in mind. Ego is not losing its strength. Śrīmukh walks inside the room. Keeping her chin on her thighs, Lipsā is also thoughtful.

The honeymoon night is passing by.

After a long thought, Śrīmukh came to Lipsā. He gazed at Lipsā's face. Lipsā is looking down. Śrīmukh extended his hands. Lipsā showed no interest. Śrīmukh apprehends. Nevertheless, to touch her lips, he moved forward. Lipsā protested with her hands. Śrīmukh is stunned. He controlled himself and sat on one side of the bed. He thought of many things, but could not read Lipsā's mind.

Śrīmukh is restless. He tries to explain to her,

- Lipsā! If this had been your mind's wish, then why didn't you express it before? What is the point in turning away now?

Lipsā's anger is at the tip of her nose. Śrīmukh sighs a deep breath. He shows tolerance. In front of him is an attractive beauty. But he is filled with male ego. He is neither able to go out nor able to come inside. He himself is to blame.

Lipsā is still sitting. The honeymoon night is passing by. Fire is in her heart. Mind is with protest. In her pride, aristocracy is reflected. In front of her eyes, here is only loneliness. In her thoughts, exist supremacy of husband...understanding of loneliness. Then, why did she come forward? Why did she protest? Protest is always not fruitful. True words are not always valued. Ability is not always recognized. Situation is complex.

Now, Lipsā cannot reproach her father. She is her father's first heir. She is her mother's pride. She also thought about motherhood. She cannot go against her own self. Superior thought processes get hindered at every step. Śrīmukh does not bend to her. Lipsā realizes that two parallel lines can never intersect with each other. Other than that, life would be full of conflicts. Marriage rituals are finished. There is now lesser risk of social denial. Parents are not to be blamed. She is accountable for her own deeds. Where is the sorrow in accepting own faults? Self confidence is required to endure it. Just as it has come, it would also go away. Somebody dear to the mind will definitely come.

The morning came after a long wait.

Śrīmukh is angry. He requests Lipsā again. Lipsā still maintains her denial. Śrīmukh extends his hands. Lipsā stares. Her face is clear with hatred. At the corner of her eye, there is an excluded look. She turned away her eyes. Śrīmukh well understood her mentality. He took back his hands.

Śrīmukh rose from the bed and came towards the door. He looked at Lipsā in a content manner. He also looked inside the room. He opened the door. The surroundings are unclear. The night had been cool. The road ahead is hazy. Śrīmukh looked far. Directions are clear. The eastern sky is a queer mixture of light and darkness. The tweeting of birds is heard.

Śrīmukh slowly came outside. Lipsā is surprised. She came to the door and looked outside. She saw fully. A few unfriendly relatives were seen. She wanted to hinder her movement. But he had gone far. She wanted to call her. But her throat did not support pronouncing his name. She wanted to follow him. But her vanity rendered Śrīmukh insignificant.

Śrīmukh gradually faded from Lipsā's sight. Lipsā's sorrow transformed into anger and she came inside and closed the door. She lied down with the pillow onto her face. She was in a state midway between anger and sorrow.

People seldom think that unfavourable union does not produce an effect. In life, time comes when one is unable to recognize the good and the bad. At that time, taking shelter of the unfavourable, one surrenders the favourable. The desired is breached. The aim is also changed. The grief of separation of the beloved. The undesired one's arrival is like wet fuel. But the inner meaning is significant. It can neither be imagined, nor be owned.

Medinī is bound by fate.

She lies down at her mind and age. Her daughter is the lady of the house. Her residence is also proper. Food is fine. Everything is sufficient. Yet the mind is dependent. She is always worried about Śrāvaṇī. Śrāvaṇī is primarily innocent. She hates to protest. She does not take part in arguments. Without being at fault, she readily accepts mistakes. This is the condition. Always, her son-in-law exhibits his anger. Without any reason, he does not hesitate to scold. As long as he stays

outside the home, things are peaceful. As he enters the house, the situation turns grim. If anytime, something is told, he becomes angry. He scolds as per his wish. But the mother's mind is not far away. Medinī weeps alone. But wishing for her daughter, she holds her tears. She explains to daughter. Clinching onto the unforeseen, she convinces herself.

Śrāvaṇī feels that she is a doll. Her work is to obey her master's orders in the house. Everything is done as per his interests. Śrāvaṇī is fearful. Her wishes are not fulfilled here. Her words carry no importance. Even her thoughts remain concealed.

Once, sitting by Medinī's side, Śrāvaṇī is thinking aloud. Expressing her grief, she is worried. She describes her poor situation. She submits her helplessness.

Suddenly, Abhrapad arrives.

Seeing them, he shouted.

- What is happening?

Śrāvaṇī is answerless.

Abhrapad shouted loudly.

- Old woman, why are always sitting here? Go and do some work. Who will give you food without any work?

Śrāvaṇī answered.

- What will she do?

- What are the maids doing here?

- How can you compare my mother with the maids?

- Oh...? Is she a queen? She had always been a maid.

- She has come over here as my mother. Not as a maid.
- Then what? My marriage is with you, not...
- What is in marriage? She is as much your mother as she is mine. Or else, how do I respect your elders?
- What emulation? What are you today? You are a maid's daughter and always, you will remain a maid's daughter. Or else...?
- Or else, what? Don't I have any right as your wife?
- Wife...? Rights? Since when did all such words come to your mouth? Do as I tell you. Or else, I will take your tongue out. Ha...,ha..., old woman! From tomorrow, I want to see you in the kitchen. Or else, both mother and daughter would face the same fate.

Abhrapad departs. Medinî came to Śrāvaṇî, wiped her tears with her sari and consoled her.

Daughter! Why are you quarreling for me? How long will I live? What is the meaning of pain and pleasure for me? I am happy with your happiness. The togetherness of both of you is my desire. Without any work, I would be lazy over here. As desired by my son-in-law, I will do some kitchen work. What is to be worried over here? Whatever he wants, will be obeyed. Why is this conflict? I do not have any conflict. Husband is God-like. It is not expected to have a quarrel with one's husband. If he is unhappy, then everything would be unhappy. Leave the conflict and be happy.

Śrāvaṇî's eyes are filled with tears. She condemns herself. She curses her luck. She is unhappy thinking of her mother's situation. But helpless. She neither tolerates her mother's insult, nor accepts her moving out of the house. Also, she could not keep her mother as per her wishes. She feels her house is changed. The residence is changed. The decoration is new but situation remains the same. There

is no newness to the experience. She does not feel in love with her husband. She blames her poverty for this. Now she feels that it is her poverty.

Śrāvaṇī is restless.

What would enable surpassing the circle of hunger? Some people are influenced by seeing only the top half of the stomach. At the end it is the centered around the deeds. Their deeds have all led to self abandonment...sweet behaviour...love. These deeds result in a behaviour which becomes right. This is the pride of kindness...the formation.

Time passed.

Dinamaṇi lighted the candle as before. The lighting is not circled with any eagerness. There is slowness in the movement.

Śrāvaṇī is looking at the same. She is fearful. Every movement of her reminds her of domination and slavery. Śrāvaṇī departs for her bedroom.

The night passed amidst the vanity. Śrīmukh went elsewhere. He is worried. Still he maintains his pride...I am Godly....I am an aristocrat....I am very good....But there is hunger in stomach. His body has slackened. He consumes food at the mercy of others. There is no fixed place to sleep.

Days are passing like this. Śrīmukh becomes tired. Livelihood is difficult for him. He decides to spend his life serving people. He moves from one place to the other in search of a job. But he feels that everywhere people are like him. At the core of all work, there is vanity. Everywhere there is slavery. A good position at workplace implies full of vanity.

Śrīmukh sat below a tree on the footpath. He feels nostalgic about the past golden days. He does not feel like talking. Why should he feel bad with other's words? Now, wherever he goes, he listens to morals. Where there s welcome, there

is hesitation. Wherever he is staying, he is suspected by people. Wherever he stands, people complain against him. Whenever he speaks, somebody counters him. At the time of countering, he also notes the rude behaviour. People do not take him seriously. A few people try to hear him out. He is saddened. His breath gets arrested. Śrîmukh thinks – why do such things happen?

Everywhere there is the game of pride. The country is arrogant....The time is arrogant.....The language is arrogant....The profession is arrogant....The stature is arrogant.....The knowledge is arrogant....moreover there is arrogance in conscience. Like this, the arrogance flows.....At least, Śrîmukh also feels that he is also the origin of some form of arrogance. He is standing at par. Where there is no loss there is no gain – so where is the question of emulation? Amidst unnoticed hypnotism, he is arrogant. Passion for anything creates arrogance. Anybody comes against this arrogance to counter it. Here, there lies the indication of multiple faces of mind. Here there is description of self confinement. A feeling of differentiation would exist.

Śrîmukh is worried.

The tension of the repentant mind is like a spider's web. At the feet of pain are uncontrolled rituals. The people who live happily in the society are men of high thoughts. However, Śrîmukh has lost faith in the information of such good works. In front of him, lies arrogance.....that confinement.....that centre of desire.

The tiredness of time is making things grayish.

Opening the kitchen door, Medinî came to her daughter's bedroom. She walked slowly. She is looking down. Putting her hands on the waist, she is moving around. With the orders of her son-in-law, she works in the kitchen. Sometimes, she also works in her daughter's room. Whenever she gets some free time, she

comes outside cautiously. She talked to Dinamaṇi. She discussed about her pain and pleasure.

Dinamaṇi is happy in his mind. Medinī is also busy with her work. She is working hard. Where one is putting in labour, other is becoming happy. This is the theory of arrogance. One unhappy person finds solace when somebody else is also unhappy. The fatigue comes with the realization of self unhappiness. This is the reason people forget. Memories become unfavourable. The thoughts of confinement of rituals arrive. Dinamaṇi is immersed.

Gloomy events of his life come in front of him – his dead wife Parvati. She resembled a virago. Both her shape and nature were alike her. Both her image and her behaviour were alike her. Both her intelligence and her desire were alike her. Since, she became a wife, she tried to control all matters. She entered into everything. She did not think about taking anybody's permission. She also did not wait for anybody. She worked with likeness to her interest. She forcibly tried to own everything. She would be ready to humiliate anybody. She neither cared for blame nor praise. She was an idol of vanity in her behaviour. She could go to any limits to accomplish her work.

But all these were intolerable for Dinamaṇi. He still tried to pursue her to understand. But Parvati was firm on her decisions. Everyday, this led to arguments at home along with dissatisfaction. Due to this, Parvati gradually became very confounded. She increased her torture. Dinamaṇi also became rude. The small arguments turned into a major conflict and arrogance exploded. Dinamaṇi suffered with this explosion. Parvati also suffered and committed suicide.

Thereafter, Dinamaṇi is alone. Love and respect for Parvati does not come to his mind. Affection towards her also does not arise. Only her picture dances in the mind. She comes to his mind with bitterness and also leaves the mind with

bitterness. Distressed Medinî stands in front of him and continues to speak. New thoughts arise.

There is smile at the corner of Dinamañi's lips. His face is covered with an apathetic look. He is ornamented with old age. He is affectionate. He is filled with new thoughts in his mind amidst all the elements. Dinamañi gazes.

Medinî can be seen in front. She is restless. She is also looking pleased. She had not come since long. She wears a new look today. Did the son-in-law do something favourable? Did she get something? What may be the reason? Dinamañi shouted from a distant place.

- Sister-! Here here.....

Medinî smiled at him.

Dinamañi was surprised. His inquisitiveness increased. He asked emotionally.

- Sister....! What has happened today? Anything special?

Medinî is answerless.

- Today tell me. You look very pleased. Has son-in-law gifted you anything?

- Yes..., something like that.

- What is it? Wealth...? Or house.....?

- Nothing like that.

- Then, what?

Medinî sat slowly. She arranged her sari properly. With a smile, she started.

- God has heard me.

- Oh...! What is the matter?

- My daughter is pregnant.
- Oh! You are blessed, Medinî. Your sorrow will be away. But you will become more engaged.
- Truth....God should be kind enough. My daughter should give birth to a baby boy.

Dinamani smiled.

- Sister.....Now we are more desirous. Where is the result? Having determination in mind, I was also desirous at a point of time. But.....
- Truth.....The path of life is controlled by crookedness.
- I am very much relieved since your daughter has gone to their family.
- Yes.....

Medinî takes a deep breath.

Knowing his master's nature, Dinamani felt aggrieved. Putting his master's words differently, created his own words. His own deeds are all result of his master's wishes. His master's character depicted the poorest of mountains. Over and above that was stone-like extravagance. Inside it was deadly ice. Dinamani is dejected. His thoughts echoed rudeness. His decisions were also emotionless. The reflection of his thoughts had a cruel parity.

In recent times, the temple of womb is cast with a spell. Fate is to be embraced. Purity. Unpartitioned happiness. Devotion is sincere. Śrāvaṇî is reflecting glamour and beauty. Abhrapad's ego is filled with many colours. But he is a mountain of pride and vanity.

He laughs recently. He is the conqueror. No body objects to his words. Also, nobody in his proximity is as talkative as Lipsā. Śrāvaṇî is silent. To Medinî, she is a statue. Dinamani is silent as a servant. Others are quiet at the extravagance of his wealth and aristocracy. The rest of the people keep quiet being cautious of his evil

intentions. Śrīmukh is also not there to obstruct him. It is the right time to reach a goal...to lead a luxurious life.

Abhrapad laughed openly.

Sitting at the side, Śrāvaṇī is surprised. She asked gently.

- What happened?
- The matter is difficult to understand. What does it have to do with you?
- Then what do I have to do with?
- There is no need to mingle into my matters.
- Why?
- I have lots of wealth and lots of work to do. As such, I have lot of things to worry about.
- Is your problem not my problem?

Again, Abhrapad laughed.

- How is it possible? You are a maid's daughter. You have grown up in a poor cottage. How can you throw light upon my business? Further, I am an aristocrat....come from respectable family...traditional. Do you have any such cultural background? Work like a maid's daughter and also behave similarly. Be involved in your business.

Śrāvaṇī's face reddened.

Anger could be seen on her nose. Eyes were full of inquisitiveness. She controlled her anger and asked gently.

- Why are you mentioning all these things? You have married me knowing everything. Days have passed. Am I still not to be considered as your wife? Do you still not accept me as your wife?

Abhrapad laughed sarcastically.

- Wife....? All ladies have a single definition – ‘slave’. You are a slave. Furthermore, you are a slave’s daughter.
- Do you feel that by such words, I will be more a slave or a slave’s daughter?
- This is your identity.
- Do you not know anything else?
- I know it better....
- Knowing all this, how do you identify me in front of others?
- You would remember.
- What will be your benefit?
- You will become cautious of your rights.
- Is it your trick? Being involved in such self created sadness, how do you demand your masculinity?
- Sadness....? Whose.....? Mine...?? How does the breed of slaves gauge the potential of aristocrats?
- You may be master for others. For me, you are a different person.

Abhrapad shouted.

- Śrāvaṇī....! You have gathered lot of courage for this protest. But don’t forget that I am the master of this house. I am an aristocrat...I am respected in the locality and come from one of the most respected families around. Always have control over your language. Else, I will cut your tongue in future.

Abhrapad went out angrily. Śrāvaṇī took a deep breath. She wiped her tears. She is sad. Her mind is shattered. She asks herself – who can make him understand? He is filled with arrogance. He is greedy. He is selfish. He is always

having untrue things in front of his eyes. Good things are valueless for him. Well wishing words are taken by him as harmful. Whatever is happiness is valueless to him. Only, whatever he is doing is correct. All other words are meaningless.. What does he wish?

Śrāvaṇī is worried. She curses herself. She deeply repents – why is she protesting? She has seen such things. She tolerates such incidents. There is no benefit in protesting against such things. Only dangers increase for others. The results will be dreadful. She will be silent here – she will not protest any more. If she observes something bad, she will close her eyes. Tear drops filled Śrāvaṇī's eyes.

The sky is filled with moonlight. It is exhibited lifelessly. The stars are twinkling romantically. The clouds are moving. The wind is impatient. Lipsā is sitting in the open palatial room. She is thoughtful. Her hairs are plentiful. Her clothes are shabby. Her sight is on dark treetops.

In the other room, resides her ailing father. He suffers from breathing disorders and is restless. Sadly, he shouts.

- Bhavāni....! Bhavāni....!

Bhavāni comes and responds back to him with a harsh tone.

- Why are you so much thoughtful?
- Ah....! Did anybody go in search of Śrīmukh?
- Why should anybody go? Is he a child?
- Ah....! It's not like that. He has gone out of home with arrogance.
- Then what is to be done? Is he arrogant alone? Don't others have ego?
- My daughter is suffering due to this arrogance. Why don't you make her understand?
- You have ruined my daughter's life by bringing this useless to our home.

- Oh....again arrogance?
- What arrogance? Do you know our daughter's mind? She is suffering because of such bad decisions.

For her entire life, she will live in trouble.

- Oh....What is my fault in this? After marriage, she is responsible for this. Then why is she seeking your help?
- What have you done?
- Why are you favouring your daughter? Because of my weakness. You are arrogant and she has also grown to be arrogant by following you. Who has listened to me?
- Daughter in such state of affairs by listening to you.
- It is due to her own fault. But the present situation is because of you. Always you are favouring her for her careless behaviour.
- Do you feel that my daughter will be my slave?
- No..., No....., she will be Goddess. She will be here just like yourself. Do you want that?
- You tell me only. My daughter will stay here as earlier. She will not go to that nomadic. If the nomadic comes here, I will kick him out. Yes....., hear me out, if you mention of him once more, the situation will be dreadful.

After warning him, Bhavāni entered the room. Old Raghupati caught on to fate and took a deep breath.

- Alas....alas....arrogance.....

Hearing all this noise, Lipsā came to her father's room and gradually sat by the bedside. Observing worries at father's face, she inquired.

- Father.....!

Raghupati became conscious.

Lipsā asked.

- Why are you worried for me?

Raghupati maintained silence.

Lipsā soothed him boldly.

- Do not be worried for me. Leave all your worries for me. I can manage them myself.

Raghupati is helpless. He tried to convince her daughter.

- Daughter! Time is not the same every time. Every time situation is not favourable. Whatever seems to be of pleasure today may turn out to be sorrowful tomorrow. Whatever is nectar today may turn out to be poison tomorrow. Think properly, my daughter! Judge the situation. Whatever is not done in a timely manner may not be fruitful in days to come. Still nothing detrimental has happened. Again, everything will be peaceful as before. Keeping your mind cool and head still, tread the path of your husband and be merry. Send out people to find out Śrīmukh. He will surely return after knowing the change in your mind.

Lipsā is absent minded. She stood silently for a while. Raghupati ordered her.

- Go....Go...., daughter....! As fast as possible, accomplish your work.

Lipsā went away slowly. Lamentation is there in her mind. Her voice is choked. The pain of repentance is there in her weak heart. The vision of Śrīmukh seems like a dream.

The sky is full of clouds.

Śrīmukh is tired. He is not interested in journey today. Without moving here and there, he tries to find the honey of peace. Everywhere are the footprints of narcissism. There is emulation of transgression. The destination is uncertain. The path is very dark. There is sudden fire at sight. The instincts are that of insects. People with arrogance jump into such fire.

Off late, Śrīmukh has been suffering with sorrow. He treads carefully thinking of egotism. His mind is thoughtful of clasp of arrogance. His feelings have become bitter with its shadow. Unmindfully, he is filled with disgust. There is tension all around. The influence and results of arrogance are beautifully demarcated – the difference between fire and ashes gradually become prominent. The result is ashes while fire is the influence. The burning is different. A form of thread is established. It looks like fire. That is why it looks like a thread. Its arrogance is like that of fire. This self creation controls the mind in oneness. Objects also look similar in nature. The arrogance of life is also one of such transformations.

Śrīmukh is pleased.

He does not have any such threads. Its ingredients are those of rights. It only burns when fired. Again, it turns into ashes. The ashes also burn the fire for sometime. Such ingredients take the form of ashes or a bloody look, this is the philosophy. The philosophy of influence and results is enlightenment. Here lies the desired thing. This is the goal. There is no sign of ashes.....there is no spark of fire.....only ability is called in the path of life.

Śrīmukh is humbled by himself. His saddened mind reminds him of his past. He feels sorry. There is no desire in the origin. Else, at every step, the lost mother spreads love. She comes again and again in his mind and weakens his heart. Off late, her appearance arises in the eyes. Śrīmukh turns sad. His speech also becomes

slow. But, he hovers around in search of something. Clothes are dirty. Lifestyle also follows madness of existence. Nevertheless, his search for something beautiful pushes him to go towards it....for repentance....for love....To embrace the unsupported....for illustration of the truth....for self containment...for well being.

But, recently, his journey is not peaceful. There, not only there is blooming of pride, but also, incoherence of work, which institutes the path of blindness. The revolution for freedom gets destroyed. Justice is denied. Duty is self –centered. Independent men are slaves of corruption. Everywhere, there is commotion, same thoughts....same feelings....multiplying the embracing....collective idol....Who would flee from this path...? Revolution burns him. Corruption fills the surroundings with smoke. The thorn of corruption hurts the foot. In front, the waves of injustice bubble extensively. But, these currents form the path. Otherwise, it is not possible to lead life.

Śrīmukh saddens.

The peaceful thoughts face hurdles. The goal turns cloudy. Śrīmukh sat below a banyan tree with his hands on his head. He could see some people in front of him. Everyone was busy with arguments. Then, an old man came. His dress was simple. His head had some grey hairs. His face was graceful. Being tired, he also sat below the tree. He turned serious after taking a deep breath releasing the tiredness.

Śrīmukh only saw. The old man inquired about the inquisitiveness of the youth.

- Young man! Where are you going?
- This locality.
- What will you do here?
- I have come here for the first time.

- What is your business?
- I have come here for work.
- What work?
- Anything that I get.
- Household work.....?
- What is your name?
- Can you come with me?
- Your identity.....?
- My name is Induketan. I live here. What is your identity?
- I am Śrîmukh. My house is far away. Now I live for work here and there.
- How much remuneration?
- I will decide after seeing the work.
- Fine...fine.....Then come.

Śrîmukh observed – the serious voice of the old man had pride in it. His inquisitive nature is boundless. His eyes were full of peace. Śrîmukh felt that he could depend on him. He got up. He was ready to follow him. Induketan went in front. Śrîmukh asked him at the side of the road.

- Who else is there at home?

Induketan laughed.

- Who else will be there? You will come.....and see.

Śrîmukh kept silent. Emotionally, he went on to follow him.

A silent house appeared in front of him. The paleness of the old man is observed. A dilemma is evident. Somewhere, illness is showing its presence. Here, the trees in the garden have also turned old. The flowers are bestowing a rare look. The path is become narrow. Induketan went in front. Śrîmukh followed.

Śrīmukh observed. Some other old man came down from the top room and opened the door. Induketan described.

- This is Śrīmukh. He is looking for a job. He...is my younger....Candrāmani.

Candrāmani responded in a perplexed manner.

- I am nothing....I am a dedicated servant.

Śrīmukh greeted him with folded hands.

Candrāmani greeted him into the house. Everything is decorated to serve his master. He showed him the guest room. There he asked Śrīmukh to settle down.

Śrīmukh entered.

Everything was quite old in the guest room. Everything was a mark of Induketan's family heritage. Śrīmukh was amazed to see all this. He felt glorious. His mind became composed. Suddenly, his eyes fell upon a hazy picture. It was a lady's picture. It was drawn long back – that's why, the haziness. Śrīmukh is stunned. Memories of his young age emerged. It was as if, the replica of his mother. He suddenly shivered at such pronunciation. Śrīmukh closed his eyes. His eyes were drenched in tears.

Candrāmani brought water. Suddenly, seeing tears in his eyes, he asked.

- What happened? Why speechless?

Śrīmukh did not reveal his heart.

- No....no....Nothing of that sort.

Candrāmani observed from top to bottom. He was an experienced person. He did not take much time in understanding his mind. He is not a normal worker.

He must have come from a noble background. He must have had a glorious past. He may be part of some family heritage. He asked.

- Anything else required?

Śrīmukh answered gently.

- Nothing else. Only water.

Candrāmani went away.

The silence of the evening and loneliness of nature was evident. The stars started twinkling. Feeling assured, the moon showed itself. As a daily routine, Candrāmani cleaned the top room. He decorated the place by keeping the mat. He placed the things in order. Then he went to call Induketan. Induketan came up. He sat on the mat.

The moonlight brightened in the sky. Induketan sat down and concentrated by looking at him. He could see the goodness in him, as before. His expectations were climbing up on seeing him. Justice is purified by his goodness. Now, there is no time to have double thoughts. He is peaceful after being confirmed with his goodness. Here, the sameness of nature is found in name. Hence, so many things are going around. In the bouquet of names, this name is raising the bar of expectation. As a result, there is happiness. In return, this is the crux of fate. But what is there in return? Are friendship and relations enough these days? Induketan thought about the goodness with a cool mind and still head. In return, the discovery of a single name is instituted – ‘Moonbeam’.

Candrāmani informed politely.

- Sir....! He wanted to go out.

Induketan ordered.

- Bring him over here.

Induketan sat down seriously. Candrāmani made Śrīmukh sit down and got involved in his own work. Induketan simply ordered.

- Sit down here.

Śrīmukh was happy.

Induketan told.

- See the house here. You have come to know about the members of the family now. Tell me, what do you want to do over here?
- I will do, whatever you order me to do. Order me....
- Many days ago, some institutions were built by me. Due to my old age, I cannot go for inspection to those places. I am very much interested to know about the current status of those institutions. You visit those places, inspect properly and work for their betterment.
- Any information about the institutions.....
- Correct.....All the information is with Candrāmani. Collect it from him and go. Yes....take the required money with you.
- As you wish.

Induketan called Candrāmani politely. Candrāmani came. Induketan ordered him.

- This is Śrīmukh. Today you are responsible for his eating. Again, from tomorrow morning, he will start his journey for visiting the institutions. For that, much information is required. You arrange them. Go....young man. From tomorrow, you will take care of all these things.

Candrāmani directed Śrīmukh about the way and went out of the room. Śrīmukh followed.

Lonely Induketan is immersed in deep thought. The night is shining. The night becomes serious once the evening sets. Silence follows the night.

The length of silence cannot be measured.

Śrāvaṇī is in pain by her grief. Her face is covered with lines of silence. With her limited wishes, she is worried now. Her future will be filled with tears. Now, she is the mother of a daughter. For this, her husband is very angry on her. At every moment, he is reprimanding her. Always, he admonishes. But every time, Medinī intervenes. She accepts all accusations by bowing her head. She prays for mercy. She persuades Śrāvaṇī to own all the allegations. But Śrāvaṇī weeps. She blames her own luck. She decides for suicide. On one side, there is her aged mother. On the other side, there is her newly born daughter. She is only crying. She chooses silence as the way of leading life.

Love and affection arises in her motherly heart. Her daughter's childhood makes her forget her sorrow and sufferings. She tries to convince herself. Her old mother, Medinī motivates her to think positively. She is now happy as a grandmother. Be it a boy or be it a girl, either is of much importance to her.

Abhrapad is dissatisfied. He is angry because of the birth of a girl child. He has even called off all the rituals of the birth ceremony. He has also cancelled the naming ceremony.

Abhrapad is dissatisfied with himself. He is neither ready to accept the fatherhood of a girl child nor ready to quit the girl child. He has a feeling that he has been defeated. It is painful – if it were a boy, then his wealth would have multiplied. A girl implies that there would be deterioration of his affluence. But by any means, he would increase his property. The wealth would be more. It will be preserved for some future generations. Respect would also increase.

Abhrapad is busy in finding out a way. The means for acquiring more property sometimes get funny. He is immersed in thought. Even her daughter can earn wealth. For this, appropriate training is required to be provided. Primarily, she should be given proper direction through guidance. If she develops to be a talented dancer, then it would ease the path to earn more wealth.

Abhrapad is bit relaxed.

During that time, foster mother informed.

- As per order, the naming ceremony of the daughter shall be held.

Abhrapad eagerly asked.

- What is the daughter's name?

Urvī.....

Abhrapad was pleased.

All right....Tell it to your master's wife. I am coming back soon.

The foster mother went away.

Behind the scenes, the music of wellness is searching for the reverberation of time. Abhrapad is thoughtful in his room. The village seems dusky in front. The trees cover the terrain in green colour. It is greenish all around. The horizon is unclear.

Everywhere it is unclear.

Lipsā is nostalgic. It has been some years since her marriage. To the society, she is a woman. In her heart, she is repentant. With the expectation of reunion of husband and wife, father Raghupati has breathed his last. However, mother Bhavāni still gets furious on hearing the name of Śrīmukh. Filled with vanity, she

still advises her daughter to follow the footsteps of aristocracy. Falling down from a level is similar to death for her. Her age is visible in her white hairs. Her skin is showing the fading lustre. Still her eyeliner makes her eyes attractive. Colourful desires fill her heart and mind.

Practically, who will win whose heart? Everybody is filled with ego. There are some people who think beyond the line of vanity. Decisions happen to blossom. They bear fruits.

Lipsā feels that she is trapped. She can neither stay there nor move out. Fruitless time passes. The limits of tolerance have been shattered. Now, she even finds some white hairs from within the black ones. She is suffering from pain in her body. The solitariness and indifference of mind deepens. On one side, mother Bhavāni's ego is intensifying. On the other side, there is emptiness in the sky of thought.....blue beauty.....again pain of estranged relations. Some of the pale Champak flowers have fallen down. Lipsā still puts one Champak flower everyday.

The temple looks beautiful besides the Champak tree.

This is the place Induketan has indicated. Śrîmukh has come. Here, the cock's call raises everyone from sleep. Shadows determine the hour of the clock. The fox howls at night. This is such a village. It is clean all around. The paddy fields are all around. The temple at the end of the village is the place for virtue. But the temple is half broken. People come here and pray to God. But all the time, God seems unhappy here. Śrîmukh looked around. He sat down after taking a deep breath. He is worried – people have become used to this place. Nobody thinks about renovating this temple. Nobody is either repenting for its poor condition. Śrîmukh goes the priest.

- Are you the priest over here?
- Yes...tell me....what do you want?

- Who has built this temple?
- Somebody pious.
- What is his name?
- I cannot say.
- It is getting destroyed. Nobody seems to be bothering about any renovation work.
- Who will do it? Everybody is needy over here. Wealthy people behave as poor ones. Moreover, everybody argues ‘I am superior.....I am superior’. They come over here and pray to God for wealth. They quarrel over there properties. This is the condition. What is their benefit by investing over here?
- Then what are you doing over here?
- What do I do? I do it for earning to meet my family needs.
- Then don’t you want to take care of the renovation work?
- I have taken care. But nothing has happened. Still waiting for some noble soul to arrive.

Śrīmukh turns answerless. His heart pains – who has done it? What is the achievement? What is the return? What is attained? What was the objective of the construction? What is the result? The objective of renovation is noble. Has anybody in the past tried to think about it? Who will take its responsibility? There would be variety! People forget the name of the founder.

Śrīmukh is restless.

The calm face of Induketan is coming to his mind.....the happening at the top room....then the servant Candrāmani. Thinking of some other destination, Śrīmukh got up from there. Nobody obstructed him. Neither was anybody asking about his next destination. He is lonely...a traveller.

This area is scarcely populated. It is one of the favourite places of Induketan. This is the place of Induketan's forefathers. They started there business from this place. Induketan had been following them. Since then, he felt the necessity of education over there. Therefore, firstly, he started a school there.

The school is in front of Śrīmukh. Some age old trees are surrounding the school. The foundation of the school is similarly dilapidated. All the rooms are door less. The wind passes through the broken doors. The small plants around the school render it the look of a forest cottage.

Śrīmukh came. He stayed in front of the wrecked school for sometime. There, firstly he came across two people. One was a beggar, another was a mad person. The beggar was having food. The mad person was engrossed in shouting on the other side. Śrīmukh saw. In one of its rooms, a lady beggar was bed ridden because of illness. On the other side, an old man struck with leprosy was blowing away the flies sitting on his pimples. Śrīmukh could not understand anything. Looking around...thinking. Suddenly, the sound of a quarrel was heard. Śrīmukh went forward. He saw two people quarreling. Both of them were drunkards. He could not decipher any reason for the quarrel. Śrīmukh looked towards them. He went forward to stop the quarrel. Suddenly, somebody shouted from the back.

- Do not go....Do not go.....

Śrīmukh was surprised. The beggar having food was shouting.

- Do not go. They are drunkards. They are always quarreling. Also, they scold and drive us away from here. They have no wisdom.

Śrīmukh asked boldly.

- What are you doing here?
- I live here.

- Since when?
- For many days.
- Do you lead life by begging?
- We are hopeless. What else shall we do?
- Okay, in a few days time, all will have to go out of here.
- Why?
- Did your father build it?
- So did your father build it?
- Beggar! Speak carefully.
- Why? We have been living here since long. Nobody has ever told us. Who are you to get us out of here? It is an eternal truth that whoever lives where becomes the master of that place. So, I am the master. Go....Do as you like. Oh, I was thinking of him as a saint. Basically, he is also a drunkard. Today, because of slightly more drinking, he has come here to sleep. Damn...Damn....Go....Search for some other place. You will not get any place here.

Śrīmukh was astonished.

During this time, other two beggars came to the school. One was blind. The other was deaf. Keeping them as witnesses, the beggar shouted at Śrīmukh.

- Hey, look! This drunkard is here to get us out.

The deaf told.

- What are you telling? Music....? Whose marriage is it today?
- Oh.....! Not music....Drunkard....
- Foot? What?
- Damn....Idiot....Deaf.
- Why Khadira leaf.....? Where is the betel leaf?

The blind man intervened.

- Stop.....He is talking of people.
- Talking of food.....? Where....?

The deaf man stopped.

Śrīmukh departed amidst the discussion of beggars. Pride and vanity are sparkling at the back of his disturbed mind. In this quarreling situation, pride is the flag bearer. Śrīmukh went on to some other way. His mind started to think about the experiences. He also started introspecting.....What is the desire for these discarded places? What is the ownership? Why does he speak of right over here? What is he himself doing in the name of inspection? Is whatever he doing in his scope? Off course, there is greediness. Definitely there is an instinct of owning the things in his execution. This profit and greed, this hypnotism, this desire for crossing limits are all different steps of pride.

The heaviness of his heart lessened.

Śrīmukh stands on a straight road. Many indicated places are in front of him. He is happy. His mind is puzzled – is there no salvation from pride? Here just as there is no hope of victory, there is an apprehension of pain for defeat. Why does it happen? Why does such self indignation happen at every moment? Why such hesitation? Why such anxiety? Why such division based on needs? What are these philosophies surrounding pride?

Śrīmukh is tired and thoughtful.

A beautiful village is in the vicinity. In this village is Induketan's dental clinic. Śrīmukh decided to take rest over there. He asked some people for the landmarks of his other destinations. Here...Here.....some villagers came forward and directed. Śrīmukh followed them.

Śrīmukh came to the door of the clinic. The villagers directed – this is the clinic. Śrīmukh was surprised. He looked here and there. Some cows were tied in the adjacent room. One portion of the clinic is broken. On the other side, one door is closed. There is no door in the other room. But there is an idol placed in the room. Śrīmukh asked thoughtfully.

- Is it a clinic? Who is the doctor over here?

The villagers smiled and told.

- It is a clinic only by name. But no doctors come here and there is no medication.
- Then, how is it a clinic?
- Here, there is an ancient history.
- Tell me?
- This was built by a great person. He had appointed a doctor here. Medicines were also available. But the doctor was not interested to stay in the village. He went away elsewhere. Thereafter, nobody came. Then everything stopped.
- Then, is the door closed from that day?
- No...No...This room is used by the village youths. They organize a club here. In the other room, the religious activities of the village are organized. The village meeting and welfare activities are also organized.
- What is the history of this?
- Once upon a time, a great person had come here for a piece of work with his wife. Some of the village women requested his wife for the treatment of the children. She accepted the request and started to work. She organized everything. When, all the work was finished, people started to think about the name of the clinic. When, it was thought to name the

clinic after her name, she objected. She suggested naming the clinic after the name of the village God. Since then, it is so.

- What is the name?
- Śāśirekhā (Moon beam).....

Śrīmukh was surprised. He became thoughtful. The villagers asked.

- Do you belong to them?

Śrīmukh felt uneasy from within.

- Yes....
- Are you here to rebuild it?
- I am thinking about it.
- Oh, good luck.

He tried to call a couple of persons. Śrīmukh objected. The villagers asked.

- How can you return back today?
- Where should I stay?
- In this youth club only.

Śrīmukh is silent. The villagers are assuring him

- Don't be thoughtful. You have come for the welfare of the village. You are our guest. We will help you in all ways. There would be no problem. You stay here only. Afterwards, he went to bring the key of the room.

The villagers departed. Śrīmukh looked towards his way forward. He observed the half destroyed clinic. Again he looked at the nearby trees. He stayed there. The devoted look brought out the tree's old stories. Some people plant trees. Some people are responsible for deforestation. Thirdly, there are some people who neither plant trees, nor uproot them. They only observe and become happy. Some

people become proud by owning the trees. Because of intolerance, some deforest them. Some people become depressed by thinking that the trees belong to others. Without any reason, some people talk about the trees here and there. This has been the rule. Here, the third persons look valueless. Śrīmukh now feels to be part of this group. He looks at the trees. He also witnesses the cutting of trees. However, he still discovers his existence. He is conscious about self dignity.

This pride explains to self. This meeting creates bubbles. At the strike of fate, these bubbles increase with the wind. Their existence lies in water. Their speed is determined by that of the water. But, what reflection is seen in the bubbles? The reflection is that of self and the self centered bubbles. At the end, what is the result of all this?

Śrīmukh took a long breath.

What is the way? How to follow it? Everywhere, it is binding. The protest is shaped by its boundaries. All hinderances are prominent. The sign of depression is observed at the end. The seed of the beginning lies in the end. The lavishness of the exterior burns. Belief does not touch aristocracy. The mind enters the sense. What is there inside? Where is the base? Where is the end to wealth? Where is the end of knowledge?

During this time, the villagers were present. Opening the door of the youth club, they told.

-Stay here tonight. In the evening, some old villagers and young people will come here. They will discuss about the clinic.

Śrīmukh was pleased.

The villagers informed.

- If water is needed, you may go to the well there. You go there with this pot. We will come back in the evening.
- It is okay.

The villagers departed. Śrīmukh entered the room. Being assured, he changed his clothes. He sat down in the yard with a peaceful mind. Afternoon sets in the village. The varied dresses of the village women were seen. The modesty and spirituality of the people were enjoyable. The village cleanliness blossomed in the day-to-day village life. Śrīmukh became thoughtful on looking into the well. The gathering of village women was seen in front. Here somebody as ‘Lipsā’ is enjoying her vanity. Somebody as ‘Śrāvaṇī’ is wiping her tears. Again, because of sufferings and sorrow, some old woman has turned into ‘Medinī’. Sorrowful Śrīmukh turned his head down.

The clouds could be seen in the western skyline. The deceitful disguise of the sunset expanded itself. The last moments of a hunt were signalled by the golden twilight. The evening ingredients are welcomed at the feet of the housewife. Far away, the sounds of the ringing bell at the temple increase the adventurous atmosphere.

Thoughtful Śrīmukh sat down.

The villagers gathered. They started the discussion. They prepared the blueprint of the restoration project for the clinic. Śrīmukh assured of assistance. The villagers were satisfied. Śrīmukh inquired about his next destination.

- How far is Yagnapur from here?

Some villager answered.

- It is nearby....What work do you have over there?
- There is a vast field for grazing cows?

- Vast field.....??
- A village fair is arranged there. Sometimes a herd of cows could also be seen there.

Everybody laughed.

Śrīmukh is astonished.

- What...? What is the cause of laughter?

An old man explained.

- Sir! Nowadays, there is neither any field nor any fair. For the field only, there is quarrel amongst the villagers. Everybody is interested in using the field for cultivation. People are using muscle power to acquire the field. Thus, the entire field is being used for cultivation. Still there is no end to the conflict.
- Why was the vast field not used for cultivation?

The old man became emotional.

- The story is old and great. Once upon a time, a great person was returning back on the way. Suddenly, his cart broke down at that place. The bullock was ill. It was not able to carry the cart. It was freed. But the bullock died after some time over there. The kind hearted person decided to build a cow shed at that place.
- Then?
- Within some days, the noble man bought the nearby fields. The whole field was declared as a cattle field. A cowshed was also built over there.
- What was the goal?
- The goal was noble. When the cows and buffaloes would turn old, they would reside over there. They would spend the rest of their life happily there. The goal was clear.

- Then.....?
- Then what? The noble man gave the responsibility to the villagers and went back. Now, there is neither any cattle field, nor any cowshed. Only, a quarrelsome village.

Śrīmukh gets tired.

The diseased should be asked. The desire for knowledge came to an end. The sounds of the fox deepened the night. The villagers departed. Śrīmukh also requested for everybody's departure.

His breath was filled with sad memories....whatever he is getting, he is also losing it. Quest is not only the source of search, but also the strong nature. He is desirous. Desire for getting something. It is greed.....greediness is the hidden language of vanity.

Why is this sadness? Śrīmukh asks himself. Why is his lack of confidence? The mind wishes to take possession of whatever is great in front. That is always not possible. Maybe, sometimes. Being compared with others, he is happy. Sometimes, unhappy. Sometimes, he is filled with sorrow. But why do such things happen? Till such time the desirous thing is got and the boundaries of the element are known, the mind is restless but why is this philosophy not known? The road is simple and the goal is also known. The goal is also clear. The boundary is also prominent. Vanity hinders the awakening. Again the mind takes a form to grasp self. The mind separates. He weakens amidst the universal pervasion. The desirous element reflects itself in the mirror of the mind. That is the reason for everything. The reflection in the mirror does not show the boundaries. So, there is restlessness, commotion and turbulence.

The practice for maintaining the boundaries are regular. All things are under control. The flames of pride have base in spreading satisfaction. The turmoil dies down.

Śrīmukh's heart unnoticingly chanted the consoling words....Oum Śāntiḥ....Śāntiḥ....Śāntiḥ.

The whole night passed away unslept.

Śrīmukh got ready after completing his morning formalities. He again started towards his destination. The name of the village is Abhayapally. There is a school. The school is for children. After visiting the school, he will be back. So he started his journey early morning.

His feelings for the chants of search gradually started melting. His thoughts were occupied with new ideas. His perspective changed. An age comes in life when, people accept nothing but their own existence. Here he gives so much importance that the other things in life diminish. But, now Śrīmukh is worried about his own existence. Variety comes to his thoughts. His worries are all centered on it. Ignorance is proved in a speedy manner. Still, recently, some uniqueness in prayers arouses him. Mind tries to absorb the same. That....what is independent.....more intoxicating....philosophy of selflessness in all directions....for all...

Abhayapally was like a desert. He met the people. Somebody took him to the school to talk about it. Śrīmukh was surprised. The school was in dilapidated condition. The broken down walls were standing like the mountain peaks. Some goats were eating plants on the broken walls. Hens were roaming around. Sheep were grazing. Crows were around. The area was covered with grass. Calves had gathered happily. Śrīmukh was speechless. He came away. The villagers asked.

- Are you a teacher?

Śrīmukh looked towards them and answered bravely.

- How did you know?
- Who else would know about a school?
- Oh....it was a guess work.

The villagers answered in assertive mode.

Śrīmukh asked.

- Is the school not functioning now?
- No...no...The building is broken down. How would it work?
- Then, where do the children study?
- Who is studying? The school is shifted to the other village. They have become more powerful. The school is functioning in their village. It is far away. So, the children are not going to school.
- Why don't you organize a school here?
- It was organized over here. By virtue of a noble person, a school was established over here. He also appointed a teacher.
- Teacher?
- Yes....teacher. The noble man was also taking care of the teacher's food and lodging. A teacher's house was also present.
- Teacher's house?
- Yes.....The classrooms had collapsed due to a cyclone. Thereafter, the classes were conducted in teacher's house.
- Can I meet the teacher now?
- He is not present.
- Where did he go?
- He was old. He passed away within a few days.
- Then?

- Then what? School was closed.
- School got closed....? Then, should we go to the teacher's home?
- Where is the home? It is also broken.
- Okay, we will come back after having a look.
- Let's go.....

Śrīmukh was again surprised. The condition of the teacher's house was similar to that of the school building. Near the half broken house, another half broken temple signifies that people live in the village. In the temple, there is a statue of Lord Shiva. Some flowers were seen on the statue. Śrīmukh bowed and prayed to Lord Shiva and calmed himself. Benevolently, the villagers showed him the way. Śrīmukh followed his way.

Śrīmukh moved on. The reaction of his past memories reflected in his mind. A lonely path was in front of him. There were only some footprints on the way. The sound of celebration of love and romance could be heard from nearby. It is the celebration of marriage. The sound of a microphone was carried in the wind from a faraway village. The sound was that of happiness. He was cherishing this sound of happiness and joy. His thoughts were facilitated by Lipsā. He was nostalgic. Śrīmukh was sad because of her attitude – what is the distance between picture and character?

Distance increases pain.

Silence spreads its colour in self thoughts. The virtues of self are adverse to waiting. Within sometime, the thinking comes to an end. The desired moment comes in front. The time is troubled.

Tears were filled in Śrāvaṇī's eyes.

The quest for knowledge in the reliable areas is destroyed. The love stream has died with the silent crying. The immersion of kindness had rendered the day

leaden. Medinî is no more. She was ill with common fever. She passed away forever lying on her bed. Some days had passed. Still her picture arises in Śrāvaṇî's memories. Like her mother, she realized her own faults. Still, how many are affected by her mother's dignity?

Śrāvaṇî was angry – only due to her husband's pride, her mother had turned to a slave. She was a slave's daughter. Her mother's death meant no more than a slave's death. Nobody is saddened due to it. Lamentation is a feeling – faraway. Nobody is there for any help. Where is the question of obstructing unsocial activities? If she protests for any such work, even her husband does not hesitate to beat her. He is also not that affectionate to her daughter. He performs the bare minimum responsibilities of a father. Or else, ignorance. His words are busy with the degradation of others. Greediness is reflected in his behaviour. The greed is extreme for getting something. Śrāvaṇî has many a times tried to politely make him understand. But all these are in vain.

Daughter is growing up. Abhrapad had arranged for dance training for his daughter, thinking that she can earn money just like a son would have. But Śrāvaṇî is not interested in all this. She had protested time and again. For this, she has been rebuked and beaten. She laments thinking it to be persuasions. But, the lovely dance of the daughter makes her forget her sorrows and sufferings. Silently, time passes on.

During the unfavourable times, age rolls by.

Lipsā is surprised by finding a few grey hairs on her head. Seeing the reflection in the mirror, she was filled with self pride. But like the dried champak flowers, her wishes squeezed. She does not take much interest in anything. Meanwhile, the seed of self realization is sprouted.

Mother Bhabani is ill for some days. Brothers did not have time to look after her. Sister-in-laws are also no better. Hence, Lipsā takes care of her. She feels disgusted and rebukes. But Bhabani is still immersed in her ocean of pride. She wants her daughter Lipsā to follow her footsteps. This is the cause of conflict between the two. Lipsā is always involved in conflicts. She blamed her mother for her dissatisfied life. But Bhavāni shouts on hearing the name of Śrīmukh.

Lipsā analyzes her present condition within the mixture of pain and pleasure. With her loneliness, vanity seems to fade away. The radiance of colours of pride was absent. But, Lipsā sees herself in her new clothes. The family only remains with a few servants in the name of visitors. There were some neighbours. Due to her nature, nobody was fascinated by her beauty. Nowadays everything is as usual...as per practices....Lipsā is not satisfied. She searches of somebody who genuinely praises her. At least, sacrificing oneself, who hails her beauty. But, now the situation is awful. Lipsā feels that nobody can handle her situation. Her courteous look suddenly thought of the importance of Śrīmukh. Lipsā searches for it and laments her past.

It had been a tiresome hunt.

Śrīmukh is present with all the information. Śrīmukh accepted Candrāmani's welcome and entered the house. He inquired about the master. Candrāmani replied politely mentioning his healthiness.

The autumn weather was fine. The white clouds were beautifying the clean sky. The beauty of the garden could be compared with that of the lover. The surrounding is looking green. The two sides of the path are filled with trees. The trees are swaying to the tune of the wind. The sun is about to set and it is time for the birds to fly back to their nests.

Induketan sat calmly. Smile is reflected on his face. His devotion indicated the tranquility of the autumn sky....in front of the eyes were the mouldable affectionate clouds....the green path of the season....the lamenting moonbeam....the art of the full moon.....

Union is a unique sensation. Here, sensation is alone. The provisions for journey are adequate. Separation is not of much importance. Differentiation is without parts. This is ideal form for formation. A part of the result.

Evening sets in with the dewdrops.

Candrāmani arranged the top room properly. As in previous occasions, Induketan went and sat over there. Śrīmukh entered humbly. Induketan asked.

- Have you visited all the places?
- Yes.....
- Were you able to collect all the details?

Śrīmukh answered sorrowfully.

- Nothing is favourable enough for collecting any details.
- Then.....?
- Everything is destroyed.

Induketan smiled.

- Then what is the worry?

Śrīmukh replied irritatingly

- But renovation is not possible everywhere.

Induketan smiled again.

- Then what.....?

Taking a deep breath, Śrīmukh replied.

- All these have to be built newly.

Induketan asked him seriously.

- Who will build it...?

Śrīmukh looked at Induketan's face. Then he replied slowly.

- As you instruct, Sir.

Induketan took a deep breath.

- Time has passed by.

Śrīmukh looked surprised.

- Why did not you tell earlier?

Induketan made him understand.

- My dear son! Everything has its limitations. Some form of controlling mechanism exists. When all these things come to the mind, at that time the mind also becomes controlled. Attitudes are also chained. On that path, appetite appears. That path is of abandonment....dedication... devotion....

Śrīmukh asked fascinatingly.

- How are all these things possible?
- Life is a form of power. By any means, this power needs to be utilized. As far as it is utilized, it is possible to express it. But how it is to be expressed, is a matter of thought.

Many questions gathered in Śrīmukh's mind – What was he expressing till now? In which direction was he utilizing his energy of life? How was the path okay for all?

Observing Śrīmukh to be silent, Induketan told.

- Expression power of everybody is not the same. Here, experience leads the way. Accordingly, life progresses. Sincerity decides the degree of expression. There, the result is union. But in reality, dedication determines the way of life.

Śrīmukh remained serious in a humble manner. His mind is disturbed by the springing thoughts of the devastated places. Looking for a means to own them, he questioned.

- Then what about the renovation of the dilapidated places?

Induketan smiled.

- Not only life, everything is time bound. When all these were constructed, it was an appropriate time. Thereafter, all were handed over. Now, what is left to be done? Where is the objective?
- Then what is the decision?
- Land was present. Land was left over there. Earlier the land was not unutilized productively. We had put it to use. It required planning. Ingredients were present. The skill of construction was present. There were some beneficial objectives. Only, there was lack of proper planning. This was our execution. But was the complete project sustainable? If the objectives are fulfilled, does anybody think of its future existence?
- Then what should be done over there?
- The development would be thrown out of gears.

- Knowing each and every thing, why did you get engaged in it? Why did you build all these? What was your objective behind all this? Whom did you dedicate all these?

Śrīmukh was bewildered.

Induketan looked at the sky. The moonlight was clearly visible in the autumn sky. The rhythmic sounds of insects were making the atmosphere pleasant.

Induketan started.

- My dear son. My experience has been my great achievement. In the flow of life, I have sometimes felt the arrival of bubbles. Transition has been attached with me all along. The idol of transition is my wife Moonbeam. We discovered each other at a weak moment. The boundary of life was clear to us. But there were a few obstacles in our path of union. At this top room, we decided on how to come out of our obstacles. Some welfare activities came across our minds. That's why we stayed at many places. While staying at many places, the welfare activities were thought of.
- Then, what was the reason of welfare thoughts?
- No.....It was the result of incompleteness.
- Then mother.....?
- She was the planner for all the activities. But, all our activities were centered around peace. Still, we could not forget the essence of life. Thereby, the way of life and its destination was controlled. Dedication was thought as the supreme law of life. So she was accepting dedication as the way of life in her works, words and mind.
- Then.....?

- Thereby my partner in peace was filled with happiness. The result of her deeds was the various accomplishments. So, her life was aligned with accomplishment. For me, way of life....accomplishment...enlightenment.

Induketan remained silent. Śrīmukh discovered his piousness and as a disciple, he laid down at the feet of Induketan. The autumn night made the relationship as a special one.

Servant Candrāmani indicated that the night was late.

Autumn had set in for long.

It is night. Abhrapad's sleep was disturbed. His bitter mind was filled with greed. The pain in his heart was intolerable. There was a heap of disbelief in his heart. His every word reflected vanity. There were no limits to his misbehavior. Everything was done for wealth creation.

For increasing his wealth, his daughter Urvī was recently put to dance. The public were pleased to see the dance of her adolescent stage. Though the prize money was less, still it was motivating. Abhrapad was very happy, since the money was getting added to his wealth. Nowadays, Abhrapad himself invested in some activities. For the well being of the daughter, old Dinamaṇi used to move around with her.

But Śrāvaṇī was not in favour of all this. So she protested against it, time and again. She protested to Dinamaṇi and her daughter. She also requested to her husband. She made him aware that the results would be fearful. But all these efforts go in vain. She cries. To whom shall she reveal to lessen her sorrow? Only mother was there who was close to her. Now, her place is taken by old Dinamaṇi. He does whatever he can, but when helpless, only keeps a hand on her forehead revealing his helplessness.

He was ill for three days. Śrāvaṇī was busy in taking care of him. Urvī was also serving. But Abhrapad could not tolerate all these things. He shouted at both of them on seeing them at the servant's side.

- What are you doing here?

Śrāvaṇī remained silent.

Urvī answered.

- Grandfather is ill.
- Grandfather....? He is a servant.....You can call him by his name.
- Can't servant become a grandfather?
- That I cannot tell.

Urvī asked boldly.

- Then what do you tell?
- Am I inhuman in front of a servant?

Abhrapad slapped his daughter and asked her to go out from there. He also ordered to Śrāvaṇī.

- Go.....I had not brought you here for taking care of a servant.

Śrāvaṇī departed without any word. Dinamaṇi requested politely.

- Master, I do not need any care. Do not scold others because of me.

Abhrapad stopped.

- It is okay. How long will you lie down? Start your work from tomorrow. Tomorrow night, my daughter has a dance program. If necessary, you have to accompany her.

Abhrapad came into Śrāvaṇī's room. He told rudely.

- What, are you practicing a maid's work? Why are you so affectionate towards servants? Servant's place is at the master's feet. You are only giving them courage. They would start creating nuisance within a few days. If you again display such behaviour, you will be thrown out of here.

Abhrapad departed. In some other room, Urvî was crying. Śrāvaṇî was sitting there. She was blaming her bad luck. She was praying to God for her early death. But she was reminded of her old mother's advice to tolerate everything in life. She gave the examples to her daughter. She advised her daughter to increase the level of patience. She prayed to God for the wellbeing of their daughter and embraced her..... cried.

As Urvî grew, she became conversant with her father's attitude and character. She also realized her mother's sorrow. She understood her declining family values. She heard about her mother's past. She was disturbed. But she could not decide on what is to be done. Eventually, out of fear, she kept her head on her mother's lap and cried.

Urvî tried to forget her family history. In front of her eyes, was the ambience of the dance hall. Then the style and movement of the feet. She was tuned to the rhythms of the dhol. Her success lied in the smile on the face of audience. She was proud of the ovation and applause of public. Urvî remained humble. When she used to come back to the rest room after her dance performance, hundreds of hands tried to shake hands with her. As if she could not draw the picture of her life all by herself. The broken picture decorated her.

Being by Urvî's side, Dinamaṇî used to take pride in Urvî's performance but he also feared a lot for her future. Many thought of getting her as their life partners. Some people discussed with her regarding business on dancing matters, while some others asked for her value for physical enjoyment. Some presented her with

flower garlands in romance while some others waited for an exchange of smiles as lovers. Some praised her for her dedication to work while some others prayed for her future progress. But all these were in vain to Dinamaṇi. He did not wish to listen to any thing, He only wished to control Urvī. But this was not possible. He tried to explain Urvī. Urvī was becoming wealthy. Dinamaṇi thought – Father was burning with vanity. Others were also burning. Daughter was also going in same direction. She was burning others that time. Time would come when she would be burnt in other's fire. Her ego was increasing day after day on the ovation and applause of public. People were encouraging her. Actually, this was the lower most rung of pride. As she was going up the ladder of progress, she would have destroyed others as well as her own self.

To Dinamaṇi, welfare of the family was his prime objective. Whenever, he apprehended a problem, he would have seen an obstacle. When he is not able to do so, he himself would become an obstacle – he showed as if he was ill. Sometimes, he had to look into household work. He would obey his master's orders. However, he did not let all this affect his affection for Urvī. He was bound to be present in the dance performances. But, recently he would pose to be ill to prevent her.

Once, Dinamaṇi was hearing a description of Urvī's performance from Śrāvaṇī. Śrāvaṇī was feeling very sad. Dinamaṇi requested her to refrain from sending Urvī to the dance programmes. Śrāvaṇī was helpless. Her husband's vanity was supreme. Then the daughter followed like insects. So, Śrāvaṇī was sad. She had a protesting mind. Her thoughts were bitter. Her silent nature was taking the protest in a different path. But off late, she had made her mind strong rather than to make protests. She promised herself to intensify the protest – by exploding the bomb of silence everyday.

Angry Śrāvaṇī was sitting.

Suddenly she heard a commotion and looked outside the window to find people calling Dinamaṇi.

- Fatherly.....! Fatherly.....!

Dinamaṇi was present.

Śrāvaṇī asked.

- Why is the noise?
- It's not noise. Wealthy Raghupati's sons are there with their new vehicles. They are enjoying the new vehicles.
- But these people do not come. Why have they come now?
- Today Raghupati's wife Bhabani is seriously ill. She would not live any more. What will the only daughter do?
- Isn't the daughter's name Lipsā?
- Yes....She had deserted her husband in greed of property. Father Raghupati died suddenly, so she is in trouble. Others would try to take advantage of the situation and confiscate her property. Off late, the brothers had arrived. Who knows, what would happen? She does not even think of where Śrīmukh has gone.

Hearing Śrīmukh's name, Śrāvaṇī's heart pounded faster. She became a bit pleased. A few thoughts from the past unsteadied her mind.

She asked.

- He would have had his share over here. Why isn't he coming?
- He has renounced all his own properties. Why are you worried about other's property? His properties are now used as temple for the village Goddess. Always, some spiritual ceremonies are held there. Religious meetings are also held there. People are involved in welfare activities over there. Some of them also provide donations.

- From the very beginning, he has been very generous.
- At an early adulthood, he had become a saint to make his father happy.
- Why did he become a saint? He had got married to Lipsā.
- What marriage? He had gone out on the night of the honeymoon. Didn't Raghupati search for him? Didn't he go on explaining to her daughter? But like mother, like daughter. The ego of both of them hurt old Raghupati. He died of his sorrow. Still then, they have not realized it.
- What will happen now?
- What now? Monks do not have any fixed place to stay. Who knows where he goes? Basically, Śrīmukh is a noble person. Raghupati had understood him properly. He captured a gem of a person as Śrīmukh and got him married off to his daughter. But what? Nobody acknowledged him. Because of ego and pride, the gem could not be recognized and now there is repentance.

Śrāvaṇī was speechless in self exhaustion. Forgetting dedication to her husband, she blames her luck. Observing her worried face, Dinamaṇi told.

- Who is to blame? Here also, it is the same situation. My master could not recognize her gemlike wife, inspite of getting her. One day, time will come, when he would also repent.

Dinamaṇi went out turning his back. Śrāvaṇī sat – whatever she has got in life, she has lost it. What is the way by which she could take her husband and daughter away from the evil path? Or else, should she end her life before witnessing the downfall of both of them?

Days were passing with the tension.

When it is the time for the buds to bloom, wind arrives there. Thereafter it spreads the fragrance. Not only does this attract the bee but also some other insects

along with that. When the bee comes for union, it also finds other insects. But how does the inexperienced bud understand the same? Śrāvaṇī is in agony. For some days, Urvī has been staying outside for her dance programmes. Off course, proper arrangements are present. Besides her, fatherly is also present. But still she is not in peace. Śrāvaṇī was roaming with her mind going hither and thither. The symbol of fear was there on her silent face. She was counting the days. Her foot movements were restless. Sometimes, she looked outside the door for her daughter. Sometimes, she would stare out of the window for a long time.

Many were going on the road. But nobody was clearly visible. Only a garland of heads could be seen. Her feelings were hurting her. Still, she could take her eyes off. Her mind could wait no longer.

Suddenly, a loud laughter could be heard. Śrāvaṇī turned conscious. She looked indifferently – her husband was laughing crookedly. She sat still. She was serious. Abhrapad started rudely.

- Punishment is received today. Till date, she has been suffering.

Śrāvaṇī asked politely.

- Whom are you talking about?
- That rude lady....now her ego is crushed.
- What happened....? Who is she.....?
- She is sinful Lipsā. Who is now whose relative.....? For wealth, everybody turns to be a relative. If wealth is lost, everything is lost. The property may not fall in the right hands.
- What happened....? Tell me clearly.

Abhrapad laughed crookedly.

- The old lady Bhabani has died. The entire property is to be divided. The sons are raising walls in their own properties. The house also got divided. The daughter's share has fallen in the room of the courtyard.....room.....That sinful lady has aptly received her punishment.

Again Abhrapad laughed.

Śrāvaṇī was disgusted.

- What are you happy for? Laughing at bad times of others is not good.
- What is her bad time?
- Anyway....What is here?
- I am greatly satisfied by the fact that the egoistic lady is punished. She must undergo atonement for her evil deeds. Simple lady.....
- What is her ego?

Śrāvaṇī asked angrily.

- Think about your own self.

Turning around, she departed.

Abhrapad turned angry.

- Śrāvaṇī.....! How dare you speak such words to me? Since when have you developed such habits?

Abhrapad boldly entered into the committee room.

It was on the verge of a conflict.

Off late, Lipsā has left the palace and has been residing in the room in the courtyard. It is clean everywhere and nicely decorated. Raghupati had built it with love and affection. It is here that he reaped the benefits of his business. He also meditated here for his salvation. He thought about the means for atonement. He

spent his leisure time over here. It was a very small portion of his property. This was now the share of Lipsā.

Lipsā became responsible for whatever she has inherited from her father. She has protest in her mind but many times more, it is repentance. This shelter is everything she has. The hut is her only property. The way for solution is also the path of this hut. The curvy road ahead led to the pool. In order to gauge the distance between the pool and the hut, she was sitting there. A lonely place. The other places were already used for worship. The places were renovated.....To be in line with the requirements for worship. Now, she is no longer influenced by her father's aristocracy. All around were the cruel sounds of insects. The harsh sound of the crow was dreadful. The violent crying of dogs was reflecting the torturous scenario of lonely life.

Lipsā repented.

That day, Śrīmukh was seen to be going out of the back door of the palace by the curvy road. Lipsā could not see her groom clearly in the early morning sun. Her eyes were tainted in vanity. But nowadays, mother did not advise to express pride. Even father did not advise to suppress her ego. All expressions are by self. All actions are by self. The quarrel between the brothers has ended. They have taken their shares. Off late, the favourableness of mind is only for self.

Lipsā was worried. With her every shadow of experience, there was vanity. The shadow itself was like a closed door. It neither allowed the outside light to enter, nor the inside darkness to go out. Recently, Lipsā experienced the removal of all ornaments. This freeness made her luminous. She understood the essence of life. She could feel other's pain. She was eager to tread into her new path of life. She could feel the closeness of the ordinary gentleman. She was eager to search for

him. She was ready to pray for forgiveness and devote herself to him. At the name of Śrīmukh, waves vibrated within her.

With age, the fickle mindedness was lost.

With open hair, Lipsā stared towards the pool. Waves were created...boundaries created...towards the shore. She was excited...crying...again looking towards....again looking towards the white water lilies, she closed her eyes.

Night fell.

Induketan went towards the top room. Candrāmani had not prepared the carpet. Śrīmukh was now a servant. In spite of his illness, Induketan has not left going to the top room. He tried to sleep over there. Sitting nearby, Śrīmukh massages the feet with his hands. He gives a description of the daily jobs. He explains the details of income and expenditure. Induketan praised Śrīmukh for his devotion to work. He is also pleased with his behaviour. Everyday, Śrīmukh listened to the past history of Induketan. But, on that day, Śrīmukh orated his history. Induketan knew that the story is completed. Induketan preached about life.

- Long live! You are not my servant. You are my son. Śrīmukh became polite.
- Why this unnecessary provision of rights for me.....? I have completed the responsibilities given by you to self satisfaction. If again my services are required, I would be happy to accept it. Where is the question of right? You are experienced. You are fully aware of the subject of rights and responsibilities.

Induketan smiled.

- Long live! On one hand there is responsibility, on the other hand there is right – this is the prime difference. Somewhere, the owner handles the

responsibilities. Somewhere, the responsible person becomes the owner.
You are on whose side.....?

Śrīmukh was answerless.

Again, smilingly Induketan advised.

- You are given some responsibilities imply that you have certain rights.
Now you are responsible means you have the rights.

Śrīmukh was overwhelmed with politeness. He was quite impressed with the affectionate words of the old man. He asked.

- Then, what kind of responsibility is given to me?
- I do not know....., how long will I live? I am not bothered about what will happen to my properties after my death. I am bothered about you.
- Bothered about me.....?
- I have heard everything about you. I have also gauged the degree of your vanity. I also know about your transformation through various activities for removal of this vanity. I feel that you have gained your real state of mind. So considering your nature and caliber, I have granted all rights to you as my son.

Being surprised, Śrīmukh again requested.

- Tell me the responsibility.
- Now I am free from all family life. Here is the top room. The blessings of the moonbeam are also here.
- I am beside you.
- That is not enough. You are married. You have left your wife because of your vanity. Your left wife must be suffering. You have transformed. After your transformation, you are aware of your responsibilities. So, you

bring her for her transformation. Here, she will experience her life. The moonbeam will be your path finder.

Śrīmukh was surprised. He accepted his faults.

- I will obey your orders.

At this time, Candrāmani entered with a lamp. Some people beside him requested.

- They are here to invite you.

Induketan asked the requesting persons to sit down. One of the organizers gave him the invitation and told.

- In this locality, for the laying of foundation stone of a temple of dance, a dance programme has been organized. You are requested to come over there as a chief guest. This is our invitation.

Induketan smiled gently.

- Your invitation is accepted. But I will not be able to go due to my ailing health. If you wish, then in my place, I would appoint another person to go.

The organizers agreed.

- That would be fine. If you tell about him, then we would go and invite him.
- There is no need to go anywhere. He is there in front of you.

Induketan pointed his finger.

- This is Śrīmukh....He is a pious person. Let the foundation stone be laid by him. I think, that will be correct.

Everybody looked at Śrīmukh. His face was prominent even in the dim light. Some of the hairs were white. Some of his beard was also white. In the moonlight, his middle age was clear. But still there was a reflection of youth on his bare body. His peaceful and steady eyes were very polite looking.

The organizers invited him.

- Please do come.

Śrīmukh looked at Induketan's face. He looked at the organizers. He remained answerless in self guilt.

Induketan told.

- Do not be tensed. For your good deeds, there will be no catastrophe. Whatever is for the good must be promised.

Śrīmukh promised.

- I accept your invitation. I will reach at the proper time at the proper place.

The organizers departed. Once again, Śrīmukh showed his gratefulness to Induketan. He lay down at his feet and cried. Induketan took him up and hugged. He made him understand.....

- This is association.

Candrāmani's covered body shivered.

The dance programme commenced. The rhythmic tune of musical instruments began playing. All were anxiously waiting for the guest. Announcement was made that Urvî was going to present her dance. The audiences were relieved. The curtain rose. Urvî started presenting her dance on the stage. Her

dance came to an end with applause from the audiences. The organizer invited the guest on stage. The guest came. The programme started as per agenda. Firstly, the organizer invited the guest to bless one and all. Then, Urvī came to receive the blessings. Śrīmukh was astonished. The girl looked very much like Śrāvaṇī. The only difference was that there was no reflection of humility on her face. Śrīmukh welcomed her from the core of his heart. He gifted her with gifts and prize money sent by Induketan. Again, there was applause from the audience. Śrīmukh started to speak from his own experiences.

‘Respected! Life starts from a dot. It ends with association...But vanity obstructs the path of life. It gets reflected in many ways. Sometimes in the form of attachment..., sometimes in the form of infatuation..., sometimes in the form of anger.... Like this, it is expressed in many ways. Many pray to overcome the same. They face failure. But it is not understood – all these prayers are for life. If you do not understand the meaning of life, then all these prayers will go in vain. Again, the aim of life is association. There is peace in it. There is happiness. So, prayer needs to be the killer of vanity to establish peace.

After finishing his speech, Śrīmukh got down from stage. All were pleased on hearing his short and summarized speech. All congratulated the guest.

Śrīmukh prepared to return. He requested the organizers to arrange for his meeting with the girl. The organizers took him to the green room. Śrīmukh wanted to know the identity of Urvī. Finding Dinamaṇi at that place, he was surprised. Dinamaṇi could not recognize him. Śrīmukh went to him and asked.

- Is your name Dinamaṇi?

Suddenly, Dinamaṇi started examining him and asked.

- Yes....I am Dinamaṇi.....Perhaps you are Śrīmukh?

Śrīmukh merrily replied.

- Yes....., fatherly.....
- It may be sixteen years or more than that. Ah....my fate! I am blessed at your sight.
- What are you doing here?
- I am moving around with Śrāvaṇī's daughter.
- Śrāvaṇī's daughter.....?
- The dancer Urvī is Śrāvaṇī's daughter.

Dinamaṇi again indicated towards Urvī.

- Pay respect....Pay respect....He is a noble person. This is pious soul Śrīmukh at whose place the village Goddess is currently situated.

Urvī paid respect to him.

Śrīmukh blesses.

- Be happy. Be peace loving.

Remembering of Śrāvaṇī, Śrīmukh also wanted to inquire about Lipsā. Suddenly, the organizer reached over there. He ordered Dinamaṇi to bring Urvī to the stage. Dinamaṇi tried to move fast. He only remembered.

- You come quickly. There is no news.

With self dignity, Śrīmukh departed from the ceremony. Something spoken....Something unspoken....Something hidden....Something outside... Something understandable.... Something not understandable. But the point of union was as sweet as nectar in the origin of a flower. Hence, it would yield results in carrying out the search there. The search would be a fruitful nostalgia. The offerings of the mortal describe the importance of life vividly.

Induketan's days were passing by. One early morning, Induketan passed away. At the last, he gave the responsibility of servant Candrāmani to Śrīmukh and breathed his last. Now, in the palace, Induketan's position was taken over by Śrīmukh. The same top room. The same Candrāmani. The path finder in the association.....Śaṣirekhā....

Candrāmani requested.

- What are you thinking about? Fulfill the desires of master. By this, you will be happy.

Śrīmukh sat. The picture of birthplace aroused in his mind. That is Madhugram, where he did all his welfare activities. It is here that he left Lipsā on his journey. The place still echoed of the voice of his father during his childhood. But, now, in front of Śrīmukh was a lifeless village. In the name of clamour, there were arguments. Mastery was demonstrated in scope of acquisition of wealth. Vanity was everybody's right. The weak were the ornaments of decay. Girls were in a land of vice. Men were acting as controllers.

Dinamani brought back Urvī to home. He described the good news to all. Abhrapad was happy about the prize money. He went to Śrāvaṇī's room to keep all the wealth. Śrāvaṇī was burning with anger. For the first time, she was entirely perturbed with anger.

- What, did you get the money....?

Abhrapad smiled diplomatically.

Śrāvaṇī hissed loudly as a snake.

- Uncivilized.....! Loafer.....! Hate your attitude.....Why don't you go to brothels?

Abhrapad shouted.

- Caution.....you servant's daughter!

Śrāvaṇī's disgust was evident.

- Demon..... Lower caste..... Go away from here. My life is ruined by getting you as a husband. You are also ruining my daughter's life. Stupid.... Vile person.....
- Śrāvaṇī.....! I will get you tongue out.
- Go – Go.....Idiot.....
- Śrāvaṇī.....!

Abhrapad roared and started beating her. Śrāvaṇī shouted. Hearing her cry, Urvī came. Then, Abhrapad tried to strangulate Śrāvaṇī and threw her to the ground. Seeing this, Urvī became very angry. She took a stick and hit Abhrapad on his body. Abhrapad took her to another room. She tied her with a rope. He slapped her and went away, closing the door. Urvī could not shout in fear, she only cried.

Not hearing any sound, Abhrapad came to Śrāvaṇī's room. Śrāvaṇī was lying down on the floor. He tried to pick her up. He suddenly gained consciousness. Again he observed. Śrāvaṇī was senseless. Abhrapad became worried. He shouted at a loud voice continuously.

- Fatherly.....! Fatherly.....!

Dinamaṇi came from outside. Looking at Śrāvaṇī, he asked.

- What happened.....What happened.....?
- At first, bring water.

Then Dinamaṇi brought water. He sprinkled water on Śrāvaṇī's face. Abhrapad used the hand fan, after which Śrāvaṇī gained her sense. Dinamaṇi became happy and asked.

- Where is daughter...?

Abhrapad directed with an adverse attitude.

- In that room.

Dinamaṇi went over there. Urvī was tied. Crying Urvī became exuberant on seeing Dinamaṇi. Dinamaṇi consoled Urvī. There, Abhrapad expressed his anxiety for Śrāvaṇī.

- I know....., nobody can live here peacefully. Pain....Only pain.

Urvī came to Śrāvaṇī's room. She cried.

- Mother....! Mother.....!

Śrāvaṇī sat. Her eyes were filled with tears. Urvī called her again and again. But Śrāvaṇī remained silent. Then Dinamaṇi shouted.

- Daughter....! Daughter.....! Why don't you speak....!

Śrāvaṇī still remained speechless. Abhrapad grew fearful. Gaining composure, he told.

- Śrāvaṇī.....! Śrāvaṇī.....! Oh, why don't you speak anything?

With tear full of eyes, Śrāvaṇī continued to stare. Urvī was restless. She told.

- Mother....! Mother....! Mother.....!!

Śrāvaṇī was indicating – 'Her speaking power is lost. She is not able to speak.' Urvī told surprisingly.

- Have you become dumb?

Śrāvaṇī nodded her head.

Filled with agony, Dinamaṇi told to Abhrapad.

- Why did you do this? You could not recognize your Goddess-like wife?
You have converted her silence into her dumbness?

Abhrapad was pained. He could not understand on what is to be done and looked still towards Śrāvaṇī.

The storm had passed. The result has been fearful. The silence at home was like an empty palace. Solitariness was supreme. The silence was even causing pain to the sparrows. The inner consciences of all were unhappy.

Three days had passed. The same condition prevailed. Śrāvaṇī was speechless. She was dumb. Abhrapad was busy in contacting good doctors. He gave medicines. However, still there was no improvement. Urvī was also silent. She was not interested in speaking to her father. Dinamaṇi was busy with his service. He could not desert Urvī and her mother. He was working with her instructions.

Abhrapad was alone and worried. For the first time in his life, such an incident had aggrieved him. For the first time, repentance had touched his heart. She felt to be a failure on the issue of Śrāvaṇī. But he was not ready to bow down.

The afternoon was cool.

At the committee place of the village, some people were busy in fixing up the schedule of the welfare activities. A calm person gradually came over there. The villagers recognized – it is Śrīmukh. All of a sudden, the message spread. Many people came to see Śrīmukh. Dinamaṇi heard the news and informed

Śrāvaṇī. Urvī was sitting over there. She became anxious to meet Śrīmukh on hearing his name. Dinamaṇi reminded.

- He is a noble man....he has come to the committee place. Remember? On that day, he had blessed you and given a prize.

Śrāvaṇī was curious and had a gentle smile. Urvī rushed out without telling anything. She ran towards the committee place. Dinamaṇi was worried thinking about Abhrapad. He also came to the meeting place to gauge Abhrapad's actions.

Abhrapad was deeply thoughtful. He was recalling his past egos and vanities. He heard noise from outside and entered the meeting room. He looked to Dinamaṇi and asked.

- Where is the noise coming from?

Dinamaṇi answered with a fearful voice.

- May be some activities are being held at the committee place.
- What kind of activities? Today, there is no festival? Dinamaṇi was silent.

Abhrapad thoughtfully told.

- The medicines are causing no improvement. You search for some other better doctor. Or else, she would remain dumb forever. Recently, the daughter is also following her path. She is not talking with me. Whether Urvī is besides Śrāvaṇī? Call her....
- She is not there.
- Where has she gone?
- May be, to the village committee place.....
- Why has she gone there? Just let me check...., what is going on over there?

Abhrapad was ready to go. Dinamaṇi was helpless. Still, by acquiring some courage, he told.

- Why should you go? I can call her.
- No...No....I also have some other work. I am going.

Abhrapad went out.

Dinamaṇi quickly went to Śrāvaṇī's room and informed her about it.

- Daughter....! Something bad will happen. Just now, young master has gone out to the village committee place in search of Urvī. You please tell him not to go. Else.....Else.....

Dinamaṇi stopped.

Silent Śrāvaṇī got up and changed her dress.

Lipsā heard the news about Śrīmukh's arrival. Waves of pleasure spread in her body. She was anxious. Heart beats were going faster. She was restless. This was the right time to invite him...this was the opportunity for atonement....this was the correct time to surrender all egos and vanities. He would be invited to her cottage. Here the tears of repentance would be used to wash his feet. She anxiously changed her clothes and ran.

Urvī passed through the crowd and reached the committee place. She introduced herself and took the blessings from Śrīmukh's feet displaying a youthful mannerism. Śrīmukh also blessed her and gave her some more gifts. People were astonished. Abhrapad was looking at the scene from a distant place. He burned with anger – 'The daughter does not touch my feet. But she is paying respect to an unknown person?'

Abhrapad reached the stage. He shouted loudly.

- You arrogant....evil.....why have you come here?

Forcibly, Abhrapad took away all the gifts from her hand. He slapped her strongly.

- Go.....as soon as possible.....

Then he shouted at Śrīmukh.

- Nomadic....? Loafer....! Have you again come to destroy my family?
Today, who will save you?

Abhrapad started hitting Śrīmukh. There was commotion all around. Śrīmukh remained silent. He stood like an innocent bullock. Abhrapad was hitting him angrily. Lipsā came at that moment. She was crying loudly and holding Śrīmukh. Still then, Abhrapad had closed his eyes and was hitting him.

Śrāvaṇī was running fast. Dinamaṇi was following. Seeing the scene of hitting from a distance, Śrāvaṇī suddenly screamed.

- N....N....No.....No.....

Abhrapad heard her shouting again and again mixed with crying and ultimately stopped hitting. Śrāvaṇī was weeping like a hurt deer. Lipsā was crying. Urvī was also crying.

Śrīmukh was bleeding heavily.

Lipsā was wiping the blood with her sari. Abhrapad held Śrāvaṇī tightly. He was also crying.

- What did you do? How did you do?

Seeing Śrīmukh's blood stained body, some people came to hit Abhrapad.

- Do you think that because of your richness, you can hit anybody?
Come....Come....Hit him....Hit him.....

All the people came in front. All of a sudden, Śrīmukh came and stood in front of Abhṛapad and tried to rescue him. People were angry.

- Go away.....Go away.....If all hit him, he is going to die today.

Śrīmukh requested.

- Brothers....! Listen.... Kindly listen.

The public stood quietly. Śrīmukh explained.

- Brothers? When the words from the mouth end, at that time, words come out in actions. If all such things were organized, then it was a necessity.

The people argued.

How....? How.....?

Śrīmukh explained.

- Śrāvaṇī was dumb. She had lost her speaking power due to her sorrow. She has regained her speaking ability. Her dumbness has been expelled. That is why I am happy. I don't feel sad, if somebody's hitting me is beneficial to the other. I am happy with this. If I am killed....

Suddenly Lipsā placed her hand on Śrīmukh's mouth.

- Do not tell like this. If anything like this happens, it is due to me. From the very beginning, I have given you enough grief and trouble.

Lipsā cried heavily. Śrīmukh consoled.

- Lipsā....! What is the reason for your crying? It is afternoon. This is the time to depart.....
- Where will you go? My cottage is open for you. My heart is decorated for your arrival.

Lipsā held Śrīmukh's hand and brought him to her cottage. The public were astonished. Abhrapad stood beside along with Śrāvaṇī. He was staring into the path. Old Dinamaṇi was sitting beside Urvī with a light heart. He wiped the tears and told.

- Why did you do it? Couldn't you understand the person who wanted welfare for your family?

Abhrapad was ashamed and repentant. He realized his degree of vanity. Realizing that the downfall of pride is the path for happiness, he ordered to Dinamaṇi.

- Fatherly..... Come....with me.

Dinamaṇi was apprehensive.

Abhrapad speedily came in front of Lipsā's cottage. Śrāvaṇī followed him quickly. Along with Urvī, Dinamaṇi followed their path. All united in front of Lipsā's cottage. Śrīmukh stood. Lipsā was only observing Abhrapad's movements.

Abhrapad folded his hands and told politely.

- Friend....! Śrīmukh....! Vanity makes a person blind. So I couldn't witness the good things anywhere. Today you have raised the curtain of blindness in my life. I am ashamed... I am repentant... I get your forgiveness.

Śrīmukh held his hands. Abhrapad told.

- Friend. Please forgive whatever misdeeds have been done by me unconsciously. It will not be repeated in the future.

Śrīmukh smiled a bit.

Abhrapad looked at Lipsā and told.

- Goddess! I know that my misbehavior is unpardonable. I am repentant for all the bad things that I have thought of you or bad words that I have spoken about you.

Lipsā smiled a bit.

- Śrāvaṇī was there for anything.

Śrāvaṇī smiled. Lipsā, Śrāvaṇī and Urvī entered the cottage. Dinamaṇi was pleased on witnessing this lovely union. Urvī invited Śrīmukh and Lipsā.

- Won't you come to our house? Will you not see my dance?

Śrīmukh smiled and told.

- Oh...Is it right? We must go. This year also, dance programme would be organized.

Dinamaṇi told merrily.

- Let dance programme be organized at village committee place this time.

Everybody laughed.

The evening approached. The lovely union is nearing the end. All the family members of Abhrapad returned back home.

Śrīmukh sat down.

Lipsā's cottage was shining in moonlight. The courtyard was looking bright. The white lilies had blossomed in pool waters. The sounds of the insects came. By the coolness of the moonbeam, Śrīmukh looked at Lipsā with a smiling face. Lipsā put on medicines on the blood stained wounds of Śrīmukh with tears in her eyes.

The invisible colourful morning approached from the veil of the night.

दिलोत्तमा



विद्वन्मणिः

प्रो. केशवचन्द्रदाश

V.II Tilottamā

It is a small village housing more than a hundred families. Although the boundaries of the village are wide spread, still the village is small. Towards one side, an unnamed river is flowing by while on the other side, it is a pond full of lotus flowers. To the west, there is a long road while the north boundary constitutes of a farmland. Amidst all this, the village is full of trees. Looking from a distance, it seems that the trees are fully blossomed. However, the village had experienced many floods in the past along with many chilly winters. Still, the village is self sufficient by its own merits and efforts. The dust from cow-feet brings dusk to the village. Dawn alights the village with the calls of calves, roosters, dogs, cuckoos and pigeons. The day passes with the singing of the farmers. Night falls with the light from cowshed.

The seasons come one by one. Spring decorates the place with the blossoming flowers. The white moonlight, the joyful night, the cool breeze, Palash flowers- all render wholeness to the village. The summer heat surrenders to the shadow of the trees and hides behind the leaves. Monsoon fills the air with the fragrance of the first rains. The black clouds express themselves with an eye of lighting at the horizon. The village plays with the kitchen smoke all around it. The village fills songs to the mouth of the village kids. It brings smiles to the farmer's face. The village brings excitements to the new bride. The cool breeze of early morning gradually sets in winter. The paddy turns golden to bring the new harvest. The dry soil laughs with the blood and sweat of farmers.

The shepherds sing along as they walk along with their fleet of cows. The kids play in the dust, pick the flowers and enjoy each other's company. Amidst all this, somebody notices everything insignificantly. At times he passes sweet remarks. He always carries a smile like a flower. His teeth are placed like white

seeds. Dust is noticed in his fair complexion. He does not go to play inspite of everyone's call.

He turns down the calls of play telling

- Later, later.

During a quarrel, he tries to explain things and at times becomes gloomy. A passenger from a car asks him:

- Why are you so sad? Why are you so gloomy?

He smiles gently. Again a question comes.

- Hasn't mother given you food?

He modestly replies and smiles back.

- Yes.

- Then why don't you play?

- I will play later.

- Ok.

Everybody goes away seeing him smiling. He enjoys seeing others play- at times he claps – at times he dances. A blissful moment will exist in his poorly stepped dancing. His posture earned respect from others. Everyone is happy with his behaviour. His sweet speech, his running, his dance are all elements of happiness for others.

He is always kind hearted to the young girls. He praises the girls to his mother, treats them, accompanies them to their homes and promises to meet them the next day.

He is a king in minds of the poor villagers. He has maintained his tradition of strong bonding. Although, the modern generation is knowledgeable in literary

facts, their traditional knowledge compliments them. For example, if fashionable clothes are absent for kids, they decorate them with turmeric and vermillion. Just like the fragrance of basil leaves, the young kids spread their beauty with the traditional decorations. But as the saying goes – ‘Who knows the future?’ Also, it is said that future extends from one’s shadow but it is really difficult to prove it.

Grandmother explains ‘Dear, if you are not able to read, you are blind, if you are not educated- nobody would respect you. That is why, study and become great. In this world, you will not be able to earn, unless you are educated. Your brother would be able to snatch your wealth, your property but not your knowledge. If you gain knowledge, you will have property and people will come and respect you.’

Puṣpavallava sees outside the window. Sunflower droops and invites the evening sun. The birds return to their nests touching the temple peak. The twilight appears behind the back of the coconut tree. Following the black cloud, the moon appears with a mild smile in the reflection of the pond.

Puspavallava’s mind was filled with the gloominess of the drooping sunflower. Different thoughts made his mind heavy. Nevertheless the waves of happiness were dancing in Puspavallava’s mind. He is happy. Many mornings, evenings and days have passed by in the village banks. Everything was drenched in oneness. The choir was quenching the thirst. This evening, many thoughts are arising in his mind. The new thoughts are creating unknown waves increasingly.

Days were passing like it. Although the evening was unknown with lightning, it had come. Such evenings are really attractive. The age of twenty-one wishes for some invention. The village palm trees and mango trees are all enjoying with each other. Many false tears, unknown sentiments are noticeable. But all these are forgotten tales.

Today, some charm has come to the classroom such that it feels that the evening would steal it. The whole classroom is so picturesque. The seats, going, coming, people talking are all pictures that steal one's mind. Some people are seen to carry gentle smiles. It is felt like stealing their smiles forever.

Following Tilottamā's black eyes, her smile attracts Puspavallava's heart. He is able to see the storm of life looking at the rhythm of her love filled eyes. Even after closing his eyes, it is visible. The black hairs, the sweat droplets of her nose, teeth like the bent saplings of grass and waves of her long hair. It seems that she resembles the earth like a half-moon. Lightning illuminated the house.

A few books were lying on the bed. Pages got scattered here and there with the wind coming through the window. Going outside the house, Puṣpavallava saw that the evening has passed. He paid homage to his forefathers. Remembering his late father, he offered flowers to his late mother's photograph. Seeing a couple of kids laughing Puṣpavallava remembered his young days. He gradually reached to the doorsteps.

He tried to firm up his way of life, but found complexities in all directions. Puṣpavallava has been passing his days studying but no means of earning a livelihood have surfaced. Doctors, Engineers, Teachers are all the same today. Educated-Illiterate, Rich-Poor, the Deprived and the Greedy all long for a cosy lifestyle- thus rendering selfishness of mankind.

Puṣpavallava noticed dirt in his clothing, which was challenging his self-respect. The strings of life were gradually tearing apart. His foundation and beliefs were constantly being challenged. One could hear the sound of poverty at the end

of the month. Puṣṣavallava laughed mildly. He walked inside his home but amidst all this conflicts, Tilottamā's smiling face was peeping.

- Do you stay far away?

Tilottamā's voice was echoing in his ears.

He felt ashamed. Romance aroused within him. Puṣṣavallava started turning the pages one after the other. He felt afraid. His heart started beating faster. He sat firmly. Puṣṣavallava continued seeing the book. Suddenly power went off for sometime. He sat in the dark and closed his eyes.

He travelled to his own thoughts. He could see his late father holding a child. His father asked the Sanyasi

- Will the child live and prosper?

The Sanyasi frowned and replied

- Don't worry- sorrow and happiness are evergreen friends. If a person lives his life considering all possibilities and consequences, he would be successful.

The Sanyasi laughed. Then they descended the stairs. His father slipped and fell down. The child shouted and injured himself too.

Puṣṣavallava stopped dreaming. He found that his book has fallen down. The water container has also fallen and flooded water all around his room.

He didn't think much. Puṣṣavallava opened the door and saw that night has deepened. All were sleeping deeply. Again he closed the door and went to sleep.

Today is Sunday. All are in a joyful mood in the hostel. There are some chit-chats going on by the side of the well. Some are washing their clothes. Some are taking water from the well and bathing. Puṣṭapavallava is however still asleep. The chilly wind coming through the window is making the room cold. Vadrikeśa saw Puṣṭa sleeping. The door was closed from inside.

Vadrikeśa was inquisitive and approached the door. He knocked the door. Puṣṭapavallava changed his sleeping position and continued his sleep. Vadrikeśa knocked the door again.

- Who is there?

A sound came from inside.

- It is already 8'0 clock. Please wake up.
- Who are you?
- Vadrikeśa.
- Yes, Yes. Wake up.
- No work is there on Sunday – so I was sleeping.
- Oh don't you want to bath?
- When?
- Now. You have finished your work?
- Yes, Yes.

This time Aśutoṣa also came to have his bath. He shouted

- Oh! Puṣṭa, come near the well.
- I am coming.

Puṣṭa came for bathing. Vadrikeśa said,

- Aśutoṣa! Today we will tell something to Puṣpa.

Aśutoṣa poured water onto his body and inquired about what the matter is.

- After finishing your bath, come to me. I don't want to discuss now.

It is twelve o' clock. Vadrikeśa smiled and called Aśutoṣa to Puṣpa's door.

Aśutoṣa went to Puṣpa's place. Sitting on the bed, Vadrikeśa started in a cheerful manner.

- I would like to share what I have felt and seen. However, I have thought of an idea prior to this.
- What idea?

Aśutoṣa asked eagerly. But before this, whatever I have noticed, I am telling Puṣpa, don't mistrust us.

- Is there any mystery? – Aśutoṣa asked again.

Puṣpavallava smiled and told

- If you have anything to tell, please tell. Where is the question of trust – mistrust?
- Really, Puṣpa, Tilottamā's eyes were always after you. She was completely drowned in your thoughts.

Vadrikeśa laughed.

Puṣpa laughed and asked

- What are you telling?
- Really, and you were also.....
- ‘Now stop’, exclaimed Aśutoṣa seriously.
- What is there to be afraid of the truth?

Puṣpa told

- Tell something else, Vadrikeśa.

I have thought of another idea.

- Next Sunday, let everybody come from our class.
- ‘Where?’ asked Aśutoṣa.
- Wait, let me think.
- You mentioned that you have already thought about it –
- Yes, Sunday we will go for a picnic to Chilka Lake.
- ‘Everybody means just us’ asked Puṣpa.
- No everybody from the class.

And all laughed. Puṣpa asked,

- Okay, who will arrange for everything?
- What will you do over there?

Vadrikeśa observed him ironically.

- I have some other work.
- No, why is it so? As our representative, leader and elder brother – you need to take all the responsibilities for organizing it.

Puṣpa told nonchalantly,

- Aśutoṣa! Take all the responsibilities.
- No, no, I am not fit for the job. I will only come, stay with you all and if any specific job can be done by me – you may delegate the same to me.
- ‘What big-brother?’ Vadrikeśa laughed on Puṣpa.
- ‘What are you thinking about? I have asked in the class. Your name is also proposed. If anybody disagrees, then we will see.’ Vadrikeśa laughed.
- But....
- No but-but. Tilottamā should also agree. Why are you thinking? What are you pondering upon? If you come to hear of anything, tell.
- Tell if I have stolen anything. Have I looked upon anybody else’s wife?
- Varikesh! Don’t talk childishly.
- ‘What did I tell? Where did you find evilness in my thoughts? You have everything – beauty, youthfulness, education, art-loving nature, musician, singer. Infact...infact recently, I have also noticed an eagerness for marriage in your eyes’, and he laughed.
- Stop, Vadrikeśa! What will stop you?
- Are you not fit for Tilottamā?
- Who said that Puṣpa is not fit? You are telling like this, Aśutoṣa!
- Correct.
- ‘Leave it. What do we do now? Evening is over. Come, let us go for a walk’, said Puṣpavallava and started walking.

Gradually, the three friends came outside. The sound of the 6 o’clock bell could be heard from the hostel.

Tilottamā came. Nīlimā also came behind her. They were walking on the left side of the road towards college and chatting. At times, Tilottamā was speaking turning her back. Nīlimā also paused seeing Tilottamā turning back.

Tilottamā's gooselike gait, posture of holding books, smiling face, sweet voice, long hair and covered body would attract the attention of any person.

On the contrary, Nīlimā's shrewd sight, complex laughter, snake like nose, clever posture, sarcastic remarks, crooked gait and semi covered body would fool any person.

Though opposite in nature and habit, they were friends. They shared the same room, ate and slept together. Nobody went outside alone. Both had youthful nature.

Both of them climbed the stairs and entered classroom together. They kept the books in their left hand. An office staff came and informed them,

- The teacher is not well. He will not come today.
- 'Will we stay here for an hour? Any problem?', said Nīlimā.
- 'Would you please inform the other students?', requested the staff and departed.
- Tilottamā! Come and sit here for sometime. Hey, Tilottamā! Do I ask you something, will you tell me the truth?

Tilottamā asked innocently,

- What will you ask?

Nīlimā asked cleverly,

- Your mind seems to be a bit different.
- Different..... what are you telling?
- Since the last four days, you seem to be quite restless.
- What are you telling, explain in a simple manner?

Nīlimā whispered into her ears,

- Your feelings for Puṣpa seem to grow.
- ‘How come such thoughts came to your mind?’ she smiled.
- I have seen.
- What have you seen?
- Your eyes.
- Where?
- Towards Puṣpa’s eyes –
- Incorrect – Incorrect.
- It is not incorrect, I have seen it.
- ‘Nīlimā, I don’t like this habit of yours.’ She smiled. Nīlimā shook her head sarcastically.

Some students entered the classroom. Others also followed them. Vadrikeśa ordered with his hands – ‘All of you, sit down.’ Then he went near the teacher’s chair and started – ‘We have thought of an idea.’ All laughed.

Listen. Next Sunday, we will go for a picnic to Chilka and do boating in the lake. For this, you have to pay ten rupees. All of you have to pay to Puṣpa and sign therein.

The teacher arrived. ‘All of you please keep silent.’

Vadrikeśa expressed anxiously.

Everything has been decided. Any questions? We will organize everything in the next two days. Don’t be late – ‘Puṣpa, do you have anything to mention?’, asked Vadrikeśa.

Some requested – ‘Puṣpa is a good orator, speak something.’

The teacher asked angrily,

- How long do I have to wait?

As the teacher arrived, all stopped talking and occupied the seats quietly. The teacher started teaching.

But Tilottamā's eyes were fixed onto Puṣpavallava. Nīlimā was also looking at his beauty. She praised Puṣpa silently to herself – 'Remarkable figure. Innocent smiling face. The innocence of the mind was glowing in his looks. I don't know, what is there in my fate.'

The infant moon gradually made its appearance in the water. The night was speeding through the hills. The road below was visible by the dim light of the lamp post. The autumn dew made the grass bow down. A few sleepy dogs cuddled beside the closed doors by the road.

The motor vehicle speeded. Tilottamā's face could be seen through the small window. Others were talking loudly, singing and laughing in the vehicle. Puṣpa's hand was placed by the side of the window. Though he was talking, but his eyes were fixed onto the wavy hairs of Tilottamā. Nīlimā also kept on watching Puṣpa. She envied Tilottamā in her mind. Puṣpavallava was eager to fulfill his wishes.

A flag was seen on the top of the temple shrine at a distant village. The vehicle also wanted to stop for sometime at the parking area. The driver wanted to have a smoke. All were tired. When the vehicle stopped, all descended. Vadrikeśa went quickly to the hotel, arranged for some snacks and called everybody. All came in. But, Puṣpa, Tilottamā and Nīlimā came in last. Vadrikeśa laughed seeing them and asked

- Time has passed. Why are you so late?

Tilottamā spoke softly

- If all of you want to leave us, then you may proceed.
- Yes, we can go without you two, but how can we without Puṣpa?

Nīlimā stared at Puṣpa and remarked,

- Take your Puṣpa and leave us.
- ‘No, no. How can we go without you?’ Vadrikeśa replied gently.

The vehicle started its ignition. Everybody hurriedly returned finishing their food. The trees started moving fast, the houses went by. All started talking just like before. All were happy. Aśutoṣa sat at one corner and started singing. Everybody looked at him.

His sad tone was cherished by everybody. The pain of poverty, means for human existence, failed attempts, the shelterless condition of the impoverished, the dark path, unfulfilled thoughts of union and limitless desires were the theme of his song, which reverberated with his voice. His serious tone decayed gradually. Everyone praised him by clapping hands. Many requested him for another song but Aśutoṣa refused to sing. He pointed his finger towards Puṣpa. The sound of clapping doubled the sound of the engine of the vehicle. But Puṣpavallava did not want to sing. Chilka was nearby. Their destination arrived.

The vehicle reached the banks of the Chilka Lake. Small waves were playing in the blue waters of the Chilka. The boatmen were calling them from the banks. The boats were swaying. Some small hills were half inundated in water and having a bath. Some farmers were going to their fields taking the curly lakeside road. Some reserved women were gazing at the actions of the students.

The blue waters of the Chilka were spread over a wide region. The eyes could not see the end of the lake. The grey sky was only visible at the backdrop. Amidst all this, was fog and the sunrays were reflecting in the water. The water was saline but many birds were swimming in the water. Few birds were seen circling the sky in the fog. Nearby, a kingfisher was seen aiming at a fish with its head immersed in the water. Again the bird raised its head and looked up at the sky. Its search was successful.

Boat reached the bank. All are seen busy, enthusiastic and in happy mood. Gradually, the boats started entering. Fearful Tilottamā was still standing on the banks of the lake, behaving like a child. Puṣpavallava entered the boat and stretched his hand. Tilottamā paused, smilingly held Puṣpavallava's hand and entered the boat.

Nearby, the temple of Goddess Bhagwati could be seen. Everybody bowed and payed homeage. The boatman held his boatstick to spade through water. First, he prayed to God. With a smiling face, he told, 'Please sit vey carefully' and then the black boatman tied a piece of cloth onto his head. He tied a sail onto one side of the boat and started singing...Oo.....

O Goddess Bhagwati....

The wind is blowing waves on your body

But you are so composed and still.

Although rhythmless, his song reached far ith his deep emotions. He thought – “In this world, I am alone and my companion is my boat. No education, no ceremony of religious rites, no dependencies. So he is the uncontested ruler of the waterworld. The world catches fire. Politics, Economics, Sociology – all change. The urban life earns money only to repent. Somewhere earthquake,

somewhere flood, somewhere storm – all contribute to catastrophes. But his mother, Bhagwati is always present. He is there, his boat is also there. Fishes are there in water and the lake is full of water. The heat of the sun is there. Fresh air is there. His small hut is also there.”

The boat was floating and sailing in the waters to create small waves. The breeze of the lake filled the boat. There was water everywhere. Inbetween, there were some semi immersed hills. Kingfisher birds were seen on the hills, looking far away.

In the Chilka Lake, the Kālijai hill is picturesque and praiseworthy. The boatman said that Kālijai is actually a God. People go there and provide offerings in water. They offer flowers and sweets also.

Aśutojya started to search for its actual reason. Aśutojya observed Tilottamā’s face and compared that to have fallen in love just like the tip of an iceberg immersed in water. Sorrow-happiness-kindness-love-forgiveness are all normal here. By any means and all efforts, man cannot hide these emotions. Somehow, they get revealed. Although nobody knows the core of these emotions, they definitely would speak out to reveal the thoughts.

The boat started moving fast in the blue waters. Aśutojya started to say something about the mythological story of Kālijai

- She was a village girl. Modernity could not touch her. Her father and relatives were tired to search a suitable partner for her marriage.

Tilottamā asked anxiously, ‘What happened then?’

- As days passed, a groom was found for her in the Chilka. But he was neither handsome, nor rich nor educated.

- ‘Then why was he selected?’, asked Nīlimā in a disgusted tone.
- During that time, nobody wanted to send their daughters far away after marriage. Also, nobody wanted to keep their daughters after the age of sixteen. They always remained cautious about people passing remarks about such things.
- ‘Is it right for a father to think of social pressures for a daughter’s marriage in lieu of her happiness?’, Puṃpa asked.
- His wish was there but nothing could be done, due to the heads of the society.
- ‘Then what happened?’ asked Vadrikeśa.
- The bride and the groom did not see each other but their marriage was destined by the society. So the marriage took place.
- ‘Did they go to stay in in-laws house?’ someone asked.
- No, no, they had to give something for the see-off.
- ‘Give something??’ everyone asked surprisingly. ‘Father of the bride had to give dowry alongwith his daughter to the groom. They thought that by doing this, the groom would remain happy and forgive the ill deeds of their daughter.’
- ‘Was the bride dumb?’ asked Nīlimā.
- Simple girl, what could she do? Whatever happened was the wish of her relatives. When it was time, all arrived dressed up. The boat reached the river bank. The bride, groom and bride’s father climbed the boat. The boat started to sail.

The boatman stopped humming his song and said

- Look! Here, the water is very deep. The row does not touch the bed over here. The boat sails here with the help of the wind. Here is the place of

Kālijañ God. All of you pray to Him. If you have any flowers, then offer it.

- ‘Yes...., throw.’ Tilottamā replied nonchalantly.
- ‘What happened next?’ Nīlimā asked.
- Then, a black cloud was seen from the western sky. The whole sky got filled with clouds. The wind blew strongly. Water started entering the boat. All were frightened and helpless.
- ‘What happened then?’ all asked apprehensively.
- Then the boat started fighting against the hill and finally it sunk.
- ‘Did all of them die?’ Tilottamā asked Aśutojya surprisingly. ‘No, no, after quite some time, the father and boatman reached the hill. But the bride rowned forever.’
- ‘What happened then?’ all asked.
- The father and the boatman returned to their homes. But some sailors say that after this incident, they have seen a lady with open hairs crying on that hill. She wears a white dress and roams here and there. Whenever, anybody is in distress, she helps them. After sometime, somebody came and made a temple on that hill.

The boat reached near Kālijañ hill. The boatman said,

- Please get down over here. Visit the temple and take Devi’s blessings. Roam around the hill. Before sunset, reach the boat.

Everybody clattered and got down on the hill. Tilottamā was waiting shyly. Puṃpavallava stretched his hand just like before. Tilottamā saw Puṃpa’s face and stretched her right hand. Both the hands stayed in position for sometime.

There are a few trees over the hill at a distance. Many birds live there. The birds like to have fish. Many fish bones are lying below the trees. The hill is

always full of birds chirping. The Devi temple also houses nests of many birds. The goats meant for sacrifice to Devi are roaming here and there. The waves of the lake always touch the feet of the temple and pay homage by making sounds. The last rays of the sun see the Devi before sunset at dawn. The moon gives light to the bird nests. Many people visit the temple everyday. They enjoy the Chilka during the day and return at evening to their homes.

Puṣṭapavallava held Tilottamā's hand and went downhill. Nīlimā was talking to others. Some were telling here it is, there it is and where it is, many stories.

Suddenly, Nīlimā's attention turned towards Puṣṭa. She had heart burns but her face did not express it. She continued talking humbly. She went ahead. Talking nicely, she intervened between the two. She held both their hands. Puṣṭa was a bit apprehensive. Tilottamā's simple mind did not understand anything. She saw everybody roaming and collecting leaves and flowers.

Puṣṭa, Tilottamā and Nīlimā entered the flower garden. Puṣṭa looked happy. Tilottamā extended her hands to pick flowers. But being short, she was not able to reach the flowers. Puṣṭapavallava plucked the flower and gave it to Tilottamā. He said 'Tilottamā! Your face is also like a flower.'

'What are you telling, Puṣṭa?' Nīlimā asked with a crooked face. Puṣṭapavallava kept silent like a handicapped soldier. He saw silence all around. Birds were circling the sky. Some flowers were lying on the ground.

- 'Why do you have such crooked thoughts, Nīlimā! This is not fair', mentioned Tilottamā.
- 'Such words do not appear to be good' told Nīlimā.

- ‘What happened, why are you getting angry?’ asked Tilottamā.

Meanwhile, Vadrikeśa shouted

- Time is going by - be fast - be fast -

The harsh words of Nīlimā threw Puṣpa’s heart into the blue waters of the lake. Thereafter, Tilottamā proceeded gradually for taking food. Puṣpa observed the swiftness of the cook. Nīlimā and Tilottamā dispersed.

Puṣpavallava smiled gently. Turning around, Puṣpa went downhill and found some shadow. Like a lost traveller, he sat down on a boulder. He could see a hundred reflections of Tilottamā in the waters of the lake. He was romanticized and could not feel his love sweat. Many thoughts crystallized like ice blocks in his mind.

Busy Vadrikeśa was calling them again and again. Puṣpavallava responded and started walking slowly. Vadrikeśa noticed his slow pace of walking and got angry watching him.

- ‘All are waiting in the boat after finishing food. What were you doing?’ Vadrikeśa asked angrily.

- My mind does not want to leave this beautiful place.

- ‘Then you stay here. We are leaving’ told Vadrikeśa excitedly.

- No, we will come here once again.

- ‘We have not returned yet. How can you think of coming here once again?’ Vadrikeśa asked sarcastically.

- We will, if we want.

- Okay – finish your food first. Then we will discuss. Sit.

Vadrikeśa sat first. He held Puṣpa's hand and made him sit down. Both of them started eating.

The boatman arrived and said

- Come all of you. The sun is going down to his mother's lap and the wind is also favourable.

Puṣpavallava started thinking of the day's happenings. Tilottamā was standing like a woman covered with dust. Nīlimā pointed out her finger to show a pair of swimming swans. The proud koel birds were proposing to each other. Tilottamā dreamt of a blue lotus in the lake water. The beautiful scenery of the lake was inviting the thirsty sun. The lake was also greedy of the sun. The unfulfilled waves could feel the shores like a widow's pain.

As seen in many poetries, the full moon is very much like the gradual lighting of the wick of a lamp. Like the poet of an unfinished poem, Puṣpavallava stated comparing Tilottamā's beauty with that of the moon. He could see a garland in the young hands of Tilottamā.

The full boat started progressing paying homage to the mild dusk. Glowing in the moon light; the dancing friends started praising the scenic beauty of the full moon. Thinking of future prospects, Tilottamā got excited with Puṣpavallava's thoughts. She prepared an imaginary garland with the moonlight. Today, she thought about leaving everything and lying down in Puṣpa's heart for sometime. She longed for a fresh touch to a shooting star. Just like an insect burns itself, the hunger for togetherness was burning Tilottamā's mind. Today, her mind is not ready to listen to the sermons of Buddha – Shankar-Jesus-Mohammed. Leaving aside all the jewellery and garments of the large heart of eternal love, she devoted

herself to the pyre of union with Puṣṣavallava. It would be better to depend on somebody rather than to lead a suffocated life in an air conditioned room.

Tilottamā stood still for sometime just as a calm river. Her mind's eye looked upon the wavy waters. The boat sailed far. Everybody shared their wonderful experiences merrily. But Puṣṣavallava's feelings could not be expressed. Now, he is near Tilottamā. He did not have the courage to look at her. He did not have the power. However, he was listening to everyone and did not speak.

The full moon rose high up in the sky. All were sleeping. The scenes were appearing in everyone's minds like dancing monkeys. Puṣṣa was sleepless. He could feel the unknown touch of Tilottamā. The beautiful touch of a fair hand, the excitement of mild breeze, the touch of the long hairs of the sleeping Tilottamā – all these increased Puṣṣa's heartbeats. He now wants to sleep in this blue night.

The boatman's song and the sound of boat oar sailing in the water was heard. On the other side, Aśutoṣa and Vadrikeśa's discussion broke the silence of the boat. All of them were half sleepy. Some were fully sleeping.

Amidst her sleep, Tilottamā touched Puṣṣa's body unconsciously. Puṣṣa suddenly woke up. He thought that Tilottamā is asking for something. His mind wanted to take her in his lap, but the surrounding environment was not suitable. If anyone happens to see them, then the next morning rumours would be spread. The scandal shall spread far by word of the mouth. Such thoughts started to create circles of smoke in his mind. He could never take the blame of a characterless individual.

The two eyes were gradually feeling addicted. He started sleeping in the boat with his sitting posture. Besides him, Tilottamā slept keeping her head on him. Both were enjoying the cool breeze of the lake and both of their dreams doubled. Unconsciously, Puspa's sleepy hand fell on Tilottamā's hand. Their hands remained in that position. The fingers were numb as the petals of dried flower.

Some dim lights could be seen far away on the lake shore. The boatman's song could be heard. As if the night was mad with romance with the moon in mid-sky. Some empty boats were seen as lines by the shore. Somewhere, the boatmen were sleeping keeping lights on in the boats. Somewhere, ailing sound of old boatmen were heard. Rickshaw driver was waiting by the road side – 'Come, come, Sir', shouted the driver blowing the horn.

'Wake up – wake up Sirs! The boat has reached the shore.' Two-three persons were shaken to be woken up. Suddenly, Nīlimā woke up. She saw Puṣpa sleeping with her hand kept on Tilottamā's hand. Tilottamā was also sleeping with her head kept on Puṣpa. Nīlimā turned very angry. She was deeply moved seeing both of them in that condition. She slowly touched Tilottamā, woke her up and highlighted Puṣpa's ill intentions. Tilottamā did not pay much heed to it. She saw later that Nīlimā's face is red with anger. Thereafter she controlled herself.

It is past midnight. All got down and started going towards the pre-arranged guest house. Nīlimā held Tilottamā's hand and started talking with her. Others also walked discussing about varied problems and good things.

Rain from a sudden passing cloud drenched Tilottamā and Nīlimā. They stood by the side of the window of an empty school. Both of them discussed about the sudden cloud. A guard saw them and asked, 'Why are you standing here? Come and sit inside. After the rain stops, you may decide.'

Both of them entered the room. There was nobody except both of them in the room. Nīlimā started to speak about their recent experience.

- Tilottamā. I don't like Puṣpa's behaviour –
- Why do you always talk about Puṣpa? In two months from now, our exams are scheduled.

Tilottamā expressed with artificial anger.

- Tilottamā! Why is it being discussed that romance has aroused in your mind? I know that you have a soft corner for him.
- If you know, then why are you asking?
- But, see, Tilottamā! We do not know everything about Puṣpa –
- Then, what do you want to tell?
- Don't you know? His behaviour is indescribable. Yesterday, when you were sleeping, his hands were over yours. I have seen it with my own eyes.

Tilottamā remained silent thinking about public humiliation. A seed of sadness mixed with ill thoughts was sown in her mind. She started thinking about it. Have others also noticed it like Tilottamā?

- Tilottamā? Not only is his poor behaviour, the language of his eyes is also not good. As if, he is always mocking. If such is behaviour towards us, it would definitely be poorer towards others.

Tilottamā's mind was full of sadness. Though angry, she maintained silence. The redness of her face was something worth seeing.

- Tilottamā! He is a loose character. If you want good for yourself, take him out of your mind.

Tilottamā's face was wet with tears. Her anger was transformed into tears and it tried to reveal itself. Nīlimā again started to tell something. Tilottamā told in a husky tone –

- Stop Nīlimā! Forget everything. This is the time for making merry, not for shedding tears.

Nīlimā artificially consoled her. She knows well that Tilottamā possesses deep love. That is why her goal will not be fulfilled there. She is neither happy with Puṃpa's behaviour during boating, nor she likes Tilottamā as before. Human behaviour is always reactive. When he sees that, there is no benefit for self, he turns revengeful.

The rains have become feeble. The shameless sun showed its face from behind the clouds. Rain drops were falling from the leaves of the trees. Some people started to go their ways. Some cows began to come out of the doors from the shelter taken in the school. The school staff hastened to go to their homes. Somebody came and rang the bell.

Both of them started to go towards their homes. The Deodar trees stood at the back as still as a monument. The motor cars were fleeing as thirsty nomads. Tilottamā was thoughtful. Her face sweated. Her mind was lustful under her skin thoughtful about the past days which caused the unexpected meeting of eyes. Today she realized that she would never be happy in her family life with the association of such a useless person. Nīlimā's artificial consolation had a womanly envy inside her. Dramatically, she ridiculed and said valiantly-

- Do not be afraid - life is a battlefield. Anything is possible here. I will try to find your life partner from anywhere else and try to satisfy you.

Tilottamā remained silent with a smiling face and a sad heart. Nīlimā reiterated doubtfully – ‘Or else, reveal everything to your father and think of a new plan.’

Both of them had smiles. The two friends gradually proceeded on the road. Thereafter, the road started to follow them like a mad snake.

Puṣpavallava sat alone silently in a room. He was reading a letter. It was signed by his old father –

Sri

Blessings from the old father. Mother is keeping well. You know that excepting the farm, there is no other property. This time, we have lost crops. Also, there was no water. Your ailing mother always wishes for your marriage. Otherwise, she would close her eyes in a few days time. You come home and take the responsibilities. Or else, how will the condition of Nirod and Kshirod improve?

It is holidays now. You come over here. Save the family. We have turned old. There is nobody to ask regarding our condition.

All are well. Still we want to see you. If you want to see your parents, please come.

We will wait for you.

Your wellwisher,

Serving father.

His mind was thoughtful on reading the letter. He remembered his father. He could hear his mother’s voice. Then, Tilottamā’s thoughts tried to stop him. Not only is the desire to marry Tilottamā, but also his mind full of love for her.

Noon was full with lightning. The sun tried to come out of the clouds. Nearby, Vadrikeśa and Aśutoṣa were coming. Both of them were in a discussion. Happily, they approached Puṣpa's door and mentioned, Puṣpa

- Good news -
- For whom?
- For us.
- What what?

Aśutoṣa happily told 'Puṣpa!'

- Both of us have got jobs –
- Where? Which post?
- The post of teacher in the foothills of Dhaulī Mountain in a high school.
- Both of you over there?
- No Vadrikeśa got the job in a nearby village.
- 'Good-good' Puṣpavallava was overwhelmed! 'When are you going?'
- They ordered us to join before the Christmas vacation. So we need to reach in a couple of day's time.

Aśutoṣa said.

- Go – wish you a happy journey.
- 'Would you not wish me? Big brother!' complained Vadrikeśa.
- 'Why did you think differently?', smilingly asked Puṣpavallava.
- May all flowers shower in your path.
- 'We accept all your good wishes', Vadrikeśa mentioned shaking hands.

Pausing for a while, he went into a different discussion.

- How shall we celebrate today – what brother? What do you want?
- It is your time to celebrate.

Aśutoṃa hurriedly went outside. He said

- I have asked the servant to get something from the shop.

The servant went to the shop. The three friends looked at each other. Vadrikeśa started,

- Puṃpa! Begin on some topic.
- Primarily for you two.
- No, asking mainly for you.
- After your departure, I will go back to my home. I have received a letter.
- All of us shall go. Tilottamā here.....

Stop Vadrikeśa.

- ‘Her news will be given by somebody else’, laughed Aśutoṃa.

Meanwhile, the servant arrived with sweets. He prepared to leave after bringing the sweets and keeping the change. But Puṃpa held his hand and asked him to take some sweets. He refused. After many requests, he took some and left.

Vadrikeśa calmly said

- Big brother. Do not forget us. If you ever require any help from us, do not hesitate.

Aśutoṃa held Puṃpa’s hand and said in a heavy voice

- Puṣpa! Life is like a vehicle. When the vehicle stops, one has to get down. Sometimes one has to step forward, while at times one has to step backwards. It was exuberant to pass on the last three years merrily. To err is human. If unknowingly, we have made any mistakes, please forgive us.
- Do not say like this, Aśutoṣa!
- No Puṣpa! The result of union is falling apart. People take from others. But the feelings stay as memories. Later when you sit back and think of the good and bad things, you would feel happy and sad.
- You know! Aśutoṣa!
- Puṣpa! We would love to remember.
- Big brother. If you manage to get time, do come over there. Although you are alone over here, Tilottamā will make you forget everything else. When you marry, do invite us.

Vadrikeśa laughed at Aśutoṣa's words.

In the subconscious mind, Puṣpavallava felt sad. He kept their hands on his and kissed them. All felt happy and laughed.

They went outside. Looking into the half sized trees, they kept walking. All three of them walked at the same speed. Their discussions also reduced. The wind became steady and favourable. The birds got busy in feeding their young ones.

Crooked road. Today also, it is reddish. There has been no improvement in five years, instead it has deteriorated. Work is still going on. The dilapidated house of fatherly, 'Dam' was situated on the road side. He comes here everyday. He tells

the history of his shop like that in the past – the tired pedestrians, the villagers drank water over here. They discussed politics. Everytime, improvements were discussed. Fatherly ‘Dam’ always used to criticize slow pace. He used to tell – during his time, every family was a happy one and his shop depicted the history of the village. The shop used to cater to the needs of his entire family. Times have changed. He was enthusiastic during his youth. He mentioned – sometime back they had together built the road by themselves. But so many years down the line, it has still not improved. But sometime before, after many requests – people came every year and put new soil onto the road to make it stronger. But due to the floods, every year the new soil used to get washed away. He was happy looking at the road during that time.

Since long, cattle used to graze by the road side. At times, they used to stray into houses and cause damage to them. They also damaged the crops. He used to make them go away by shouting. He was used to hearing the sounds of cows and buffaloes. He used to make them run away by hearing their sounds from a distance.

Puÿpa got down from the vehicle. Fatherly ‘Dam’s’ house was nearby. He was busy discussing politics as before. He observed changes in the village. The broken house at a distance stood like a ghost. The lack lustureness of the farmers, shepherds remained the same. Only he had changed.

This is old fatherly servant in Dam fatherly’s dilapidated house. After a half completed life, he met Puÿpavallava. He greeted and came like a tortoise. He stood by ailing Fatherly Dam’s doorsteps. Fatherly’s eyes were filled with water.

Puÿpa touched his fatherly’s feet. He took the leg dust on his head.

- Why-why are you doing this?
- You are like my father. I am doing the right thing.

- No Master! It is not correct for you to bow down. Now...
- No fatherly! Since my father has gone to heaven, you have performed all duties as a father.
- As a practice, I call you as Fatherly. Basically you...
- Do not tell any more, Master! I am your servant. I am not sure what God wants -, since I was bound by your love, I took an oath to consider yourself as everything in my life and brought you up.

The servant took the cloth from his shoulder and wiped his Master's feet.

- Why do you do such things, fatherly!
- 'It makes me immensely happy' his voice trembled.
- Fatherly, is everything fine?
- Yes, yes, Kshirod has gone to school. Nirod has gone to the shop. They will return soon.
- Fatherly! Will fatherly Dam see us?
- Yes, yes, he is waiting. Come.....come.....
- No, please speak more informally, fatherly.

Smiling a bit, fatherly said

- Master!
- Again, you are calling me as Master?
- Puṛpa
- 'Okay, it will be like this', said fatherly. Puṛpa followed the fatherly servant.

Fatherly Dam laughed with toothless mouth.

- Fatherly Dam, greetings!
- May you live long.

- Fatherly Dam! People find difficulty in living today even for sixty years. Then why do you wish me long life?
- Oh! The youth of today do not wish for long life.
- Then what?
- Wish us prosperity – it is prosperity that allows a person to live.
- Where do you live these days? Is everything fine?
- Yes, yes – everybody is waiting at home. Fatherly Dam, will speak to you later.

The servant went in front. Keeping a desert-like thirsty mind behind, Puṣṣavallava went ahead looking here and there. He noticed the village girls today. They also saw him. Those who used to build houses in the dust four years ago are reserved today. They could be seen far away. They are not talking. Today, he saw their feet painted in red. His face had the age old thirst. His journey was nice. The dresses revealed the excitement. The tight dresses exposed the arrogance of adult age. Puṣṣa could see Tilottamā amidst such sentiment.

The old servant gave directions of the road.

- Go straight on the road.
- ‘Yes’, laughed Puṣṣa.

The old servant also laughed.

He then started

- Master! We have accepted a marriage proposal.
- ‘Marriage proposal? Whose?’, inquisitively asked Puṣṣa.
- The girl is beautiful – very beautiful – her name is Madhuchanda-

- ‘But fatherly! I am not ready now. Neither do I earn. I am twenty five years old. Currently, there is nobody to look after at home. How do I marry under such a condition’, expressed Puṣpa.
- ‘You will get lots of wealth from the girl’s side. They would also support the expenses of your education’ the old man said smilingly.
- ‘Has a word been given?’ anxiously asked Puṣpa.
- No, - how can we do so without taking your opinion?

Puṣpavallava’s mind was restless.

- Master! See, Kshirod is running back. Come quickly.
- A dot has stability and no turbulence. But I have disturbance and no stability. Puṣpa thought as he went. Thoughts of sadness and happiness continued to play onto his mind.

Gradually, Kshirod came. They came to the village. Sitting by the window side, many old women inquired about his wellbeing. Some wives saw him from behind the doors.

The sun gradually rose from the east and went to the horizon. The house compound was drenched in the calm colourful sunrays of the evening. Tilottamā was walking. She was plucking flowers. Again, she was throwing them. She was thinking of something. She thought about expressing it but kept it concealed within herself.

Her mind was in such distress that it could not be expressed. Without Puṣpa, her mind did not wish to live. His behaviour, endurance, humour, shy salutation ‘Tilottame’, his nice figure, high thoughts – all these have stolen Tilottamā’s heart....., but he is characterless. In today’s world, fraud people hide behind good

looks. Mother Anupama came out of the house. She used to look after the flowers in the garden during the morning hours. She observed her daughter's gloomy face.

She asked lovingly – ‘Why are you like this?’ She went over to her, wiped her face with her saree and said.

- Look Tilottamā! A girl is born to go over to some other house. Definitely, you will also go from here sometime or the other. So you need not be sad.

Tilottamā remained silent. Puṣpa may be characterless but his love is pure.

She has also observed his emotions. When she came home, Puṣpa had said

- Tilottamā! Do not forget.

Although hesitant, she also said

- You also don't forget.
- What is there in our life? Why are men happy in society, women also turn happy holding the hands of wealthy men.

Thoughtful Anupama said

- ‘Tilottamā! Do not think otherwise. Bhāgyadatta will be your able husband. He has lots of wealth. He is the chief. There is no dearth of money. You will be very happy’ laughed Anupama.

Tilottamā soon responded

- No, mother! Stop this proposal. I will not marry now.
- Why are you speaking like mad, Tilottamā? Your marriage is in four days time. You are now grown up. Educated. Your marriage will be held with grandeur. Why do you worry?

- ‘I do not wish to marry’ she cried.

Puṣpa’s picture came up in her mind. But she was afraid and ashamed to reveal it. Or else – being educated, how does one tolerate a characterless person? Instead, it is better to be the wife of a wealthy person. But if the unknown person leaves her for some reason or if her soft corner is revealed someday and she is not pardoned or if he turns characterless with all his wealth – thinking all this, Tilottamā started crying in a high pitch.

Anupama tried to explain her ‘Tilottamā! Do not leave your current happiness thinking of the dreadful past. It is your turn to be happy now. Do not cry any more. If you cry, you will eat my head.’ Keeping hand on her mother’s mouth – ‘Do not speak like this.....my marriage...ends.’ Tilottamā started crying with her hands covering her face.

Why are speaking like mad? If anybody happens to hear it, everything will be spoilt.....Beautiful husband. Beautiful house. Enough wealth to lead life. Then why are you thinking? Tilottamā continued crying. Puṣpa may be poor but he has a big heart. His likings are also good. Although he has sent a promising letter, now....Tilottamā could not think any more. Unnecessarily showing temper, she said –‘You are bringing down everybody, Tilottamā! We will also lose our family tradition. Your father’s prestige would also be lost. You are burning all of us. Hate birth of a girl.’ She said to herself.

Hearing commotion in the room, the husband, Kamantak, said ‘Come out of the room – why are you shouting?’

- ‘Commotion, - commotion. Why do you not understand? Who has set up this marriage for which Tilottamā is crying?’ She said with tears.

- 'I know dear. This is the weakness of women. Tears flow out of eyes very often.' Kamantak said sarcastically.
- 'Tilottamā, my days are dring up. Your mind is also not over here. You are not willing to marry. Your mind has a different picture of a husband. You will not have marriage over there.' Anupama said angrily.
- Dear. Do you have cowdung in your head? Everything is organized. Now you are telling that there will be no marriage?-
- If it does not happen here, it will happen somewhere else.
- Somewhere else?
- Wherever she wishes.
- Hey! Where do you want to marry? Have we ceased to exist? Alas....alas....alas....alas.
- Nīlimā asked to find out a husband for her. Be it so. What will happen to us?
- Alas....alas....alas. You dumb! I know everything. I have heard everything from Nīlimā. Firstly, he is poor. Secondly, he is not working. Thirdly, he does not have a family heritage. It does not work this way. Alas...alas..... I have to shut my ears of whatever more I have heard. Alas...alas.... It is sin to even to see his face.
- 'Is Nīlimā truthful? She said the truth – you first visit there, then you may decide. Where is truth in these words?' Anupama said boldly.

He said in a low voice

- No dear. Now we do not have the time to go anywhere else. All the relatives will arrive tomorrow. And I have given my word to Bhāgyadatta. Giving a word is like giving one's daughter's hand in marriage. It is a great sin to break a promise. We will give our daughter's hand in marriage. Our forefathers will be happy.

- Again you decide. You are my wife. You know that I obey you. I keep all your words. Then why are you thinking like this? And our daughter will also be happy with abundance. Nobody gives their daughters to jobless people. Nobody wants to see or hear their children to be unhappy. So dear, be calm, think and then shout. See what is going on –

Kamantak's high pitched and logical words made Anupama still. Tilottamā did not enter their room during the quarrel, nobody had noticed.

- Dear? Think what can be done. Such is the nature of girls. You know all this. I have work, let me go.

Kamantak went outside with these words. Anupama gradually entered through the door.

Tilottamā was looking at the garden outside through the window. There were bees in the flowers. The mild sun slowly turned hot. The sunflower began to bloom. Dewdrops could be seen on the creepers.

Then, some relatives arrived. They inquired about each other. They started to chit-chat with each other and enjoyed themselves. But Tilottamā's tears did not dry. Her mind felt empty.

Puṣpavallava hovered around the streets in the village. His mind was filled with worries – dual thoughts competed with each other. He thought – let me accept Madhuchhandā leaving aside Tilottamā. Again, ignoring the words of parents and friends let me go to Tilottamā. But Tilottamā has not yet signalled positively. She is selfish if she has embraced somebody rich thinking of his poverty..... Two months have passed but she has not written any letter. He wishes to write a letter – but if she lives elsewhere – thinking this, Puṣpavallava felt disturbed.

Puṣpa saw – not far away, along the curved road, a postman was coming. He laughed inside and asked

- Is there any letter for us?
- ‘No’, answered the postman and went ahead. He stopped and turned back saying, ‘Sorry. There is a letter.’

The postman went away after handing over the letter. Puṣpa could not control his anxiety after receiving the letter. Lines appeared on his forehead.

It is Tilottamā’s marriage. She has sent an invitation to Puṣpavallava. Fire of revenge burned in Puṣpavallava’s mind. The revenge is not towards Tilottamā. It is for Bhāgyadatta. Bhāgyadatta is known to him beforehand. They studied in the same school. His witty words have hardly spared any beautiful girl. Innocent people often go by one’s outer looks. They praise the outer dress. He praises his own actions and words. All are amazed by his witty words. How does one know what is in other’s mind without looking into one’s inner self? Thinking of all this, Puṣpavallava became thoughtful after sighing heavily.

Even today, Bhāgyadatta’s evil deeds are known to many. But he is rich. Everything is in hands. He proves the false to be true and otherwise. Nīlimā also belongs to his village. She is also similar. She is never liked. She never desires to see happiness in Tilottamā’s life. Such people only cause problems in other’s life. They do not think of themselves. What to tell others -. If such people do not think of causing problems to others and instead think good for themselves, then other people’s lives would be progressive.

Puṣṣavallava was sad. He felt sympathy for Tilottamā. He loved Tilottamā. Tilottamā is the queen of his heart. But today she is leaving as the lady of someone else's heart. It is not right to think badly of her at this stage. Let her be happy. May she be a good housewife. May she fulfill the expectations of Bhāgyadatta and her relatives. Today she has no relations with Puṣṣa. She is also separate. I am also for somebody else. But his mind does not agree. His heart is breaking. His body was trembling.

Puṣṣa decided to write a letter. It would be the first and last letter to her. He went to the shop and bought an envelope too. With trembling hands, he wrote –

Shri

Tilottamā.....! Blessings and best wishes. I have been thinking of writing a letter to you for many days but am not getting time for it. This is the best time. Wish you all the best at this moment. With Lord's blessings, may you turn to be a good housewife.

Tilottamā! The couple's picture at the banks of the 'Chilka' would remain enlightened. If ever, you are reminded of me, do try to forget.

Many many good wishes.

From,

Your 'Puṣṣa'

Puṣpa again went through the letter. His mind was full of sympathy. With all the good wishes, he dropped the letter into the letter box. His heart was shattered. His mind wished that a tear drop fell from his eye. But he couldn't.

Will he marry Madhuchhandā? – One he has never seen. Neither he knows anything about her. Only he knows her relatives. But in order to marry, one must know everything about the girl. Today corruption is seen even in highly esteemed families. There is a family tree but it is empty inside. At many places, beautiful flowers could be seen, but there are insects inside. What may be done? The world is in the grasp of wealth. Without money, man has no ground. Today the mind is dreadful. Greed and ambition has filled the mind. Man continues to live in this bogus world. Definitely, man lives.

Puṣpa returned. Meanwhile, fatherly servant came to the shop. He was walking gradually and wore a dirty dhoti till his knees. A spade was swaying in his hand. A shrunk towel was there on his shoulder. His white hairs were as sharp as the blades of grass. His mind was full of thoughts. He came close and smiled gently. Puṣpa replied with a gentle smile too. Fatherly told as before ‘ Master! Your mind has not changed even after repeated thoughts. Will you go out on a trip for some days? My serving days are almost ending. Still, I am not seeing you happy. For some days.....Master! For some days?’ The old servant was impatient.

- Fatherly! I know your wish. Let me propose something.
- Master.....!!!
- Yes, fatherly.....!
- ‘My Lord – today listen to me – and agree.....’ the old servant said.
- Yes, fatherly! The appropriate time has come. I do not wish to make you unhappy.

- ‘Master....!!’ tears started falling down his eyes.
- ‘Yes, fatherly! You may fix up my marriage.’ Puṣpa wiped off the old man’s tears.
- Master! You come over tomorrow. You can have a look at Madhuchhandā. I will send the news tonight.
- No fatherly! You can go. Please fix up the date of marriage. I do not require to go. The marriage would take place on the date which you decide.
- All right...all right...Please go home. Mother is waiting. I will return home after buying some fruits.

Both parted ways. Puṣpa went westwards towards his house. The horizon was smoky. The earth was filled with fog. His mind was if welcoming Madhuchhandā and departing with Tilottamā.

The busy marriage day had passed. Bhāgyadatta’s bedroom is decorated nicely. Everywhere in the room, nice pictures had been hung. There was commotion everywhere. Everybody was enjoying the gala event. The village women were decorating Tilottamā. Many people had come. Some of them had finished taking their food. The neighbours were trying to put a smile on Tilottamā’s face with hilarious discussions.

The sky was clear. The environment was good. Bhāgyadatta was discussing with his friends at the doorsteps. He was very happy. He was looking great in his new attire. Just then, the postman came and handed him some congratulatory letters. The letters were addressed to Tilottamā. Seeing this, he was very happy. He went inside his room and started going through the letters. There was also a letter from some Puṣpa. He was curious. His disbelief increased. He observed that the neighbours had all surrounded Tilottamā. Thinking it to be correct time, he entered

Tilottamā's room like a thief. He searched through her dress and cupboard and came across the couple's photo. He had a nice look at it and came outside.

He quickly came to the door. The face turned red with anger. He remembered Nīlimā. 'Brother! You would feel ashamed if you marry Tilottamā.' Nīlimā belonged to his village. She would never have lied. She also came to his house the other day. She had laughed and mentioned these words. He had laughed away on the words. But it turned true today. His heart was burning with revenge. He is clueless. He frowned. A mocking laughter aroused on his face.

Night arrived. Tilottamā was married. Her head had the mark of vermillion. Her eyes had new kohl (kajal). She wore a gold necklace. Her hair was decorated with flowers. She wore gold bangles. Her fingers had a golden ring with many precious stones. She wore a precious sari and stood in front of the mirror. Her hand and feet were numb. She was breathing heavily.

The neighbours wished a good night to Tilottamā near the mirror and went away. Tilottamā saw her own beauty. She was happy seeing herself. Precious jewellery, precious sari, the decorated multi-coloured lights, some flowers on the bed, a dim blue coloured light – all these reminded her of heaven. She imagined herself to be a celestial damsel. She laughed on seeing her image.

Gradually, the old history passed away from her mind. This is the ultimate goal in human life – the ultimate feeling. There was a day – when Puṣpa was the man in her life. At first she did not want to and also could not erase him from his mind. But today, she was even ready to walk upon a hundred Puṣpas. Just as the insect jumps into the fire, her love had also jumped. Tilottamā's face had the impressions of romance. She was looking at her image repeatedly. The sandal glowed on her. Her eyes had turned red with the kohl.

Her mind was again engrossed with thoughts. She was excited on thinking about boating in the lake..... If she had married Puṣpa, then definitely her life would have turned sorrowful. Listening to her parents, she had accepted Bhāgyadatta's hand in marriage. Today, her life would definitely be happy. Without wealth, life is like a vulture's corpse. Wives of poor people are never happy. All friends are also doing whatever is causing them to be happy. Today many people such as Puṣpa are under her feet.

Night passed. All are sleeping. Suddenly, she thought about her invitation letter for Puṣpa. She remained silent for sometime. She saw her sari in the mirror. Suddenly, she heard somebody coming. Tilottamā shivered. She saw Bhāgyadatta coming with some letters. Suddenly, she saw Bhāgyadatta throwing them on the bed. His face was bursting with anger. Tilottamā stood still by the bed and watched. He did not tell her anything. But he observed her for sometime. He turned his head and started to go outside. Tilottamā blushed and told 'Listen'-

Bhāgyadatta was excited by this single word. He could not go away. Turning slightly, he looked at Tilottamā's face. He was impatient. He forgot everything at that moment. He even forgot himself. His thirst for love was intense. He looked into Tilottamā's eyes and turned romantic. He proceeded. He embraced Tilottamā with both his hands. Tilottamā's vermillion made a mark on his naked breast.

But Bhāgyadatta's dirty mind was towards Nīlimā. She was his childhood love. A man does not like his newly wed wife if he has another lover. Even, if he goes towards somebody else, he does not forget his wife. But a woman can forget everything – Tilottamā was fully immersed in the new love. She closed her eyes and forgot everything else. Bhāgyadatta also enjoyed having love for a long time.

The night thickened. The nightplay ceased. Tired Tilottamā looked onto Bhāgyadatta's face. She remained smiling after completing everything. Slowly slowly, she uttered some childish words. Bhāgyadatta had a fake smile on his face. He was an expert in quenching his thirst of love. He smiled thinking about Tilottamā's private love. He would leave her just like his other girlfriends. If Bhāgyadatta remains alone – hundreds of Tilottamā would come to him.

The love thirst slowed down. The excitement reduced. Tilottamā thought that she was lucky, Bhāgyadatta was a master of love, it must have been good fruits of the deeds of her earlier life. Tilottamā kept her head on Bhāgyadatta's naked breast. Bhāgyadatta smiled gently. Tilottamā thought herself to be lucky. Bhāgyadatta thought – such natured women know tricks, they want to shed off the evil traits of their character. A used body only seems to be of noble character when seen from outside.

Accepting the old lover as a husband, such women get a societal acceptance to their characters. Such is their identity.

Tilottamā went off to sleep. The bed carried her lovely body, a pale blue light was on. Bhāgyadatta thought looking at the mosquito net – 'the human character also has many such holes'.

Tilottamā's face had the beauty of the full moon amidst a blue sky. Her hair fell in random manner over her forehead. She was looking like a sleeping swan. Her body had turned calm beneath her clothes. Her body was filled with the fragrance of love.

The night ended. Still, Tilottamā was sleeping. But the door was open. Many people were there. Suddenly, an old woman asked – 'Was Nīlimā over here, last night? She has not yet returned home. Is she over here?' Hearing the old woman's words, Tilottamā got up in apprehension.

Somebody said from inside –‘She had come in the evening. She had gone then only.’

The old woman tried to tell something with wet eyes. But somebody told – ‘Look into the neighbour’s home. She may be sleeping over there.’ The old woman went away.

Tilottamā completed everything in the morning and begun to wait for her husband. Her waiting time continued to increase. The wall clock continued to tick on.

Tilottamā made the bed. Suddenly she came across the bunch of letters below the pillow. She saw her picture with Puṣpa. Surprisingly, she saw the letters – one was Puṣpa’s greetings letter. The other was her husband’s. First, she read her husband’s letter with great happiness –

Tilottamā! Nobody wants to accept a characterless woman pretending to be a faithful wife. Look. Nobody can hide the truth. I have come to know of everything. I am repenting the fact that you had come into my life as a devoted wife. I do know of such girls and wives. My duty towards you is complete. Now, you may go to your lover, Puṣpa. He must be also waiting to have you. Although, tasted once, he will treat you as as a divine gift.

I know – you will forget – but, women shed tears only to show-off – you build an unseen cage to ignore everything. But after all, you belong to dirty waters - From your Bhāgyadatta.

Tilottamā could not read Puṣpa’s letter any more. There was darkness all around. She could not think any more. Suddenly, she fell to the ground just as a fallen tree. She turned unconscious.

Again, the old woman came to Bhāgyadatta's place in search of Nīlimā. With tearful voice, she asked – 'Sister! Nīlimā is nowhere. Does she come to meet your wife? Your wife was her friend.'

A woman softly called Tilottamā and entered the house. Seeing her fallen down, she shouted to draw everybody's attention. Everybody came over there. What happened...? What happened - ? Everybody started asking each other. There was a lot of bustle.

At the end of the village in the temple of Mahadeva, the morning golden rays of the sun fell all around. The chirping of birds could be heard from the nearby trees. After finishing the morning work, people go to the village pond through that route. Standing in the water, they bowed to the temple top. Some people took a bath and went to the temple. Some Brāhmaṇas chanted.

Puṣpavallava finished his morning bath and went to the temple. His face was very happy. Although he was about to marry Madhuchhandā, he is yet to speak with her. Today, it was his marriage reception. All were busy in the village. All had come to his house. Children – adults – elders, all were happy in seeing him. Puṣpa still had a childish nature. Even after seeing Madhuchhandā, he could not speak with her. The first feelings always create excitement in one's body. Whenever, he thinks of Madhuchhandā, he feels excited.

He came to the temple door and heard the priest chanting something in a loud voice. Although, he could not understand much of it, he devotedly paid homeage and offered coconut and bananas. He also bowed. The priest blessed him with Vedic mantras. Then he held the blessed food (prasadam) and called the children. They were playing. All came running on Puṣpa's call.

All surrounded Puṣṣapavallava. He laughed at their behaviour. Somebody said to give him first. Others told to offer them at first. The commotion increased. Puṣṣapavallava observed that amidst them, some were naked. Some were half-naked. Water flowed from nose of some of them. Some were in underwear. He ordered – ‘Firstly, dress properly. Wipe your nose. Stand in a line. Then I will give you the blessed food.’ All became busy. Some started to wipe their noses with left hand.

Puṣṣa gladly started to distribute the food. He had numerous thoughts in mind – they are half-naked, they are the citizens – they would do good to the society – they will strengthen the soil. Today he remembered everything, whenever he went off to study, these children would follow him. They carried all his belongings and shoes and saw him off till the highway. Until the motor car vanished from sight, they stood there to bid adieu. Also, whenever he returned home, news used to travel in advance and people used to greet him, whenever he entered the village. He distributed sweets to all. He found his books on his return to his house.

Puṣṣapavallava was surrounded by children. He saw that fatherly servant was observing his childish nature from far. Smiling, - happily – he came near and softly said:

- Master! Your wife has still not broken her fast. What are you doing in the temple? She is waiting. She has not even taken water after requesting. Come, what could be your relation with these?
- Fatherly! Why have you come?
- What can I do – mother has sent me.
- You proceed. I am coming.

Fatherly gradually started to go back. Puṣṣavallava began to follow him.

All were present at home. Mother angrily said – ‘Puṣṣa! Even after your education, you do not have any knowledge about household. Your wife is still fasting. You are roaming here and there. Was Mahadeva not present in temple?’

- Mother! While distributing the blessed food.....
- Do not speak any more. There is lot of work to be done. Ask fatherly and fix up.

Puṣṣa’s entry made Madhuchhandā cautious. She got up from the bed and bowed down at Puṣṣa’s feet. Puṣṣa held her up. Thereafter she stood with her face looking downwards. Puṣṣa remained silent. The moonlike face looked down. There were no words. She only signalled by nodding her head.

Puṣṣa was excited. He left the bed and approached Madhuchhandā. He spoke sweetly holding her chin. Feeling ashamed, she did not utter anything. Puṣṣa embraced her and picked her up onto the bed. He kept his mouth in her face. The light went off.

Tilottamā lay on the bed like an idle multitude. Her eyes were full of tears and hair disorganized. She cried like an injured bird. Sorrow blossomed from her body. There was darkness all around. She continued to lie down inspite of trying to cope with the situation.

Such time had come when inspite of taking all precautions along the path of life and inspite of having everything, it feels helpless. At times, even after falling down - man rises. But rising in such a situation is similar to an innocent animal being the slave of a situation. It is like the entire life had fallen apart. Although

there is a wish for atonement, although there is a wish for pardoning, it could not be done.

Tilottamā's revolutionary mind awakened. Neither she could take revenge, nor could she amend things. Many unclear thoughts engrossed her – 'Who has created the society? Who says that these rich people are ideal grooms? Is wealth and youthfulness the only form of life? Is marriage an absolute necessity?'

Puṣpa's image floated in her mind like a golden lotus. Puṣpa is such a lover, who would feel sad upon coming to see or hear of her grave situation. What is the benefit in thinking of such extra-marital love? Tilottamā was saddened. Today, nothing is her own; something which she can call to be her's..... Still she had to play the role of a newly wed woman in society - or - she could be a mad beggar flocking from door to door for money - or - suicide was also a good option. There are no other alternatives.

Again – if she continues to stay there, she would have to tolerate false blames. She wanted to destroy the society. Standing on the old steps of the old society, she wanted to announce loudly – 'Woman is a life partner - partner in enjoyment - partner in moving - partner in right'. But today she had seen the looks of sexually starved society. Under the disguise of dignity, there is forgery. Beneath the new cloth, there is an incorrect instinct. In the name of destruction of the past, there is an animal like instinct.

Mother-in-law summoned her in trembling tone

- Wife! Do not be saddened. I do not have any luck.
- 'No, no mother! I do not want anything. You be assured. I will go due to my fate', cried Tilottamā.

The old woman blessed her with both hands. She continued requesting her:

- Have some food. How long will you continue to live without food?
- Mother. I do not feel like living...
- Wife! He will definitely come back. Do not be impatient! Do not think otherwise. Come on, let us have some food!
- No mother.
- ‘Wife! Otherwise, I will also not eat. Your worries are mine too. SO first, I will die’, she cried.
- No mother! Whatever you tell will happen. Do not tell like this anymore.

The old woman went to bring food.

Night fell. Just like the new leaves in an old tree, new thoughts were born in her mind. She was determined. She moved here and there. She heard about the stories of ascetic women (sanyasini). All have unconditionally devoted their lives for helping others. They perform welfare activities. From morning till night, they roam from one country to the other helping others. With their deeds, they are not looked down upon. Those who were looked down upon are praised today. They look after the helpless, orphans, tortured and sick people. Today they educate the illiterate. Moving from village to village, they advise people. In the society, they are like forms of Goddess Earth. Their lives are blessed. Otherwise, what is the benefit in living a mediocre life? So, it is good to go far away. Where, there is no selfishness, there is no animal-like instinct, there is no evil thought for others, there is constructive thinking, where progress of the world is thought about. Where, there is no smell of corruption and where peace exists.

But if she declares the life of a woman to be a consumable commodity, then many would approach her for love. Many would extend their hands to jump into her fire of beauty. They would bleed her tender lips. They would coagulate her blood. At least, in the heap of disgrace in society, she would be thrown like a mango seed and people would again search for new beauty in the disguise of

dignity. This consumption trend is life's pattern. This is the nature of life and negative side of youthfulness.

All are sleeping at night. Tilottamā looked at the darkness through the window. She had firmed up the road in her painful life. She did not want to spread her own fragrance like the smoke of an incense stick. But her life had turned to be the ash of such an incense stick. Shame does not look good in the life a deserted wife. It is required to live in the society. Nobody in the society is her friend today, nor are there any relatives.

With a dark mind and bare feet, she started walking. She left behind the open door. There is darkness in front. The road is complex. Destination is far away. The cut trees on the roadside are standing like sages. She was determined not to return back. The sound of feet was heard.

The koel bird was singing. Bunch of new leaves were all around. The untimely blossoms were swaying. The fragrance of lotus flowers filled the atmosphere. Far away, the shepherd's flute conveying love could be heard. Everything looked pretty. Behind the leaves, the ploy of the crow and koel bird continued. Today, it is spring time in the entire village. All are singing and dancing.

Puṣpavallava was excited. He had Madhuchhandā besides him. She had bright vermillion on her head. She walked with veil on her head. One could observe her sensitivity. Puṣpavallava went ahead describing the spring season to her.

Madhuchhandā followed. Puṣpavallava was excited in moving around during the spring season. Holding his hand softly, she tried to draw a romantic picture in her mind. Many thoughts circled in her mind like the colours of the fist.

She held Puṣpa's hand in fright. Puṣpa's heart beats increased. They were alone. There was silence everywhere. Puṣpavallava lied down on Madhuchhandā's breast. They looked at each other and got lost in each other. Their feet felt numb on the grass. Lifting the veil, Puṣpavallava kissed Madhuchhandā. Closing her eyes and putting her head down, she said

- You are not doing the right thing.
- Why?
- It is daytime now.
- 'So what?' Laughed Puṣpa.
- Don't you know?
- No.

Madhuchhandā remained silent.

- Chhandā! Will I ask something?
- Ask.
- Have you ever experienced the full moon in a forest?
- No.

She raised her head and looked towards him. Lines could be seen on her face.

- Chhandā! Have you ever wandered alone?
-Wandered.....Many times.
- Did you observe anything new?
- 'Yes.....' she nodded.
- In what form?

Madhuchhandā remained silent.

- ‘Are you feeling embarrassed?’ He held her chin and looked at her.
- Chhandā! Look at me and answer my questions.
- Ask.
- Have you ever felt sad?
- All my sorrow has gone away seeing you.
- Then in your life, I am.....
- First and last.
- Chhandā! Some questions are arising in my mind – please answer them.
- ‘All right’, she responded.
- ‘Chhandā! If life has a boundary, where does it start and where does it end?’ – Laughed Puṣṣapavallava.
- At a point.

Puṣṣapavallava was surprised. He thoughtfully replied

- Really, you are very intelligent.

Madhuchhandā was humble. Lines of happiness were seen on her face.

- Chhandā! When you prayed for my well being at the temple....
- What happened then?
- Telling.
- You can tell freely.
- Memory of a girl came across –
- Then.
- You do not know her. Then, I did not have a liking for you.
- ‘Then’, sadly responded Madhuchhandā.
- But, when I got your love, then your behaviour made me forget everything of the past -
- Who is the girl?

- I do not like to tell anything about those times. Also, whom do I tell it to?
Hearing it, if you feel sad, then it is of no use.

Madhuchhandā looked dumbly towards Puṣpavallava.

- Chhandā! At times, life goes on like this in an unplanned manner.
- ‘Who was the girl? You did not tell.’ Madhuchhandā asked with pride.
- Forget it, Chhandā! It was my misdeed.
- What misdeed?
- All my love is for you only. But in return...

Puṣpa paused.

- Do not worry. Love is life. Love is God. Nothing bad ever happens to a lover.
- Then, am I at fault?
- No. It never happens like that. If you have any worry in your mind, then you are repentant. A repentant is never at fault.
- Really, Chhandā? I am blessed in getting such an intelligent woman as you. Tell – what do you want? I will give you everything.
- Dear! I want nothing but your love. Please give me the love that was reserved for her.
- Be it so.
- Touch my body and commit so.
- By touching you, I promise that my love is only for you.
- Is it true, dear?
- True - true.
- True.
- Yes true.

Puṣpa held her hand and placed her in his heart. His body was excited. Puṣpa's eyes closed in love, the bed of leaves made their bodies one.

‘Dhauri’ is at the foothills. The area is beautiful. There is greenery all around. Far away, the green paddy fields are seen. The Daya river flows nearby. Even today, the Dhauri hill continues to conceal the history of many people. Once there was a big war over here. Many people died. The Daya river turned red. Countless dead bodies were there inside the silt. So many women have shed their tears, that it cannot be counted. Many families have been buried in this womb. But today it is a fertile land. By God's grace, the foothills of Dhauri have turned green. Goddess Lakshmi has arrived in each house.

These days, many people come to the Dhauri hill to pray. The atmosphere is such that the chirping of birds is heard everywhere. Today many people and hermits have come here. They are talking with each other but the hill is standing dumb. Some are saying – Many days ago, a hermit came over here to pray. The remains of his leaf-hut are present even today. People say – he has been liberated. Now, somebody had constructed a big hermitage over here. Many people do farming over here. They graze the cattle and advise people. They prepare medicines from tree roots. Many people come here in grief. Many ill people come here to get rid of their illness. Many aged women come here and get attracted to religious thoughts. People do fasting. Foreigners come here to get peace of mind. Many poets, writers and philosophers also come over here.

Many men have come here to become sages. Many have also have improvements in health and mind. Many well educated people live here. Some stay as sages. Some people also die in the prity of atmosphere that is present over here. The dust over here is purified by their talents. Some graves laugh and tell –

‘We are also people.’ But today, Padmakāñcana is busy and told master – ‘Welcome you hermit.’

The master observed with half bent eyes. He had a calm face. His eyes had the shadow of twilight. The lifeless body was dry. An oldness and aged look was covering the entire person. He was thoughtful. He posed with his fingers just as hermits do. He was boldly sitting in ‘Padmasana’.

Padmakāñcana asked humbly – ‘We live in the forest. She is in her youth...’

‘Why do you think, Padmakāñcana!’ the master responded boldly.

‘We will not be breaking the rules’, informed Padmakāñcana.

‘No. Bring her to me’, ordered the master.

Padmakāñcana went away slowly. He was very emotional. He had grown up in the forest. He did not have any demands. Whatever he had earned, was all there in the religious hermitage. He had only heard about doing good for the people from his master. Those who stay in the heaven had sacrificed their lives for the welfare of mankind. Hermits say that ultimate peace is liberation. Hard work is a commitment. Treatment of the ill people is religion. Doing good for people will give completeness to life.

Tilottamā stood at the doorsteps of the religious hermitage. The fair lady had a fair dress. Her head had a hermit like tuft of well organized hair. She paid homage with empty folded hands. Her kohl-less eyes were in waiting. Her face reflected the sternness of a lady hermit. She had a tired look with dusty feet. With strict heart she waited for master’s orders.

‘Lady! Come inside’ – told Padmakāñcana. Like a sad swan, Tilottamā entered gradually. Padmakāñcana signalled – ‘This way, this way.’

She felt as if Puṣpa was catching her saree and stopping her from entering, ‘Do not go! Do not...’. Again she experienced the ruthlessness of Bhāgyadatta which ordered her to – ‘Go, go’. Today she is neither a lover, nor a wife. She is a lone traveller. Whose feelings does she honour today? Again she heard – ‘ This way, this way.....this is the way.’ Definitely, by offering herself to the master, she would gain peace in the religious hermitage. Leaving behind all insults, she stood in the pathway of being a hermit.

Both came to the master. The master sat on a long throne-like seat. His entire body signalled postures of atonement. Humbly, Padmakāñcana mentioned – ‘She has come’.

After the prayer, the master saw her with small eyes. A gradual bold phrase uttered from his mouth

- May God bless you!
- I am obliged.
- Lady! Why have you come to become a hermit?.....

His voice trembled.

- Lady! You do not know that penance has become only a story in today’s society. All are busy in experiencing happiness and beauty. Only people such as us who do not have anyone spend their time over here. Lady! You think once more –

Tears flowed from Tilottamā’s eyes. She neither could see her wound nor could show her wound. With tearful eyes, she stared at the master.

The master told – ‘Lady! Once upon a time, I was a young man. I was a family person. In the workaholic society, I also shared a position. But, the fire of communal violence struck the society. Everywhere there was a commotion- this is

a Hindu, this is a Muslim and this is a Christian. Plunder – revenge – vengeance was widespread. I used to work at some other place during that time. Unfortunately, I could not return home. I spent the night at my workplace. When I returned home, everything was finished. My wife and children were dead, the house was burnt.’ Tears came to the master’s eyes.

- Mother! When everything gets destroyed, the poor citizen has two options – being a beggar or committing a suicide.

The master remained silent.

- I am also helpless, father!
- ‘Helpless!!’ the master was surprised.
- Yes, father! I have nobody.....
- ‘You have nobody!!!’, the master was saddened. His heart was indeed very aggrieved. He tried to console –‘What is your name?’ Tilottamā remained silent.
- All right. Do not cry, do not cry. Today onwards, your name is Madhusmitā. It was my daughter’s name.

The master uttered the last words to himself.

- Padmakāñcana! Make all arrangements for the lady hermit to stay.
- All right master.
- Go mother! Nobody will insult you over here. Padmakāñcana will arrange for everything. Go, wash your feet. Wash your face. Eat something and we would meet in the evening. Go, stop staying under the sun.

Madhusmitā followed Padmakāñcana. Her eyes were on the trees of the hermitage. Everything was so very silent. Even the shadows were playing with artificial leaves. Gradually, they spent their days in the religious hermitage.

A year passed by. But there was no news of Bhāgyadatta. It was well known that Nīlimā had also gone with him. Their unhappy family was tired in searching for them. The news was also printed in the newspaper. It was announced via radio. But nobody was able to give any news about their whereabouts. How will somebody live like this? Man even forgets the gravest of tragedies.

The path was rough. It was thorny. There were trees all around. Hills were there everywhere. There was a huge mountain in front. It looked like a beast. At the foothills, lived a barbaric mountain tribe. Their houses looked like heaps from a distance. Everybody was used to the forest life. They lived on the food from forest and drunk the water from forest too. They wore clothes and shoes made out of animal skin. Some of the men and women were naked. They were not afraid of work. They roamed here and there day and night. Their vocabulary did not have the word education. Still they enjoy festivals. They make merry and are happy people. They do not fight with each other. They live together. Unity is their strength. They respect women. They can give their lives for the sake of respect of their women.

Nowadays, they also come to visit the towns. But people think that they are unsocial and hence scoff them off. The mountaineous region is heaven for them. At times, seminaked women also come to the town. People also laugh looking at them. If any tribal person comes to see that people are laughing at them, then they do not hesitate to shoot an arrow towards them. It causes loss of life. That is why people do not behave badly with them.

There has been progress in mankind today. For improving the comfort, many things have been invented. Still then, the customs of these tribals remain the same. Their livelihood has also not changed. They are happy even without the effects of modern inventions. Their health never betrays due to lack of food. They do not have many worries. Like the modern day homeless citizen, they are not hypocrites.

They do not follow blindly. They also do not dress up decently and hover around like the employmentless youth and create commotion by stealing here and there. They work hard the entire day. They have remained for ages and will continue to do so.

The leaves are dense. The sunrays are playing through the dense leaves. The situation is grave and empty. Here, it is Bhāgyadatta's rest house. Over the last one year, many things have changed. Bhāgyadatta is also repentant. He does not know, why he was with Nīlimā. He is no longer as beautiful as before. His greed for lust had still not ended. He had immense wealth. So there was no dearth of bodily pleasures. This year, Nīlimā was more than a married wife. She had thought Bhāgyadatta to be her husband. Everybody in the rest house knew that Bhāgyadatta was the husband and Nīlimā, his wife.

Nīlimā was sleeping. Bhāgyadatta was roaming outside. The locality could be seen from a distance.

Many workers were working in the rest house garden. Bhāgyadatta was thoughtful.

‘Tilottamā was abandoned due to her characterlessness. She must be spending her days somewhere. She was beautiful. Alas! Leaving aside everything, I should have done a forest research. There has been conflict with Nīlimā. She believes that Tilottamā is dead. Nīlimā has always been envious of her. She lives with her pride. She always thinks of me wrongly. She is blind with selfish motives. Nīlimā has betrayed me due to selfishness’ – thoughtfully he went towards the hill. To entertain himself, he went towards the locality. Afterwards, he told somebody – ‘The lady is sleeping. I am going towards the hill for a while. If she inquires, inform her that I have gone.’

Although his heart was excited, he was patient. Nothing could be read from his looks. He went on. The locality was nearby. The mountain girls were carrying water pitchers. In that place filled with women, Bhāgyadatta felt like returning back to town. Questions arose in his mind as to what he should do? He slipped. He failed to decide and lost his path. He repeatedly thought as to what he should do? Either he should leave Nīlimā just as he left Tilottamā or else, he should kill Nīlimā and wipe off his disrepute. Then he may return to Tilottamā and innocently beg for pardon. She is generous. She would definitely accept him. But what should he do? Moreover, Tilottamā. The blame for leaving Tilottamā was like a venomous snake. Killing Nīlimā will end him up in the prison. On one side blame and on other side it was jail.

Bhāgyadatta looked up and observed that the mountain girls were moving in a line with their pitchers towards the forest. They were looking attractive in their seminaked condition. Bhāgyadatta sat on one side of the road. He felt tempted on looking at all this. He felt greedy at the scene. He controlled himself. He was thoughtful.

Meanwhile, Nīlimā woke up and found that Bhāgyadatta is not there. She washed her face and dressed up. She asked Sanatan,

- Where is master?
- 'He had gone towards the hills' was the getle reply.
- Hey Sanatan. The dogs are barking nearby. Why are you not stopping them?
- Mother! They were disturbing my sleep too – but I thought they were crying.
- 'Crying!' she asked surprisingly.
- Yes mother! When I was coming, I told them.
- 'What?' She asked again.

- Mother! I am afraid.
- Hey! What's the fear?
- Mother, when they cry, something bad happens.
- Bad? What bad? Your blind belief has remained the same. The era has progressed. Still, you are behind. Leave all these things. I am going out for sometime. Take care of the home.
- Okay.....

Sanatan left.

Meanwhile, looking Bhāgyadatta sitting, the tribal mountain girls opined that he was an evil person. They went in seminaked condition in front of him and he also looked at them. They told something. He thought for sometime and smiled and made faces too. Looking into his expressions, the women went on to fetch water.

Bhāgyadatta peacefully thought – ‘Today, there is no need for me to go back to the rest house. Let me go somewhere else. Let me search for Tilottamā. I will hide about Nīlimā. If somebody asks, where were you for so long? He would reply that he had gone for business elsewhere. He had come for discussions with other industrialists.’

‘But Nīlimā.....’

Nīlimā is a woman. If by some means, he is deceived by her. She has ability of deceiving anybody. He would think intelligently to protect himself. If she tells something, people would believe her. It is a woman's world.

Again, the tribal mountain girls crossed his path. He shamelessly observed their youthfulness. He knew that it was a danger zone. He had heard about it from Sanatan on numerous occasions – ‘Master! Do not go over there. The nomadic tribal people live over there. They do not understand anything. They only know

death and how to kill. Neither do they understand our language, nor do we understand their language.’

Bhāgyadatta got up. The women were returning. Nīlimā was also coming in search of him. Bhāgyadatta called Nīlimā in high voice. Hearing the shout, the tribal women ran off to their huts.

Nīlimā went to Bhāgyadatta and laughed. She embraced him. But the tribal women had gone to their huts and reported something based on which the tribal men came out shouting with bows and arrows and started chasing Bhāgyadatta. Bhāgyadatta looked at them with utter surprise. He knows that they are cruel – they kill mercilessly. He did not have time to think. He caught Nīlimā’s hand and started running. Both of them started to run for their lives and the tribals chased them. They were screaming. They ran with all guns. The path was thorny. The hilly road had ups and downs, they fell and again got up. The legs started to bleed.

At places, when they fell down, they started to bleed and their legs felt heavy. The shouts of the nomads broke their concentration. The nomads shouted repeatedly and they tried to hide. But the nomads started to shoot arrows. The arrows hit them. Their bodies were covered with arrows. Their bodies seemed to be similar to fallen trees. Their faces looked as bright as freshly plucked flowers. Pain increased in their bodies and legs started trembling.

The tribals arrived. They saw their blood smeared bodies. Their bodies shrunk in fear. Their breaths were waiting to be out. Their anger turned into compassion and sadness. They indicated to each other – these are husband and wife. They had come to roam during evening time. When we came out hearing the false reporting by our women, they started running. It is their bad luck which had caused this. They started searching for medicines.

They carried the half dead bodies to their homes. The sun was setting. Only their bloody rays stayed up in the sky.

Today, Padmakāñcana is a suppressed hermit under the feet of civilization. Under the cover of penance is present the unfulfilled social desire. In the narrow bylane of life, he has a string of worries just like a line of ants. He has an untiring nature inspite of his exploited state. Life is a struggle. Through the fallen leaves of the religious hermitage, many springs have passed. Amidst this, the youthfulness blooms. The tears of work on his innocent face have erased the signs of his fresh youthfulness. The illustrious youthfulness waits in tremble even today. He longs to feel the touch a young beautiful lady even today.

In the past one year, Padmakāñcana had become a security guard. Madhusmitā's arrival had reduced the timespan of one year. His atonement had turned to be nectar. Within this one year, his passage in front of Madhusmitā's window had turned to be a religious habit. Days passed. The nights were disappointing; the shamelessness of youth had not yet gone. The reserved life of religious hermitage had influenced him. The mind was apprehensive. Although Madhusmitā was a guest, whenever he thought of her, a sense of care aroused in his mind. But to no avail. Many a times, he had strayed in front of Madhusmitā's doors at quiet nights. But his entire patience turned into a doubt – Is Madhusmitā a maiden? Or is she – abandoned??

Too much care brings weakness in front. Too much care leads to forgetting one's imperfection. He thought, will Madhusmitā ever choose to lead a social life? Her time passes nicely over here. If Madhusmitā is a maiden – then there is nothing to worry, but if she is abandoned – then also, she deserves to have a social stature. She deserves the right to live. Padmakanchan was flooded with all these thoughts.

One afternoon, Padmakāñcana knocked Madhusmitā's door. Madhusmitā opened the door. Her face had a luminance. It seemed as if she wore a garland. She was looking very beautiful. She asked

- Lord, is there any work to be done?
- No, today it is a day of austerity. I have maintained everything and so I stand here.
- 'Maintained everything', she asked.
- You may close the door.

Padmakāñcana continued to stand even after the door had closed. He had a weak mind. He was very much influenced by Madhumita's tenderness. He thought of erasing her grief. He thought of various ways and how to succeed. It was as if all of Madhusmitā's sadness was erased. He tried to do everything to bring smiles on her face. He brought flowers to beautify her and make her happy. With this much care, Madhusmitā forgot everything. She started thanking.

But a wicked thought came across Padmakāñcana's mind. He was also afraid of it. He tried to control his mind. Thereafter he could not leave the ancient appeal of the mind. He tried to find faults. His character is not firm. He has thought of all this in the process of assisting a needy person. No, he is not a dignified citizen; he is similar to a greedy dog. Cheating the less costly, he wants to get the abundance. Treating other's life like a ball is not correct. The villagers were worshipping the stone with blind belief. Some people wash the earthen doll with coconut water. Some throw flowers at a dry wood and shout –Lord, Lord. She serves the needy.

Padmakāñcana looked back – a dark cloud was touching the peak of Dhauli mountain. The monsoon was chasing the religious hermitage in the form of water drops. Seeing that, all the thoughts concentrated in his mind. Padmakāñcana looked at Madhusmitā's closed door. He observed the path of clouds. The clouds

were moving eastwards away from the religious hermitage. The drenched birds had fearful looks at treetops. Droplets of water fell from the leaves on it's feathers. Padmakāñcana was saddened.

The thirst for bodily pleasures aroused with unspoken words. He stood in front of the door with artificial looks.

The door opened. 'Come, come, sit', with open mind, Madhusmitā called him. A wave of smile appeared on the face. There was humility in the eyes and distress in the heart.

'Tell lord.'

Controlling himself, Padmakanchan sat and started telling – 'Madhusmitā, Master has gone for pilgrimage today morning.'

'Is there any message?' - Madhusmitā asked.

During this time, two birds entered the room. They seemed to be tired. They have finished making love.

Madhusmitā smiled gently and went to make them fly out. Turning his head, looking at the window, Padmakāñcana said – the weather is pure. The noon sun is breaking its way away from the clouds. Madhusmitā –

- Tell, lord.
- I have a few questions.
- Ask.
- Madhusmitā? Actually, who are you?

She was disturbed for sometime. Then, she composed her mind and said –

- I am a woman.
- Everybody knows that. Are you single or.....?

- Why is there such a question in your mind, today?

He lost his mind. He acted dumbly.

- Not today. This is a question in my mind since you arrived.

She boldly replied – ‘I am married.’

- ‘Married? To whom?’, he asked surprisingly.

Madhusmitā was thoughtful. She thought about Bhāgyadatta angrily. She trembled in anger. Padmakāñcana observed a black shadow on her fair face. She thought about her unsuccessful past wherein she felt offering herself to Bhāgyadatta and it was socially acceptable. But even without society’s acceptance, one may fulfill bodily pleasures at suitable times. However, till date, she did not try to be physically involved with anybody. She does not even expect any physical or mental support from anybody. She thinks the world to a boundary of unknown people. In the eyes of a blind society, she was an abandoned – tears came to her eyes.

Laughing artificially, she asked –

- What did you think?
- You look like a single.
- ‘Single?’, she laughed.
- Look Madhusmitā. We do not have anything in our lives other than routine work. Life is a circle of ups and downs. Nothing will be there after death. There are expectations and hopes after birth.

No, Madhusmitā. You know my wish – I want to marry...

Padmakāñcana was quiet for sometime. Like the fragrance of a flower, redness reflected around Madhusmitā. She felt that Padmakāñcana was intensely immersed in her beauty. Like an unknown insect, he wanted to jump in the fire.

Puṣpavallava's image came across her mind. Once, like an innocent child, he had also begged for love. But where has he gone?? Innocent Padmakāñcana seemed to be his representative. His face also resembled a man in love.

Madhusmitā tried to explain him differently –

- Lord! Why is a person who had been firm all life, wishing to divert his mind now? Do not travel the wrong path.
- 'Madhusmitā!!' Padmakāñcana looked at her surprisingly.
- Yes, Lord! Think for sometime. It is you, who had wiped my tears with respect t. It is you, who had given me food with care. You had advised me like a father. You had asked about my wellbeing each day. You had looked after me more than a father and mother would have done.
- Madhusmitā!!
- Yes Lord! You had arranged for my shelter wiping out all defamation. You had heard rebuke from the master for my wrong doings. You had wiped my tears when I was unwell. When, I was sad, you had blessed me with new clothes and helped me like a brother. So, I had always thought of you as an elder brother. You think – rethink – how is our relation, since then?
- Stop – stop – Madhusmitā. You have wiped out darkness today. Please forgive me.
- No Lord! You forgive me. I have received enough from you but never gave anything. Also, my beauty had influenced you to traverse the wrong path. Elder brother, forgive me. Please pardon my mistakes....

With sadness, she touched Padmakāñcana's feet and started crying.

The brother's heart melted. Although he had a gentle smile, tears were seen on his forehead.

- Sister! You have shown me the path in life.

He picked her up and kissed her caringly on her forehead.

Meantime, the maid came to tell something. Seeing all this, she was fearful. She stepped backwards. With her narrow mind, she was thrilled. Silently, she whispered – ‘The guests have come. They want to see Madhusmitā.’ She went away.

- ‘Ask them to come in’.....she ordered.
- ‘I will take leave, Sister!’ – Padmakāñcana went back to his room.

Madhusmitā was worried. ‘Who had come?’ She asked herself – ‘Is it Bhāgyadatta?’

‘Or is it Puṣpavallava?’ – ‘Who wants to see Madhusmitā?’

She was determined – she would not reveal her true identity. If she is asked, she would reply as having not knowing.

Meanwhile two teachers came from the locality near Dhauri hill. Their clothes were dirty. They thought with an innocent mind. They came to visit the religious hermitage during the holidays. They inquired about the lady hermit. They were thoughtful about getting a glimpse of the great lady.

The maid brought both of them to the door and called – ‘Devi! Open the door –guests have come.’ The door opened. The maid went away. Madhusmitā looked at both of them surprisingly. Both of the guests exclaimed in a high pitch ‘Tilottamā! You over here.....!!’

Tilottamā was serious and remained silent. She signalled with her hands and asked them to sit down. Vadrikeśa and Aśutoṣa observed her smiling face.

Puṣṣavallava's mother sat in the yard. Her bare back could be seen. The mild warmth of the sun was on her back. She was sitting peacefully with legs apart and facing the shadow. The arrangements for making betel leaf were besides her. The old pillow was with her. Above it laid the rosary of beads cuddled like a snake.

All have gone out. The old woman was alone. Wife had also gone to her father's place since the last four months. Puṣṣa had also gone to his wife's place for the past ten days. At night, she washed her feet nicely and went to lie down. Since the time they have gone, she had not washed her hands and feet. There was no peace of mind. The house looked empty. Since they had left, there is nobody who talks with the old woman. She was securing the house like a dumb person. She could not even go out leaving the work at home. She was not used to doing work at home, since the time she had come. Recently, she has remained engaged with household work. At this age, she wants to get relief from everything. Wife used to help in household work. Some times – 'do this' – 'do that' she ordered.

The young ones do not listen to the elderly. At times, there was conflict over having food. She did not like to have such food. She went out of the house. She ordered the wife. She had respect for the wife. Her mind is not well since wife is not present at home. Moreover, wife is also pregnant. She was feeling lazy. She was not able to do any work. That's why she has gone to her parent's place. During this time, she must have what she wants. Or else, the child would become greedy on seeing unconsumed matter.

She offered something not sure of what is going to happen. Who knows whose mind? Father, mother, friends think – after a girl's marriage, their responsibility ends.

Puṣpa had yet not returned. What happened there? Is wife alright? Is her health okay? During this time, one needs to consult the doctor. One needs to take proper medicines to give birth. What is he doing over there? What is being organized? Thinking all this, the old woman's mind turned weary.

Puṣpavallava returned home like a tired bird. His body was sweating. His hairs were here and there. He called mother. Mother responded – 'coming'. Puṣpa observed all corners of the house – sunlight was entering through a hole and the light was swaying like an egg. This egg shaped light was trying to gain some stability. Puṣpavallava's face had a smile.

His mother's numb feet were excited. She inquired

- How is wife's health? Is everything alright?
- Yes, everything is in order. But Chhandā is not alright.
- Yes, during this time, health is like this. May God bless her. May she get relief.
- Mother! I will again go today. Whenever, she feels pain, I have to take her to the hospital.
- Nobody is there at home. Her parents are aged. Moreover, they are always busy with work. The younger ones do not have knowledge. Who else would go over there? The mind is anxious – I will go to visit my wife.
- 'Go – have a bath – then have some food. Thereafter you may leave', she said quickly and entered the kitchen.

The sunrays scorched the waters of the pond. Still the blue lotus was smiling. The fishes were playing. Far away, calves, goats and sheep were grazing.

A fisherman was inspecting the waters. Puṣṣapavallava finished his bath and returned home.

The afternoon heat softened in copper hue. The discussions between the mother and son ended. Touching mother's sacred feet, he left for Chhandā's home. The path was slippery. On both sides were grazing fields. Some thorny bushes stood to identify the cattle that grazed over there. Puṣṣapavallava went on. He carried a packet of sweets. His mind was in dilemma. On one side it was the baby who was about to be born and on other side, it was Chhandā.

He turned back to see that he had passed his village. There were remains of a garden. If somebody calls from Chhandā's village, somebody else would hear. Many thoughts were coming to mind in solitude. He started thinking – if Tilottamā were his own, then..... No, today she is of somebody else's, her thoughts were different. She must have forgotten the past. In her new life, she belonged to her new family. She was fortunate. He could not give any assistance to her at present. But, he had certain duties. He was supposed to gift her something on her marriage. He had not even done that. Nowadays, with Chhandā coming into her life, he does not even care to take any news of her. She was his life partner. She was his partner in happiness and sorrow. Her laughter and joy was a part of his happiness. She was his mind partner.

Puṣṣa had come a long way from his village. Chhandā's village could be seen. Palm trees could also be seen next to her home, long banana leaves were also seen. The cordial long leaves of the coconut tree could be seen. Suddenly, Puṣṣa's left eye trembled. He caught hold of it thinking it to be an ominous sign. He went forward. Then he noticed vulture's call on the Peepal tree. The crows were also calling loudly. Seeing all this, his heart trembled. He still went on. A black cat ran

across. The call of the old fox beside Chhandā's village was probably addressed to him. Some women were carrying empty pots to the pond.

Puṣpa's mind was apprehensive. The old men in the village commented that these were ominous signs. Still then, Puṣpa was patient. He was educated. He thought that all these were blind beliefs. Many such false rituals were believed in the village till date.

Puṣpa looked up and saw Chhandā's home-servant running towards him. He was bare and had a dirty cloth from his waist till knee. He carried a cloth on his shoulder. He was panting and trembling. He could not even speak in front of Puṣpa.

Puṣpa asked,

- What happened, Madan? Where are you running?
- Master, to your home.
- What are you telling?
- Master! Chhandā Devi is extremely ill. She is under extreme pain. She has been taken to the maternity home. Therefore, please come over there.

Puṣpa hurried. He started going with Madan. He handed over the packet of sweets to him and requested him to bring it over there. The maternity home was not unknown to him. He hurried. The maternity home looked like the Devil's home from far. Various flower trees were also looking like patients. The flowers were also ill. The entry door looked dangerous. There, the guard looked like Devil's messenger. He asked him and got directions for the delivery room.

Anxious Puṣpavallava did not get permission to see Chhandā. The doctor did not allow him. He asked humbly – 'How is she?'

- ‘Do not be anxious’ - the nurse advised.
- ‘Is her pain too much?’ He asked again.
- ‘Now she is unconscious. Do not worry. The doctor is there. Everything will be alright’. She gave confidence and entered the room.

Puṣṣapavallava continued to wait for the doctor’s permission. Gradually, two hours passed. But nobody came outside. Chhandā’s relatives were also present over there. Everybody was silent. All asked anxiously to the nurse –‘Has she gained consciousness?’

‘Do not worry’, she repeated. The sun had set. The electric lights turned on. The screams of pain could be heard from the maternity home. It was Chhandā’s scream. Puṣṣapavallava heart was tore apart. She was ready for the delivery. The thought of whether it would be a boy or a girl did not touch him. He was anxious. He requested –‘Let me see her for a moment. I will come back after seeing her. Her pain will be slightly relieved on seeing me. Sister! Please, let me.....’

‘No, - she has regained consciousness. She will soon be okay. The doctors will come out soon. You may ask them. Also – please ask somebody to get some milk for her at dinner time.’ Saying this, she entered the room.

Puṣṣa sent somebody to the stores to get the needed. He continued to wait for the doctors. Puṣṣa asked him anxiously –‘Sir! Is her health okay?’

‘Yes, but listen over here’- the doctor took him to a dark corner. Puṣṣa followed him. The doctor put his hand on the shoulders and told him –‘If you want to see her alright, give me five hundred rupees. Or else, nothing will happen. Actually -, this hospital does not have costly medicines. We have to get it from the

shop. That's why we need the money from you. I will get the medicines through sending the servants.'

The doctor acted too busy and wanted to go away.

'It is night-time now. I cannot even go home. I do not have this much money with me.'

'Then what will happen?'

'Give me some time - I will pay you tomorrow morning. Heal Chhandā for now.' Puṣṣpa requested the doctor by holding his hands. With cruel minds, he did not want to listen anything. Ignoringly, he mentioned – 'Don't you know anybody in the shop? Bring it from him - pay him back tomorrow morning.'

'No, I do not have anybody known over here. Even the friends that I know do not have five hundred rupees with them.' Puṣṣpa again requested him.

'Then what do I do? It is fate' – ignored the doctor and started going. Pusphavallava again requested humbly – 'Look – I do not have anything. Only, I have two rings on my fingers. Accept these for now and I will pay the balance tomorrow morning.'

'What will I do with these? The shop is open. Go over there. Sell them and bring the money. I am here till ten at night.' The doctor departed hurriedly.

Puṣṣavallava's mind was shattered. During this time, he saw some of the relatives and asked them – 'Please sit over there. I will come from the shop. The nurse will come and tell everything. Please do accordingly.' Puṣṣpa went away to the shop.

The rest of the relatives entered the maternity ward and started praying to God. At times the nurse mentioned – she is well.

It is nine at night. Puṣṣavallava went from shop to shop like a mad dog. Some shops were open whereas others were closed. Puṣṣa went to each shop and told – ‘Sir! Please keep these two and lend me five hundred rupees. I will return the same tomorrow morning.’ - But everywhere, he heard the same thing – ‘We will pay half for what we are accepting. These two will not make five hundred together.’

Puṣṣavallava was frustrated. He could not think any longer. He tried many ways but could not succeed. He came to a rich person. He heard everything. He was miserly but was kind enough to mention – ‘These days, one cannot believe anybody. However, give those articles and take three hundred rupees in return. Go back to the doctor and request him to bring medicines with this sum. The balance shall be paid by you tomorrow morning.’ Mohammed laughed crookedly and mentioned – ‘Look! It is ten o’clock now. Return quickly and tell the doctor about me. You do not know, all are greedy over here’ – he smilingly entered observing the rings.

Puṣṣa hurried towards the hospital – the dogs were running after him. He continued to ignore them and moved forward. The doctor was waiting at the doorsteps. He asked Puṣṣa – ‘What are you thinking?’

Puṣṣa silently observed – the doctor to be waiting at a dark corner. Puṣṣa went upto him, caught his hands and told – ‘Sir! I have been roaming from one shop to the other for the last two hours. But nowhere, I have got five hundred rupees. I have got three hundred rupees. So please take this much and I will pay the

balance tomorrow morning.’ The doctor accepted the money slowly. He softly mentioned, ‘It is half past ten now. She is okay now. Go and see her. I am going now. I will meet you tomorrow at twelve noon.’ The doctor went away.

Puṛpa ran towards Chhandā’s maternity ward. He observed the relatives to be all silent. The nurses were waiting. Puṛpa asked –‘Sister! How is Chhandā now?’ The nurse remained silent. He opened the door and saw Chhandā’s dead body covered in white cloth. He shouted ‘Chhandā.....’

His scream got mixed with the darkness. It echoed a lot. Some of them came back to him.

The days melted, weeks of tearful eyes and painful months. Life seemed meaningless to Puṛpa and his body became tired. His ideas froze. All waited like the grass. He did not like to have food. The liquids seemed like poison. He remained silent and heard the sympathetic words of fatherly – mother’s words could also be heard. All were dark in front of him. Chhandā’s shadows seemed to dance in the blue sky. At every step he could hear, -‘Dear – dear – dear!’ It was very soft. He was being invited in the starry skies by Chhandā’s bodyless spirit. At every moment, the echo could hear a painful cry.

Many words of the mind were untold. He heard Chhandā’s last words. But he could not answer. She went away helplessly. She could not tell anything, she did not leave any sign. Her dream of motherhood remained unfulfilled. She could not even see her own child. The child also died with her - she could also neither see her mother’s deadbody, nor her father.

Today, it is Chhandā’s last rituals. The dogs and foxes were fighting at the cremation ground. The bride of the village, Chhandā’s love turned to be an example. The shepherd was afraid to go to the cremation ground. The village boys

were discussing about Chhandā's spirits everytime. But the aged people, felt pity on Puṛpa about Chhandā's untimely death. It was empty all around Puṛpa. He thought – this is life where name and shape changes. Chhandā was unhappy – she was the unseen beauty of the cremation ground. There were as if no differences between work and idleness, happiness and sorrow. Only unconsciousness – unknown things of the mind.

Four months later, Puṛpa realized that he had an unknown pain in his mind. Chhandā touched his mind. He was invited as a traveller into space. Chhandā is no more. But her memories remind him everytime. Day by day, the pain went on increasing. He thought – his end was near. But the topic of remarriage was going on at his residence. Mother was also looking for a new wife. The young ones who knew Chhandā had also forgotten her. But Puṛpa became physically ill with the mental disturbances. Still, all wanted Puṛpa to remarry. But what does Chhandā's spirit want?

Chhandā was a good housewife – looked after her husband. Puṛpa was touched by her love and behaviour. She was everything in his life. But will he be able to forget her in grave? Man is able to forget. With the passage of time, he is bound to forget.

Puṛpa stood on the village bridge in the evening. The crooked road of the village could be seen. The village trees could be seen nearby. The villagers were celebrating spring festival over there. His thoughts woke up. During this time, he had asked so many questions to Chhandā. He saw the full moon and his love had doubled.

At this place, Chhandā had let herself loose. At this place his family life had begun. At this place, their deep love had danced. Puṣpa could not think any more. Tears started to come out of his eyes.

Puṣpavallava could see the dusty road. He could see two people in white clothes approaching. He remained silent. He tried to recognize them. ‘What do you need?’ He tried to smile gently. The two persons followed him.

Memories of the past came onto Puṣpavallava’s mind. He continued to hear the known voices, ‘Elder brother!’ Puṣpa observed their changed clothes. He was Vadrikeśa, he was completely new. There was Aśutoṣa, the teacher from the village school. Both were teachers. They knew of everything – the country’s progress, whether the females in the village were educated or not, the village population, who all had children, who had passed away, who were married, who were about to get married and to whom - etcetra. It was like the information about oil and salt in one’s family. But in today’s struggle of life, Puṣpa was defeated. The world was not in his favour. Fate had also not given his side.

Vadrikeśa embraced Puṣpavallava. Aśutoṣa also embraced him heart to heart and mentioned

- Puṣpa! Why are you so concerned? Forget the past. Think of the new. What has happened was bound to happen. What could you have done about it?
- ‘Yes, friend!...., certainly.’ Puṣpa sighed deeply. His mind was sorrowful.
- ‘Elder brother! You seem to be ill’ Vadrikeśa asked.

- Yes, after her death – don't know why – she remains in the mind painfully.
- It was bound to happen, what could be done?
- No, she has remained as a pain. I want to get rid of my physical illness. Death summons me to go near to Chhandā. True, friend! My days are over.
- Do not tell like this. Consult the doctor.
- True -, since that day, hospital is a devil's home and a doctor seems like Devil himself.
- No – brother. It is duty. Do not ignore it.

Aśutoṣa changed the topic and told – ‘You know, Puṣpa!’

- What?
- About Tilottamā.
- What is to be known? The person with whom I was busy for many days has gone away. Everything is sorrowful.
- You know that we have been appointed as teachers at the foothills of Dhauli hill.
- Yes, I know.
- ‘Don't you know that Tilottamā stays in an hermitage over there?’

Vadrikeśa mentioned dramatically.

- Tilottamā? At the foothills of Dhauli hill!! In an hermitage!!!
- ‘Yes –’ both of them mentioned.
- ‘Since when?’ Puṣpa asked surprisingly.
- ‘She is over there. Don't know, why. She is abandoned. She has been there since a year.’ Aśutoṣa mentioned.

- ‘Nobody had mentioned all this before. Why are you telling this now? All these are lies.’ – Puṣpa told.
- ‘No brother! You know. We had been there once. By God’s grace, we had met her. We had also talked with her.’ Vadrikeśa mentioned anxiously.
- What did you talk about?
- Why is she abandoned? Why has she come over there? Why does she stay over there – and many more things. Thereafter our visit to that place.
- You have not mentioned this before?
- How did you know of all this? It was different during those times. Apart from this, she has adopted the religion of Dev. If you ever reveal anything about her anywhere, she would commit suicide.
- Then why did you reveal now?
- Now it is you. Her husband is dead, it is known everywhere.
- Her husband is dead!! What are you telling?
- ‘Yes, Puṣpa! Nobody knows where he had gone with Nīlimā. A year had passed. He had not returned till date. Everybody whispers that he was killed by the tribal people’ Aśutoṣa described.
- Does Tilottamā know?
- She only knows that she is abandoned by her husband. That also, she had not revealed. She had even changed her name. She leads the life of a hermit, who had lost everything.
- ‘There must be other bad hermits over there. She is beautiful...’ Puṣpa felt pain within himself.
- No -, there a hermit named Padmakāñcana looks after her like a sister.

Although, pained from within, Puṣpa could not say much. He invited both of them to his home.

Coming to his home, they again started discussing about the same thing. Vadrikeśa observed Puṣpa's health and mentioned.

- Brother! Day by day, your health is deteriorating. So.....
- 'What shall I do', Puṣpa asked.
- 'Puṣpa! Again start a family life', Aśutoṣa suggested.
- 'Family.....' slightly laughing – 'family has ended, Aśutoṣa! Stones will not look nice on a dilapidated foundation.'
- Look nice, it would look nice. If any of our old things get destroyed, or get bad, don't we purchase new things in lieu of those?
- True – but, heart or mind is something which cannot be purchased.
- You are correct in telling that it cannot be purchased from a shop – but the entire world is a shop and heart can definitely be purchased.
- Yes, it is easy to tell that heart can be purchased.
- 'Yes, I am telling that,' Aśutoṣa mentioned boldly.
- Look Aśutoṣa! Nobody will take a broken heart and give a new heart.
- 'Will give – will definitely give. I know of such a person', Vadrikeśa mentioned strongly.
- Who is that person?
- Tilottamā.
- 'Tilottamā!!' Puṣpa was surprised.
- 'Yes, Tilottamā', Aśutoṣa gave confidence.
- But, look, we have our society.

- ‘So what?’ Vadrikeśa asked.
- Think. Firstly, if he had a husband, then it would have been impossible to marry.
- Secondly, if he had died, then widow remarriage is considered bad.
- ‘But, she is abandoned’ - Aśutoṃa reminded.
- ‘Look Aśutoṃa! Today society has progressed. Still it is orthodox. Widow re-marriage is only heard about. No educated person wishes to accept somebody’s hand out of his own.’ Puṃpa repented.

His pain of mind became intolerable. He bruised his heart.

- ‘Brother! Then, don’t you wish to marry Tilottamā?’ Vadrikeśa asked.
- ‘My family is destroyed, Vadrikeśa!’ Puṃpa kept his hand on head.
- ‘Puṃpa! You are educated, why do you think like a mad person?’,

Aśutoṃa turned angry.

- No friend! My life has ended. She will not be happy holding my hand.
- Brother! You have forgotten that you were Tilottamā’s lover. That is the reason why she had been abandoned.
- Vadrikeśa!
- Yes brother! Have you forgotten those days of love during your boating? Have you forgotten the picture of you two? Have you forgotten the secret conversations? Have you forgotten the secret meetings? How many times have you touched her at night below the tree?? Have you forgotten everything??
- ‘Stop – stop, Vadrikeśa! Do not turn me mad’ - Puṃpa’s-tearful eyes.

Suddenly, both of them looked at him and said ‘Why are you sad? Whatever is bound to happen will happen.’

- Friends! I am a wingless bird today.
- No -, Puṣpa! The evil rules of society and poor traditions are bound to change. We form the society. The uneducated always criticize the values and ways but who cares to ask them? That is to be done, what is well thought of. Also, that will happen, what is bound to happen.
- ‘But.....’ Puṣpa murmured silently.
- ‘But’ has no place, brother. Tilottamā has undergone great change. Her calm stature would attract anybody. She serves as a mother to the orphans, sister to many by working there. If she hears about your present condition, she would definitely come to you. Again, a new family life would come up’, laughed Vadrikeśa! ‘Come, Aśutoṣa! Yes, brother! Do not worry. Things will be brighter in future. Tomorrow, we will go to Tilottamā’s place.’ Vadrikeśa came out. ‘Look - a black scorpion is going. This implies that something good will happen.’ Aśutoṣa followed.

Puṣpa stayed far. Vadrikeśa, Aśutoṣa went away. Puṣpa thought – in this world, only these people think of me.

It is nine o’clock. Puṣpa had yet not left the bed. His body was trembling. His heart pained. He was ill, for four days. He had not even drunk water. His mind flew like an insect at times. His pain was increasing, the medicines did not work.

Mother and fatherly were pained. They were looking after him. Vadrikeśa, Aśutoṣa came at morning and gave confidence. Their concerns were immense.

The absence of best friend was causing the delay in healing – these were their thoughts. They explained this to Puṅpa and went away for work. They would consult the doctor and come with medicines the next morning.

Even today, Puṅpa's mind was filled with Chhandā's shadow. He always thought that there was no point to repent over what had already happened. But he was filled with multiple thoughts. Vadrikeśa had a strong belief that Tilottamā would again come in his life. Again she would be his beloved.

Puṅpa's mild desires aroused – 'Even if she was abandoned, he had not forgotten her. The female mind was always following him. He wished to be her beloved. Even today he was excited. Even if she was confined by society – she was beloved....'

During this time, mother said affectionately:

- Puṅpa! Four days have passed. You have ate nothing. Come – eat something.
- Yes mother! I am hungry.
- Then, eat something –
- Yes mother! I will follow.

Puṅpa went gradually. His mind was happy. Tomorrow Tilottamā would come. Again, they would meet. He would see her in Chhandā's place. Again they would settle in life. Again, a new child would play in their house. He could see himself playing with the new children.

The afternoon heat was strong. Vadrikeśa and Aśutoṃya went. They went near the leaved houses of Dhauli hill. The tourists looked like a line of ants. Two three

vehicles were taking rest over there. There was excitement in the Dhauli hill. A flag was flying at the temple top. The chirping of birds was heard. At the back, a few white monuments were seen. The cranes sat in front.

Padmakāñcana was present at the main door of the temple. Enlightenment came out of his eyes. His face with twisted lock of hairs seemed to reject all desires. He tried to preach the tourists – ‘This is All mighty Shankar, renouncement is his ultimate goal. This God vanquishes sorrow. He destroys thirst. This is merciful Jesus, whose wish is love for mankind. This is the great man, Mohammed. He is the correct one, this is the religious comprehension. This God is ‘the universal idol’ – our leader is the supporter of universal religion. Man is great but God is the greatest – universal harmony, universal dedication, universal religion, universal progress, universal motivation for work, universal inquisitiveness is the discipline of the universal idol.

Both the friends heard Padmakāñcana’s preachings. Once certain about the recess, they went towards Tilottamā’s place in the inner portion of the house. The door was open. The afternoon prayers were on. The desired God was being worshipped. There was beautiful fragrance all around. A few birds were singing in the quiet garden. Friend called with soft voice – ‘Tilottamā.....’ with open hairs Tilottamā looked back – two known faces of the unfeared past were present. One person slipped back somewhere with the passage of time. Finishing off her prayers, she invited respectfully – ‘Come, come’.

- ‘No, you complete your prayers’ -Vadrikeśa said.
- ‘Completed’ she instructed the servant – ‘bring the fruits from my temple’. She asked both of them – ‘Is everything well?’
- ‘Is it possible to stay well in our teaching profession?’ Aśutojya joked.
- Why are your feet over here again?

- Is it something special?
- ‘You know everything. What is there for us to tell?’ Vadrikeśa mentioned smilingly.
- What do I know?
- ‘Don’t you know about Puṃpa?’ Aśutoṃa asked seriously.

Again her heart trembled at the pronounciation of Puṃpa’s name. The old memories were aroused. His smiling face came across her mind. She could not tell anything.

- ‘Why are you silent?’ asked Vadrikeśa.
- ‘No -, something else came across my mind’- she controlled herself – ‘Yes- , what were you mentioning of which I know? It has been many days since I have met you all.’
- ‘He is all right now. Frequently, he mentions that his life is ending soon’.

Aśutoṃa repented.

- I know that he is married. His wife must be staying with him.....
- ‘No -, Tilottamā! After your marriage, looking into his behaviour, near ones forced him to get married. You know all this. He tried to forget you by various means. His wife, Madhuchhandā was also very intelligent’.

Aśutoṃa paused.

- ‘Then, what happened?’ she asked eagerly.
- Thereafter, his mind also hanged slightly. But – alas! Madhuchhandā passed away in labour pain....
- ‘Passed away!! When did it happen?’ Her heart saddened.
- It has been four months. He is going around like a mad person. His health has also deteriorated. His heart pains immensely’. Vadrikeśa narrated with sad voice.

- What is he thinking now?
- ‘What will he think? He has been eager since the time he has heard about you staying in this hermitage. He wanted to see you. But due to his poor health, he could not come.’ Aśutoṣa choked as he told.

Tilottamā became anxious. Her condition became similar to that of a fish in turbid waters. She started thinking and her ears turned deaf. Her favourite days turned as balls of smoke in her eyes. Puṣpa’s picture came up from within the smoke. Gradually, that picture started approaching her and called ‘Tilottamā! Tilottamā!’ Tilottamā’s mind melted in pity. Unnoticed, tear drops accumulated at the corner of her eyes. She sighed and asked, ‘What else can be done?’

- ‘Definitely something can be done. We have thought of something. If you...’. Vadrikeśa paused.
- Tell, tell.
- ‘Tilottamā. Again come into family life. Whenever, people would speak about devotion, they would mention about Puṣpa’s wife. Be a wife to her for leading your life.’ – Aśutoṣa mentioned slowly and seriously.

Tilottamā’s body drooped. She went by the window side. She observed that workers are transplanting a tree in the garden. She controlled herself and looked towards her friends compassionately. Smiling gently, she told calmly ‘Look, I can do whatever you are telling me to do. But decide – to whom do I offer this defamed body, I have lost everything in life. Again, why do I impurify somebody whose life is sinless?’

- The Ganga river is never impure, Tilottamā! She washes away all our sins. You are the river Ganga. Your touch would again revive the frail Puṣpa.
- But Aśutoṣa! Real life is not like the happy union of films. Neither is it poetry, where there is emotional illustration. Nor is it the ideal plot in a novel. Practical life is very different from the imagined life. Practical life has many rules. There is society. There are family, friends and relatives. Doing things as per own wishes are always criticized. Moreover – I am a woman – secondly, married....
- But - you were the beloved in his earlier life...Have you forgotten?
- No – I have never forgotten – but...
- Then, what do you want; does his life burn in flames? What do you want, does his family turn into dust in future? Do you tell that he dies?
- ‘Do not speak like this, Aśutoṣa’ - with tearful eyes, she held his hands.
- ‘You can save his life. Now you think – what you can do...’ Vadrikeśa explained to her.
- ‘Look, Tilottamā. Forget the past sorrowful history. What else will you do in life? It is everybody’s goal to eye upon happy times. Whoever looks back stays at the back only. So do not think any more. You marry. Puṣpa-Tilottamā’s unique life would remain as an ideal one to us in the future.’ Aśutoṣa again explained.
- But Aśutoṣa....
- Now, there is no more time to think of anything else. Dress up. If it is not possible for you today, then when do you plan to come?

- Aśutojā! I am not thinking any more. I will remarry upon your words, but you have to wait for sometime.
- What are you telling? How many days to wait?
- Now, your friend is unwell. Think about his health. Wait for seven days. Thereafter, when he recovers his health, then I will go to his place. Today it is Thursday. I will go next Thursday. On that day, we will all go together – what do you think?
- ‘Right, right’- telling this, both went away. Tilottamā bid them adieu with smiling face.

Both the friends went outside the house. The eastern sky had the half moon. Some evening stars had risen. Birds were gradually reurning back to the trees in the religious garden.

Tilottamā stood by the door. With happy minds, the two friends melted away into the darkness. Tear drop fell from her eyes on the ground – ‘She had forgotten everything. But her teacher friends had remembered her. They thought about her even today.’ She looked back – Padmakāñcana was praying at main hall of the temple. The evening prayers were going on. He was ringing the bells.

Tilottamā was patient. This was a woman’s patience – did she stand determined? Her mind was disturbed – she had given word regarding her marriage. They would again come along with Puṣpa. Puṣpa is fighting with death today. If she had rejected him, he might have died as a consequence. She thought – today is Thursday. She had given time for the next Thursday.

But what can be done? There is a great barrier of the orthodox society in front. Thereafter, there is reproach by people. Behind, there is the dreadful past. At one time, she considered Puṣpa as her husband. Even today, she prays to God for

his wellbeing. She can give up her life for him. He is lying on the bed today like an injured bird. Hope is calling the beloved of the past. The love since her youthful days bewildered her. Her eyes were filled with tears. She felt that Puṣpa's weak hands were wiping off the sweat from her forehead. She shouted –‘Coming – I am coming.’

As if her shouting echoed and reached the front door. Hearing the same, Padmakāñcana reached her doorsteps and asked –‘What happened? Madhusmitā!’

- No, nothing as such. But I had something to say.
- Tell – there is nothing to be afraid of.
- No – nothing to fear – the autumn festival is being celebrated everywhere. So, I would be on fast for seven days.
- All right, nobody will stop you.
- So, nobody should come to my room for five days starting tomorrow.
- Why will you remain silent?
- Yes, after five days, I will do something.
- ‘Okay, be it so.’ Padmakāñchan went towards the main hall of the temple. He had a doubt in his mind regarding Madhusmitā. But he did not tell anything due to his over-caring nature.

It is Sunday. Puṣpa is feeling healthy today. His mind is joyful. It has been two days, since the sickness has gone. He was waiting to see his friends.

It is ten'o clock in the morning. Aśutoṣa and Vadrikeśa happily entered. Their faces brimmed with success. Both embraced Puṣpa. Puṣpa asked merrily

- All successful?
- We are joyful – where does the question of being unsuccessful arise?

Aśutoṣa told boldly.

- But my health.....
- You are fine now. You will be completely healthy in another two days. So Tuesday, we will go from here. Let us see what happens.
- ‘Tuesday morning, we will go. Then, we will do what nobody knows. There are always obstacles in good work.’ Vadrikeśa cautioned.
- ‘Still, we will go. Let it remain a secret.’ Aśutojya went forward. Puṣpa followed.

Puṣpavallava laughed. The friends went to the village field. On both sides of the field, children were playing. The elderly people of the village observed both of them.

Today, it is the fifth day of fasting. Tilottamā was fasting even without drinking water. She was tired. Her nerves were lifeless. The heart burned. Her mind was unconscious, still her goal was same. The person whom she considers as her husband, for whom she bows in front of wood and stone, she prays - still ignores everything and accepts her as his wife – desiring such a life, Madhusmitā offered all her pains at the feet of the eternal figure.

Tilottamā did not want to see the ill-charactered Bhāgyadatta. But she wanted life for the beloved of her youth, Puṣpavallava. The entire society stood in front to blame her. The dreadful past was following her from behind. Still her eyes wanted to see Puṣpa. Tilottamā closed her eyes. She tried hard to remember Puṣpa. She prayed again and again, ‘God, give happiness to the beloved of my youth in return of my dreadful past!’ Puṣpa’s image came in front of her as a lover of her youth. She tried to embrace him. Tears of union started to swim on Tilottamā’s face. Her youthful smile turned pale.

It was a shady afternoon. It was lethargic all around. At times, mild breeze were moving some leaves. The chirping of wayward birds could be heard. Three friends were coming. Many thoughts came to the mind. After many days, success could be touched. Tilottamā's name brought happiness to Puṣpa's mind. He was delighted. He gathered enough strength to come. He chatted with the friends happily. They also felt happy.

The friends reached the gloomy environment of the hermitage. Apprehensive Padmakāñcana observed them. Remaining silent, he started looking here and there. Vadrikeśa asked him

- Friend! Where is Madhusmitā?
- 'What for? What is your identity?', Padmakāñcana asked ignorantly.
- 'We are teachers over here' – Vadrikeśa told devotedly.
- Trying to remember if I had seen you before.
- Yes, possibly, we always stay at the foothills. We visit over here occasionally.
- Do you know her?
- 'Yes, but she is.....' Vadrikeśa looked at his friends.
- 'Yes, tell', Padmakāñcana asked anxiously.
- 'She was our friend of old times and classmate too.' Vadrikeśa told hesitantly.
- You cannot meet her now.
- Why??

She is undergoing an austere life presently. It has been five days. Two days are left. Thereafter, her fasting would be over. Hence, it would not be correct to interrupt her before that.

- 'We want to meet her today only', Puṣpa mentioned depressingly.

- Come after two days.

‘There is no harm in our seeing her.’ Aśutoṃa suggested. Apprehensively, Padmakāñcana went ahead and said – ‘Friends! You seem to be aware of Madhusmitā’s true identity, so if you please tell the truth, there would be no loss.’ Padmakāñcana asked. Aśutoṃa merrily said – ‘Friend, her name is actually Tilottamā and not Madhusmitā. She is our friend, Puṃpavallava’s beloved of the youth....’

‘Tilottamā....!! Beloved of youth....!! Then come, let us go to her room’ – Padmakāñcana led the three friends.

‘Tilottamā! Tilottamā! Your husband has come! Tilottamā!’ The religious hermitage echoed.

All gathered in front of Tilottamā’s room. Padmakāñcana knocked the door loudly. But, all were in vain.

After a long time, the door opened. Tilottamā’s pale body lay on the floor. Her face looked happy. There was a gentle smile on her face. Her white dress was disordered. Her hairs were free. Puṃpavallava shouted ‘Tilottamā - ! Tilottamā!’ He tried to awaken her while tears from his eyes drenched her face. His shouting was like the scream of a mad person. Hearing his shouting, the birds from the hermitage flew away. All were standing over there. All were crying.

The residents of the hermitage decorated the dead body with flowers. Tilottamā was sleeping forever while Padmakāñcana was silent. He also had tearful eyes. Friends stood motionless. Puṃpavallava put vermilion on her head. He

drew the vermillion on her forehead caringly and drenched her face by bringing his own face closer to her.

The dead body was raised. Padmakanchan was silent with tearful eyes. All were sorrowful. The three friends put arms on each other's shoulders and started to ascend the steps of Dhauli hill. Evening descended. The western sky turned red.

CHAPTER VI

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

Dr.Keshab Chandra Dash's literary works bring forward a deep philosophy of life and aesthetic strength. His words are chosen like pearls from deep sea shells and sentences, thus formed look like rare necklaces. The paragraphs thus formed, have rarity in style and diction while the novels are based around themes which we come across in every day life.

The first chapter provides an insight into the academic brilliance of the author alongwith his rich professional experience, numerous publications, awards and distinctions received globally.

In the second chapter, I have explained about the development of Sanskrit Prose literature starting with the age of *Samhitās*, *Brāhmaṇas* and *Upaniṣads*. Thereafter, in the classical era, the development of *ākhyāyikā* and *kathā* and the works of Daṇḍin, Subandhu and Bāṇa have been discussed. It is followed by the *Pañcatantras* which lead to the medieval era, where Campū literature is evolved and the development across various centuries is brought out. The discussion continues to enter the modern era where the shift from imagery to reality is discussed through examples of various writers. The political, social and religious conditions prevalent in the modern era are also discussed. It is to be noted that the objective of modern Sanskrit Literature is well fulfilled by the writings of Dr. Keshab Chandra Dash. He has been successful in bringing out the burning issues revolving around modern urban lifestyle involving political turmoil, economic undulations, government services, entrepreneurial challenges etc. and same are presented in contemporary style in modern day Sanskrit prose literature of today.

In the third chapter, a brief summary of all the novels is prepared by me. While carrying out the work, it is observed that at many places, the author has used

thoughts and sentences which are difficult to absorb in a leisurely reading. Simplicity in style being one of the objectives of novel reading, such complex material renders difficulty to the readers to internalize the essence of the novel. Some of such examples are provided below.

तथापि ममकारे वरुणः अरुणिमः । (*Aruṇā, Oum Śāntih*, P.152)

गोपनीया रुधिरझरी अभिशप्ता । (*Āvartam, Oum Śāntih*, P.207)

प्रचलत् इविधे व्यत्यासः । (*Visargaḥ, P.20*)

कुक्कुटविरुतिषु लघुजनपदस्य उपान्तभागः अनुमेयः अभवत् । (*Oum Śāntih*, P.18)

The variety in his novels can be seen as follows. *Tilottamā* is a complete love story of a college couple. *Śitalatṛṣṇā*, is a story of suppressed human desires, centering on the male character R̥twik's platonic love for her wife R̥ti and the latter's unsatisfied married life. *Madhuyānam*, another novel, is written by the author exploiting the religious history of India. The story shows the breakdown of both Jainism and Buddhism as a result of extreme and inhumane physical disciplines and the entrance of a woman to the monasteries. *Añjaliḥ*, another novel encompasses a family drama with many of the characters offering their comfort to the feet of time for the sake of self esteem and truth. *Visargaḥ*, is a novel on a potter's family and their struggle for escaping the shooting pains of life. *Śikhā*, another novel, depicts the story of a village boy who spurns off his father to proceed to city life where he establishes himself successfully. The age old tussle of village life and city life is brought out. *Śaśirekhā* is another novel that brings out the ill effects of arrogance in human nature. The story shows the dying down of false pride of all individuals and exposes the readers to the metaphor of moonlight in the path of darkness traversed by various characters in the novel. *Oum Śāntih* is

a series of novels which demonstrate that human life shall only be peaceful, provided selflessness prevails and all deeds are done for the benefit and betterment of others.

Dr. Dash's journey from *Tilottamā* to *Śaśirekhā* and later on *Oum Śāntiḥ*, reflect his diversity of social illustrations amidst the characterization, plot construction, sentiments and analysis. The novels have a style which engrosses the reader in visualizing the characters and situations displayed in the novels to the ones they come across in their daily lives.

In the fourth chapter, I have conducted a literary study of all the thirteen novels. It contains deep discussions about plot, characterization, narration including description, scene, summary, socio-economic conditions, elements of feminism, style, language, sentiments and figures of speech. Various characters span from a proud Lipsā and Abhrapad in *Śaśirekhā* to a romantic Indra and torturous Vṛtta in *Āvartam*, the middle class family person Vimala in *Añjaliḥ*, the deicated Yaminī and big hearted iconic Nilamani, alias Nīludā in *Aruṇā*, the orthodox and strict disciplinarian Sāmpratima and noble Śīlaprajña in *Madhuyānam*, the shrewd Govinda and dutiful and compassionate Charaka in *Nikaṣā*, Cakradhara's immense sacrifice in *Oum Śāntiḥ*, the ever confused Mānā in *Pratipad*, the strategist Avani, the ill-fated Subhānika and short sighted Kulabhadra in *Ṛtam*, the unethical Vilāsa and dedicated Murmu in *Śikhā*, the platonic Ṛtwik in *Śitalatṛṣṇā*, the charming Tilottamā, wayward Bhāgyadatta and magnetic character of Puṣpavallava in *Tilottamā* to the weak Nakula who attempts multiple suicides in *Visargaḥ*. A variety is seen in all the characters which speak volumes about the socio-economic conditions highlighted in modern Sanskrit literature. It may be noted that majority of the novels penned by Dr. Dash may be classified as social novels with some exception like *Āvartam* being a mythological one and *Madhuyānam* being a religious one.

The author has also stressed a lot on feminist issues that modern day woman are facing in various spheres of life. I have specifically dedicated a section of the discussion on such issues highlighted through various novels.

Thereafter, I have studied the elements of description, scene and summary in each of the thirteen novels and illustrated the same with specific examples from each novel. It is observed, that the writings are full of vivid descriptions and dialogues. While, the dialogues are absorbing for the readers to run through the novels, the descriptions, at times, bring down the speed of the readers. It is felt, that the author has tried to reflect his own philosophical thoughts through the descriptions given in the novels.

The author has used various *Rasas*, which have rendered beauty to the novels. I have identified *Hāsyā Rasa*, *Adbhut Rasa*, *Bhayānaka Rasa*, *Sānta Rasa*, *Karunā Rasa*, *Śṛṅgāra Rasa* and *Raudra Rasa* and explained them in the context of the novels. The author has also used various figures of speech (*Alamkāras*) such as *Upamā*, *Rūpaka*, *Anuprāsa*, *Vyatireka* and *Atiśayokti*.

The fifth chapter consists of translation of two of the most popular novels of Dr.Dash – *Tilottamā* and *Śaśirekha*. It has been the intent to preserve the feelings and emotions present in the novel to the fullest, so that a successful translation work could be achieved.

During the course of my thesis work, I have also carried out a field study by visiting Dr.Keshab Chandra Dash's residence at Puri, Orissa and interacting with him to have a better understanding of his perspective towards his novels. Dr. Dash's outlook towards his creations is relatively different from what may be commonly perceived.

The culture of Orissa had influenced the author to graft his novels. His approach towards his novels has always been philosophical. Quoting his words, "No literature is aimless. Through literature, one can reach God. Through the novels, I can feel God." This approach is quite different from that experienced in

the western literature. As per Dr. Dash, he had also realized the feeling of oneness with All Mighty after writing .



DR.KESHAB CHANDRA DASH AND MYSELF
– AT HIS RESIDENCE, MAY 2012.

While describing Dr.Keshab Chandra Dash’s works, Dr.Arjun Ranjan Mishra has mentioned²⁷, “His tireless sincerity in serving the Sanskrit language as a medium for expressing the modern life, thinking and emotions through novels, poetry and stories has ignited inspirations in many to hold pen for Sanskrit. Sanskrit prose as a canvas for reflecting the rural characters and life and free verse Sanskrit poets as a tool to provide aesthetic pleasure by delving deeper into man’s psychic existence and his quest for various truths in the fastly changing universe are two main streams running parallel in the creative in the creative endeavour of Dr.Dash. His drive to be modern in theme and approach is praise-worthy.”

²⁷ Mishra, Arjun Ranjan, *Contemporary Sanskrit Writings in Orissa*, P. 204.

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APPENDIX I

UNCOMMON WORDS

1. सहसा द्वारे खट् - खट् शब्दः श्रुतः । (खट् – खट् meaning knocking sound in *Oum Śāntiḥ*, P.23)
2. वक्रदूर्वाकुरवत् पक्ष्मपङ्क्ति । (पक्ष्मपङ्क्ति meaning eyelash in *Tilottamā*, P.8)
3. मृत्तरः धावति प्रखरवेगेन । (मृत्तरः meaning motor car in *Tilottamā*, P.16)
4. निकटे मत्स्यरङ्गपक्षि मत्स्यं लक्षीकृत्य जले निमज्जति । (मत्स्यरङ्गपक्षि meaning kingfisher bird in *Tilottamā*, P.17)
5. इति ध्वनिभिः सह त्रिचक्रस्य घण्टानिनादः । (त्रिचक्रस्य meaning tricycle rickshaw van in *Tilottamā*, P.25)
6. मनसि क्रीडन्ति हर्षविषादयोः ऊर्णनाभाः । (ऊर्णनाभाः meaning spider in *Tilottamā*, P.36)
7. भित्तिघटिकायाः परिधिमध्ये समयकण्टकः अवसीदतीव लक्ष्यते । (भित्तिघटिकायाः meaning wall clock in *Tilottamā*, P.48)
8. केषाञ्चित् नासिकातः जलं निर्गच्छति केषाञ्चन नीवीवस्त्रे अहेतुकी ग्रन्थिः वर्तते । (नीवीवस्त्र meaning under-garment in *Tilottamā*, P.50)
9. बाबो....(बाबो meaning my dear in *Añjaliḥ*, P.25)
10. अरे, मिलन्.....! (अरे meaning an exclamatory remark for surprise in *Pratipad*, P.28)

11. जाने, नप्त्री मे अकाले कालकवलिता तदर्थ....(नप्त्री meaning grandson in *Visargaḥ*, P.25)
12. विद्युद्व्यजनेन सह बहिस्थपवनः तत्र तालं सम्मेलयति । (विद्युद्व्यजनेन meaning electric fan in *Śikhā*, P.30)
13. अन्यस्य कृते रहस्यकुञ्चिका (रहस्यकुञ्चिका meaning key of mystery in *Śikhā*, P.35)
14. हँ,.... शृणोतु....(हँ meaning an exclamatory remark for Yes in *Śaṣirekhā*, P.38)
15. स्नानादिकं नित्यकर्म समाप्य तूलसीमूले जलं गालितवती । (गालितवती meaning giving water in *Śitalatṛṣṇā*, P.10)
16. धमन्ती धमन्ती विरक्ता संजाता । (धमन्ती धमन्ती meaning slowly slowly in *Śitalatṛṣṇā*, P.11)
17. एकपाश्वे निहिता रज्जुमयी खट्वा । (रज्जुमयी खट्वा meaning a bed made with ropes in *Nikaṣā*, P.32)
18. स रेलस्थानं संप्राप्तः । (रेलस्थानं meaning Railway Station in *Nikaṣā*, P.37)
19. हृदयस्य अभिव्याप्तये मनसश्च प्रसाराय पैसामेकामपि दातुं सः कुण्ठितो भवति । (पैसामेकामपि meaning even one paise in *Aruṇā, Oum Śāntiḥ*, P.156)

APPENDIX II

GOOD SAYINGS

1. पितृलोकं परित्यज्य आगता ये महालये - उज्ज्वलं ज्योतिषां मार्गं प्रपश्यन्तु व्रजन्तु ते ।
(*Śikhā*, P.5)
2. वाणिज्ये हि वसति लक्ष्मीः । (*Śikhā*, P.7)
3. पुरुष एवेदं यद् भूतं यच्च भाव्यम् । (*Śikhā*, P.55)
4. सजलनयना रजनी जलप्रवाहे स्वप्नसंकुला आसीत् - नैनं छिन्दन्ति शास्त्राणि नैनं दहति पावकः । (*Śikhā*, P.67)
5. सर्वमतिक्रान्तुं शक्यते । (*Nikaṣā*, P.19)
6. महाकालस्य सकलकलापतले जीवस्तु विरलतरल । (*Nikaṣā*, P.20)
7. व्याधिषु लघुतमीभवति जीवनपरिसरः । (*Nikaṣā*, P.20)
8. मङ्गलं भगवान् विष्णुः । मङ्गलं मधुसूदनः । मङ्गलं पुण्डरीकाक्षः । मङ्गलं गरुडध्वजः ।
(*Nikaṣā*, P.29)
9. जीवेमः शरदः शतम् । (*R̥tam*, P.35)
10. सत्यं परं धीमहि । (*R̥tam*, P.91)
11. एकस्य नयनस्य अश्रु अपरनयनमपि संक्रमते, किंतु एकस्य देहस्य व्यथा अपरस्मिन् नानुभूयते । (*Madhuyānam*, P.1)

12. बुद्धं शरणं गच्छामि । संघं शरणं गच्छामि । धम्मं शरणं गच्छामि । (*Madhuyānam*, P.7)
13. चारत्रयं मन्त्रमिदं वाचयितव्यम् । महावीरनाम्ना च संकल्प विधातव्यः । सत्यात् न प्रमदितव्यम् । धर्मात् न प्रमदितव्यम् । (*Madhuyānam*, P.28)
14. छत्रमस्तीति किं वृक्षच्छाया अनावश्यकी ? सर्वदा कालो न समानः । (*Śaśirekhā*, P.25)
15. मिलनस्य परिणामः वियोग एव । (*Tilottamā*, P.32)
16. जीवनं नाम सततगमनम् । (*Añjaliḥ*, P.18)
17. यं अनिष्टं चिन्तयति । यश्च हिंसा करोति । स एव दुःखः अनुभवति । (*Añjaliḥ*, P.20)
18. पाषाणे लिखितं नाम मसृणे लुप्यते । हृदये तु इदं रेखायते । स्मृतिषु तथापि बिन्दुमात्रतया अवशिष्यते । (*Añjaliḥ*, P.77)
19. बुद्धिर्नाम ज्ञानम् । अत्र स्मृतेः अनुभवस्य च अन्तर्भावः । यदि शान्तिः अनुभवो भवति तर्हि बुद्धिः संजायते । (*Oum Śāntiḥ*, P.43)
20. यावद् देहः तावत् विसर्गः । विसर्गे कर्मसिद्धिः । कर्मसिद्धौ मुक्तिः । (*Visargaḥ*, P.10)
21. इन्द्रो नो नेता । (*Āvartam, Oum Śāntiḥ*, P.191)
