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Thematic Study of Perumal Murugan's Select Novels

Jayshri Ramnath Chopade

Research Student, Department of English, Deogiri College, Aurangabad.

Introduction

It is generally said that literature is the mirror of human life. It is the medium through which it is possible to express the human emotions, feelings, imaginations, thoughts, pleasure and joy. It is the reflection of human life yet criticizes it. Literature is the medium to express not only the feelings but also the imagination and thoughts. It means the major function of literature is to teach the moral lessons as well as to increase the consciousness among the people. Literature is the great expression of a writer's thoughts, experiences and imaginations. Literature gives too much joy. Literature depicts the feelings as well as emotions of human life. Arnold defined literature as "literature is the criticism of life." it interprets the life at the same time it develops the mind also. Literature catches the human mind crossing the cultural and national boundaries.

In a country like India, where language and culture both alter at regular intervals with respect to distance and time, it's difficult to arrive at a conclusion where one language or culture could eclipse the other. Salman Rushdie in the 'Introduction' to his book *Vintage Book of Indian Writing* published in 1977 made a startling remark that didn't go down well with the literati of regional languages. In his claim, he said that Indian English writing was much more developed than writings in other Indian languages. He also asserted later that the reason for the same was less "metropolitan experience" (Chandran 2017: 89) in the sense that regional literature had its limited reach whereas literature written in English had a much larger reader base. Translation of these regional texts into English has not just been a monotonous exercise of changing a text from one language to the other rather it has been a creative process through which the trio of the writer, the reader, and the translator have been immensely benefitted. If the writer found a wider platform to showcase his writings, the reader got familiarised with a world/world view that was inaccessible to him due to the lack of proficiency in a particular language. In an article published in *Financial Times*, fiction editor R. Sivapriya at Juggernaut Books, a digitally oriented Indian publishing house, comments, "The most experimental and most.

Objectives of the Study

1. Perumal Murugan's fiction in general
2. Cultural Identity and Identity crisis in Perumal Murugan's novels one part woman and Pyre in particular
3. To study socio-political challenges of the Indian society reflected in Perumal Murugan's novels.
4. To explore the economic condition of the rural and urban area portrayed by Perumal Murugan in his novels.
5. To investigate the role of the administrative system in the day-to-day life of common people reflected in Perumal Murugan's novels

Research Methodology:

The present literary research is interpretive in nature. The data is analyzed by using the analytical, descriptive and critical method. The available data will be scrutinized and examined through the outlook of socio-political, cultural and economic issues reflected in Perumal Murugan's novels. The conclusions will be drawn based on secondary data.

Innovativeness is the Proposal of Research:

It is an undoubted fact that literature is the mirror of society which reflects the contemporary socio-political and economic life rural and urban Indian society. Through his novels, the novelist has remarkably delineated with various social issues in rural and urban Indian society. Nowadays India is emerging as one of the powerful economies but obviously, there are some new challenges arrived with the changing

nation. The present research would be useful to conceive the socio-political, cultural and economic condition Indian society along with various newly emerging social issues.

The Relevance of the Proposed Research:

India is one of the fastest-growing economies in the world. It is also the second-largest country as far as population is concerned. But with the process of development, the Indian society has been facing several issues. These can be divided into social, political, economic and cultural issues. Perumal Murugan is one of the well-acclaimed novelists. He has succeeded to bring contemporary issues faced by Indian people in his literary creation. The present study would be relevant to locate important issues faced by Indian society. Consciously or unconsciously some of the issues have remained untold and discussed. The present study would bring all such issues reflected in Perumal Murugan's novels to the discussion. An attempt would be also made to bring forward the root causes of such issues.

Introduction to Author:

Perumal Murugan was born in 1966 in Tiruchengode, Tamil Nadu. Perumal Murugan, professor of Tamil, Govt. Arts college, Attur, Salem Dt is a renowned writer in Tamil. He is the author of eleven novels, several short stories and collections of poems, of which several have been translated into English. Perumal Murugan has also worked extensively on the language and literature of his region of birth- Kongunadu, in Tamil Nadu, South India. His 2010 novel 'Maadhhorubhagan' (Transl. One part Woman, ed. Penguin) attracted controversy by caste-based and religion-based groups in 2015. He was forced to leave his town Namakkal where he taught and lived with his family. In 2016, the court dismissed the case that was lodged against the writer, and advocated protection of artistic and literary figures. In 2018, Perumal Murugan was elected one of the Vice Presidents of PEN International, the world wide writers body. This is the first time in 98 years that an Indian was elected to this body.

Books by the Author

1. One Part Woman
2. Pyre
3. Current Show
4. Seasons of the Palm
5. Goat Thief
6. Songs of a Coward: Poems of Exile
7. Amma: My Mother
8. A Lonely Harvest
9. Trial by Silence
10. Poonachi
11. Rising Heat

Introduction to Perumal Murugan's Selected Novels:

1. One Part Woman: caste, tradition and cultural identity

Perumal Murugan's One Part Woman has become a cult phenomenon in the subcontinent, captivating Indian readers and jump-starting conversations about caste and female empowerment. Set in South India during the British colonial period but with powerful resonance to the present day, One Part Woman tells the story of a couple, Kali and Ponna, who are unable to conceive, much to the concern of their families—and the crowing.

2. Pyre: The Cultural and Social Backdrop

Translated from his original Tamil novel Pookkuzhi, Pyre takes place mostly in a remote village called Kattuppatti. Kumaresan is a young man of the village, who goes to work in a town after living with his widowed mother for over 20 years. He finds work in a soda-making factory. In between washing used soda bottles, filling and distributing them to local shops, Kumaresan also finds his true love: a 'skinny and

wiry girl' called Saroja, who lives with her widowed father. In Pyre, Murugan dissects the artificial divisions of society that become real when love is replaced by hate and innocence is trampled by blindness. The real fire in Pyre is not that consumes society, but one that can be found in Murugan's words. Like One

Part Woman, a translation of Maadhurubaagan, Pyre, too, gets a headstart with Murugan's readers outside Tamil Nadu, thanks to his translator Aniruddhan Vasudevan, who communicates the story of Pyre beautifully.

3. A Lonely Harvest

In A Lonely Harvest-one of two inventive sequels that pick up the story right where One Part Woman ends-Ponna returns from the temple festival to find that Kali has killed himself in despair. Devastated that he would punish her so cruelly, but constantly haunted by memories of the happiness she once shared with Kali, Ponnammust now learn to face the world alone.

4. Poonachi

Through a seeming act of providence, an old couple receives a day-old female goat kid as a gift from the cosmos. Thus begins the story of Poonachi, the little orphan goat. As you follow her story from forest to habitation, independence to motherhood, you recognise in its significant moments the depth and magnitude of your own fears and

longings, fuelled by the instinct for survival that animates all life. Masterly and nuanced, Perumal Murugan's tale forces us reflect on our own responses to hierarchy and ownership, selflessness and appetite, love and desire, living and dying. Poonachi is the story of a goat who carries the burden of being different all her life, of a she-goat who survives against the odds. It is equally an expression of solidarity with the animal world and the female condition. The tale is also a commentary on our times, on the choices we make as a society and a nation, and the increasing vulnerability of individuals, particularly writers and artists, who resist when they are pressed to submit.

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